

# ‘I can’t cope...’



## Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools

Emma Callwood, Child and Educational Psychologist

Natalie Brotherton, Education Access Officer

Gwenda Goodman, Child and Educational Psychologist

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## Emotionally Based School Non-attendance

This guidance has been co-produced by the Child & Educational Psychology Service and Education Access Service to assist schools in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) to effectively identify and meet the needs of children and young people who may be at risk of Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (EBSN). The guidance was initially developed in partnership with a working group of school representatives from primary, secondary and specialist settings in 2018. It has since been updated in response to local need and ongoing evaluation. The views of children and young people (CYP) experiencing EBSN in CW&C were also elicited and informed the development of this guidance.

The aims of the guidance are to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of EBSN
- Provide clear and concise information to schools, as well as other services across CW&C, about EBSN
- Support schools in the process of early and effective identification and intervention to meet the needs of children and young people who may be at risk of EBSN
- Ensure a shared and consistent approach of early identification and support for children and young people who may be at risk of / experiencing EBSN across CW&C schools.

Research and local evidence have informed this guidance. Important factors associated with positive outcomes for CYP experiencing EBSN, include:

- **early identification / intervention**
- working in **effective partnership with** parents and school staff as well as the child / young person
- working in a **flexible** manner paying attention to the **individual needs** and **function** served by non-attendance
- emphasising the need for **rapid return to school** alongside **good support** and **adaptations** to the school environment.

(Baker and Bishop, 2015)

**Maintaining positive and trusted relationships** with key adults and peers in school - maintaining or rebuilding positive relationships is crucial to maintaining school attendance or supporting re-engagement with school / education.

**Feeling listened to and understood** - key staff in school who take the time to really listen to CYP and value their views (they 'really listened to me'; 'she got me').

**Experiencing a sense of belonging and acceptance** - CYP feel that they genuinely belong in school and are valued and included, with reasonable adjustments as necessary.

A **personalised support plan**, utilising a **small steps approach** and **timely reviews** – explicit plans informed by identified needs of CYP, with realistic and achievable steps, regularly reviewed to achieve progress and avoid drift.

**Targeted emotional-social skills intervention** - to target specific skills development and promote coping skills. For example, many CYP may need support to better understand and manage worries / fears that may get in their way, and to learn coping skills such as positive self-talk and relaxation techniques.

(CW&C, 2018<sup>1</sup>, 2019<sup>2</sup>)

## Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge and give special thanks to the Children and Young People whose views, artwork and shared experiences were invaluable in constructing this guidance.

We also thank the school representatives who contributed their time, reflections and support in the initial development of the guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> CW&C. (2018). *Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Pilot Evaluation*. Cheshire West and Chester Council, Child and Educational Psychology Service

<sup>2</sup> CW&C. (2019). *Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Interim Evaluation*. Cheshire West and Chester Council, Child and Educational Psychology Service

## What do schools say about the EBSN Guidance?

**100% schools continue to find the EBSN Good Practice Guidance and tools useful following initial training (March 2021).**

- *The guidance has been useful to help implement early intervention strategies and get things back on track quickly before non-attendance becomes an issue.*
- *We have implemented it into our attendance procedure and it now forms part of our attendance calls, monitoring, meetings and plans.*
- Very useful. Has really given us as a school the opportunity to reflect on practice.
- Have a set process to follow. Previously we'd done what we thought was right – we now have research behind it and steps to follow.
- Using the EBSN guidance and tools gave us a different way to look at non-attendance and a different way in. It opened up conversations with both pupils and parents which we may not have otherwise had.
- The identification tool - I have used it with two families now and the information it has allowed me to access has been invaluable. It provides a really useful framework for discussion with parents...it has enabled me to gain insight into medical needs that school were unaware of. We are now able to act on this and request help from medical needs.
- The guidance is easy to follow and the tools that accompany it help to engage young people.
- Devising a tool to assess the issues and using this to create a plan. It gives a good indication of the issues that need to be addressed.
- I found the laddering exercise very useful and gave us an insight into the pupil's thoughts and views.
- We've implemented new procedures involving absence and return to school and there is an increased awareness of EBSN amongst SLT, FSWs, ELSAs and first point of contact staff - office staff etc. Increased awareness of the difficulties some children face and how we can work proactively with them to support their attendance and well-being...adopted protocol for staff to follow.

### ***How effective is the EBSN Guidance in helping schools ...?***

**100% schools rated it as good or excellent in helping them to identify need.**

**90% schools rated it as good or excellent in helping them to meet need.**

**70% schools rated it as good or excellent in helping them to improve outcomes for CYP.**

***(March 2021)***

- *Very much so (for impact)...So far the children identified on the EBSNA plans have all received support and attendance has improved.*
- For those children we have used it with a tremendous effect. So much so that we've done less than previous with a greater impact!
- A major success for us has been with a particular family - the child's attendance improved, a TAF was opened and continues, the child achieved expected standard in writing and reading and the parent is now accessing the adult services they need - this came from discussion around the individual attendance plan.
- I completed the EBSN with a boy and his family... There were occasions when he would refuse to attend school or would show levels of anxiety at starting the school day. The toolkit helped generate a plan and his attendance has improved.
- Children who were constantly late or poor attenders have shown improvement and the conversations with parents have been much more positive and proactive. Parents have recognised there is a problem and have been working with the school.
- As a short term intervention it has proved successful. 80% of the group (identified for intervention) achieved 90%+ attendance last year.

### **Any further comments or tips you would like to share with schools?**

- EBSN turned things around for a Y8 pupil so much last year that he ended up becoming a mentor for another Y8 student. He was amazing!
- Involvement of both children and parents is essential – even for the younger children.
- Open and positive communication with parents is important as well as regular positive 'check ins' with the child / young person.
- We have created an 'EBSN grab pack' with key sessions to elicit the child's views and help them develop their own self-help strategies.
- EBSN intervention has been delivered through targeted ELSA support which has worked really well – *this has been instrumental to a school's success.*
- Embed (the EBSN guidance) into the new attendance procedures for school and give it a higher priority. All staff need to be aware of EBSN and school's procedures.
- There needs to be buy in from Leadership.
- Whilst there is a large outlay in terms of staffing this model, the premise is early intervention. It's worth investing early on because not only does it yield greater outcomes for the student it is ultimately more cost effective.

### **CW&C Evaluations: April 2018; March 2019; March 2021.**



EBSN\_Pilot  
Evaluation April 2018



EBSN\_Interim  
Evaluation March 201



EBSN\_Evaluation  
Report 2021.pdf

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**Acronyms**

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CEPS	Child and Educational Psychology Service
CEP	Child and Educational Psychologist
CYP	Children and Young People
CW&C	Cheshire West and Chester
EBSN	Emotionally Based School Non-attendance
EAT	Education Access Team
EHPS	Early Help and Prevention Service
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EWS	Education Welfare Service
FSW	Family Support Worker
i-ART	Integrated Access and Referral Team
MAGS	Multi-Agency Group Supervision
OWW	Our Way of Working
TAF	Team Around the Family

## The national and local attendance picture

National statistics (DfE, 2020) for 2018/19 is the most current published school year data due to the impact of school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

National data for state-funded primary, secondary and special schools showed an overall slight decrease in absence rate, from 4.8% in 2017/18 to 4.7% in 2018/19. This was driven by a decrease in authorised absence rate, as illness remains the most common reason for absence, accounting for 52.6%. The total number of school days missed for pupils in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools increased from 59.1 million in 2017/18 to 59.6 million in 2018/19. This increase reflects a rise in the total number of pupils, therefore the average number of days missed per pupil enrolment has remained steady at 8.4 days in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Within Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) in 2018/19, absence figures in state-funded schools indicated:

Primary schools: 3.9% overall absence - this is below the national average 4.0%

Secondary schools: 5.7% overall absence - this is above the national average 5.5%

Special schools: 10% overall absence - this is below the national average of 10.1%

Comparatively, the 2017/18 data in CW&C recorded higher rates of absence in state-funded primary schools (4.2% overall absence) and secondary schools (5.8% overall absence) and a lower rate in special schools (9.9%) throughout this period.

The exact impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on school attendance remains largely unknown at this time. However, the report It's **Time to ACT (2021)**<sup>3</sup> provides an early indication of the impact of the pandemic locally. The report is based on the analysis of a range of data sets provided by CW&C schools from the first term in 2020/21, compared with the same period for the previous 3 years (2017 – 2019). The data broadly reflected the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. Covid-19 related absences were excluded from the analysis.

The report highlights a widening attendance gap across all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. Although the number of pupils with almost full attendance increased (between 98-100% attendance), the number of pupils missing more than 10% of school (officially persistently absent) also increased. The growing rate of pupils persistently absent demonstrated an increase in pupils missing 20% or more of school. The overall rate of pupils persistently absent increased from 13% to 16%; this was primarily driven by pupils from disadvantaged groups, representative of 36% of all pupils. 61% of pupils who were

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<sup>3</sup> CW&C. (2021). Time to ACT: Countering the impact of Covid-19 on pupils and schools. Available at: [www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/publications/its-time-act-countering-impact-covid-19-pupils-and-schools](http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/publications/its-time-act-countering-impact-covid-19-pupils-and-schools).

persistently absent were eligible for free school meals, had current or previous contact with children's services, or were pupils with SEND.

DfE (2016) guidance<sup>4</sup> reports that pupils with poor attendance are less likely to succeed academically and are at greater risk of not accessing education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. Whilst the impact of non-attendance is not surprising in terms of the correlation between attendance and attainment, it is important to acknowledge the additional adversities that non-attendance at school imposes on children and young people (CYP). These include a negative impact upon mental health and emotional wellbeing, social isolation and additional pressures that the family unit experience as a result of a child's non-attendance at school.

### ***Non-attendance***

Pupils may not attend school for a wide variety of reasons, including truancy, school anxiety, carer responsibilities or illness, and that non-attendance patterns may shift over time (Finning et al., 2019). A range of terminologies are used in respect of non-school attendance, such as school phobia, school refusal and truancy. Recently, terms such as emotional based school avoidance (West Sussex EPS, 2018) have attempted to capture the needs of pupils who experience persistent anxiety related to attending school. A review published in 2019 highlights that rates of emotional based school non-attendance are difficult to determine however are likely to range from **1-5%** (Elliot and Pace, 2019). The range remains broad and largely unknown due to the challenges for schools in terms of developing and implementing robust assessment, support and intervention models as well variations in the way each school recognises and supports this cohort of pupils.

A review of local need in 2016 indicated that most schools in CW&C had concerns relating to a child's attendance (88%) or emotional wellbeing / anxiety-based needs (76%). *It is anticipated that current figures may be higher due to Covid19.* Of the CYP whose attendance was cause for concern, 31% also presented emotional wellbeing / anxiety-based needs. Needs relating to EBSN affected both boys and girls, and pervaded all year groups from Reception to Sixth Form, with peaks around the time of transition. A higher proportion of children in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 were identified as experiencing emotional / anxiety-based needs, with highest numbers of children in Year 6. In secondary, highest numbers of young people experiencing emotional / anxiety-based needs were in Year 8 and Year 9.

### ***Pupil absence data***

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2018-to-2019](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2018-to-2019)

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2017-to-2018](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2017-to-2018)

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<sup>4</sup> DfE (2016). *School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.* DfE.

## What is Emotionally Based School Non-attendance?

It is recognised that a high proportion of CYP not attending school may be experiencing underlying emotional needs such as fear, anxiety, unhappiness and despair, which result in them not feeling able to attend school. Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSN) is a term used in CW&C to describe the needs of this group of CYP. These CYP may be reluctant to leave home and can present high levels of distress in response to parents' attempts to get them to attend school.

EBSN is complex and multifaceted. Thambirajah et al. noted that difficulties attending school can occur "*when stress exceeds support, when risks are greater than resilience...*" (2008, p33).

Young people in CW&C who experienced EBSN, characterised their experience as one of 'not coping':

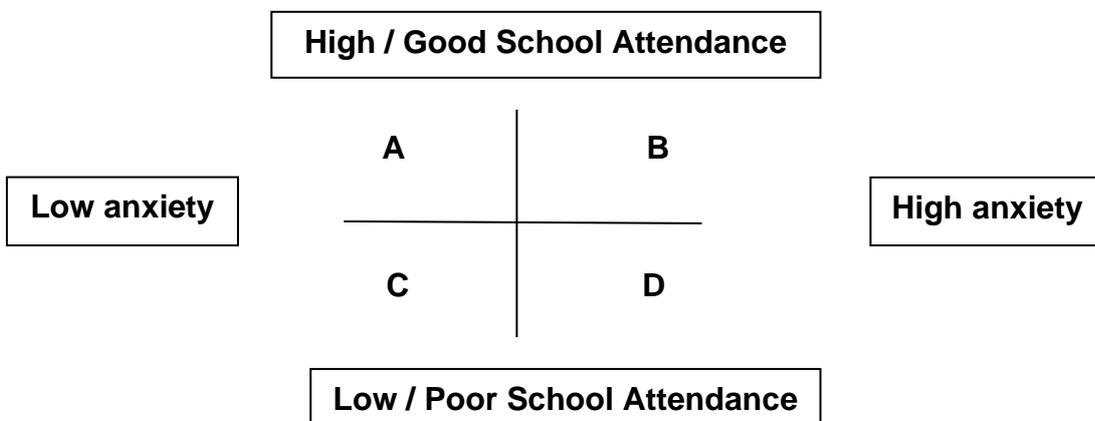
*'It was more like "I can't cope"...I couldn't cope with big situations' (Y10 student).*

These CYP are not simply choosing to opt out of school, rather the barrier to attending school results from significant anxiety within the context of their environment. Some CYP will demonstrate irregular patterns of attendance whilst others may attend with a personalised timetable and additional support from key adults.

There are two fundamental components of CYP not attending school because of emotionally based reasons:

- a pattern of absence from school which may, over time, result in a prolonged period of non-attendance
- anxiety or fear which presents as reluctance or refusal to go into school or in some cases to remain in school.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between anxiety and non-attendance:



**A** – the majority of the school population

**B** – CYP who are anxious but who manage to maintain school attendance

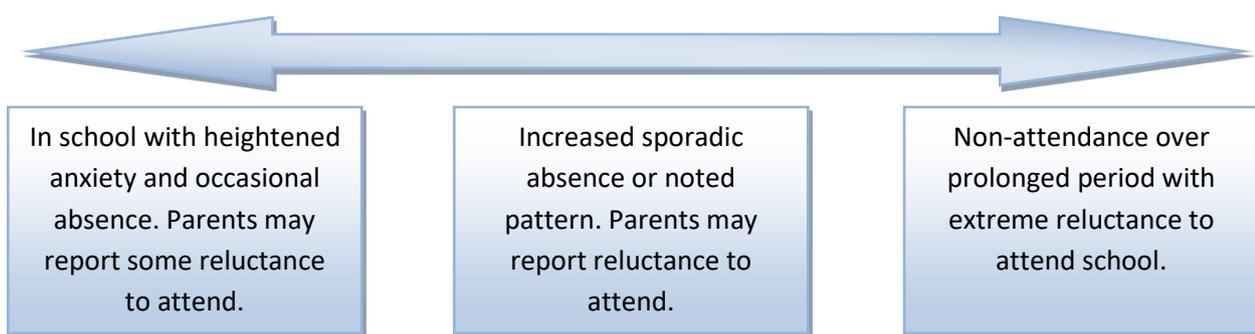
**C** – CYP who may be considered as truanting as they have low school attendance but do not show signs of emotional need / anxiety as the major factor leading to their non-attendance

**D** – CYP who present as highly anxious and feel unable to attend school. These CYP are considered to be those not attending because of emotionally based needs.

(West Sussex EPS, 2004, p7).

For some CYP, there will be clear signs that they are experiencing difficulties (eg. physical presentation, persistent non-attendance). Attendance may be sporadic or show a pattern of absence corresponding to a particular lesson or day. However for other CYP, signs may be harder to identify as these CYP may in fact have good attendance. When in school, CYP may complain about feeling unwell or make frequent requests to leave the classroom. It is important to be aware that some CYP may have learned to 'mask' their difficulties and so appear to function well when they are in school. Likewise, they may happily socialise with friends outside of school or attend specific clubs / activities. This can lead staff and others to question whether a child is actually experiencing EBSN and in turn, can lead to potential misunderstanding of need, as parents continue to experience significant difficulties at the beginning or end of the school day.

School non-attendance can differ in pattern and severity, ranging from occasional to persistent absence (Thambirajah, 2008). Some CYP will attend school but experience heightened anxiety and some reluctance, whilst other CYP will not have attended school for prolonged periods and present extreme reluctance and anxiety to attend.

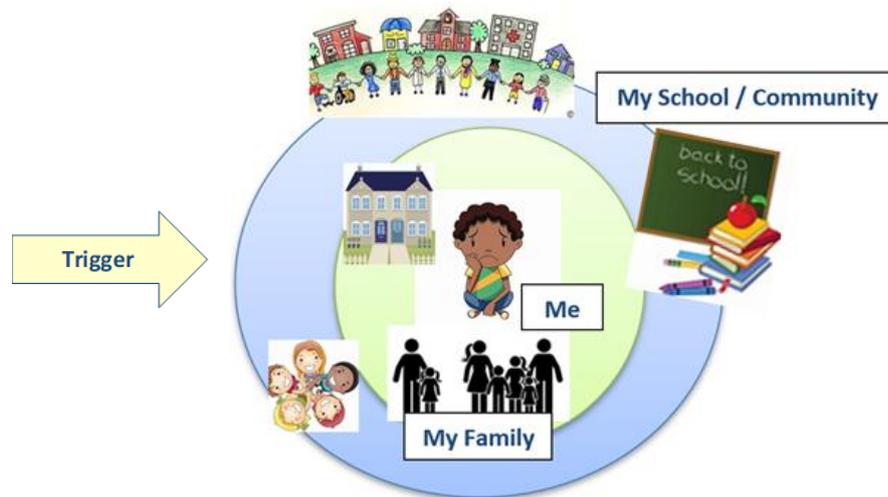


EBSN differs from truancy. It includes the underlying presence of anxiety or emotional upset, and usually the absence of anti-social behaviour. CYP tend to stay at home when absent from school and parents are usually aware of this. Nevertheless, research into the 'truancy' of young people noted a potential overlap with EBSN in relation to school-based reasons for

non-attendance (Malcom et al., 2003). Reasons included: problems with specific lessons or teachers; complexity of secondary school; experience of bullying and social isolation. It is therefore essential to identify the underlying reasons and needs of any child who might be presenting difficulties and distress behaviours related to school.

### **Factors contributing to Emotionally Based School Non-attendance**

EBSN is complex and multi-faceted; a holistic approach to assessment and intervention is required. EBSN typically occurs due to a combination of factors which are unique to the individual **child / young person, family** and **school** context, and which interact with a change in circumstances, or 'trigger event'. Common triggers include: transition between primary and secondary school / key stages; loss or bereavement within the family; bullying or other traumatic event. The COVID19 pandemic of 2020 is recognised as a traumatic event - a 'collective loss of the world we know'<sup>5</sup>.



Many CYP may find it hard to return to school following a prolonged absence, due to illness or a school holiday. The signs and associated behaviours of EBSN can present in a variety of ways for different CYP.

Research suggests that EBSN can occur at any age throughout a child or young person's education, however tends to peak at times of transition (Toplis, 2004).

The combination of factors contributing to EBSN requires a holistic assessment. Common factors associated with increased vulnerability of EBSN may include:

#### **Child factors**

<sup>5</sup> Kessler, D. (2020). *Grief expert - David Kessler and Brené on Grief and Finding Meaning*. Podcast: Unlocking Us with Brené Brown.

- difficulties with social communication / interaction
- undiagnosed needs that make it hard to access the curriculum, learning environment or wider whole school environment
- feeling overwhelmed by academic or social demands
- temperament - some children may have a predisposition to developing difficulties relating to anxiety
- medical needs

### Family factors

- family events such as: separation or divorce, loss or bereavement
- the mental and physical wellbeing of parents
- the young person taking on the additional role of young carer for siblings or parent
- an overprotective approach to parenting

### School factors

- size of the school
- bullying, including cyber bullying (most common school factor)
- transition of key stage, including transition to secondary school, and associated adjustment in terms of expectations and staff
- quality of special educational needs or pastoral provision

Factors contributing to EBSN can be understood in terms of 'push' and 'pull' factors. CW&C have conceptualised these terms differently to other literature, and as factors which both promote non-attendance:



**Push factors:** '*push the child away from school*' - associated with a need to avoid uncomfortable feelings or situations which might be stressful. There will be aspects within the school environment that the child finds difficult to manage and which push them away from wanting to attend.

**Pull factors:** '*pull the child towards home*' – associated with a need to gain comfort / a sense of 'safety' from significant others, or pleasure from specific activities outside of school. These factors are related to elements of home or community life which lead to them feeling like the safest/ most reassuring or appealing option.

CYP can often be affected by both push and pull factors associated with their school and home environments which contribute to their difficulty attending school. It is necessary to identify these specific factors so that effective strategies and interventions can be put into place across both school and home contexts.

Identifying a simple reason and solution for a child's non-attendance is unhelpful since it does not capture the multifaceted nature of EBSN, with multiple interacting factors. It also encourages blaming which can lead to individuals becoming anxious and defensive. Parents may feel blamed for their child's absence, that their parenting skills are being criticised and fear that they will be prosecuted for non-attendance. Teachers may also feel criticised and as though they are not doing enough to help, whilst CYP may feel increased anxiety or scared that they will be forced to attend school.

As well as being aware of possible risk factors associated with EBSN, it is important to consider protective factors that can support the child / young person and their family.

**School based protective factors** include:

- a robust transition policy with clear and effective procedures for sharing information on individual CYP, including attendance data and emotional social need
- whole school awareness of EBSN and established procedures for effective identification and intervention
- effective communication and partnership with parents
- whole school ethos and systems / approaches which promote and support the positive mental health and wellbeing of all CYP.

DfE advice on 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'<sup>6</sup> (2016) also focuses on the school's role in supporting pupils to achieve by building resilience and good mental health.

## **Anxiety and EBSN: how might this affect a child's ability to cope?**

Anxiety is the feeling of fear or panic. It is a normal response to a perceived or real threat. It can be thought of as the body's warning signal to keep a person safe and to prepare the body for action by releasing the hormone adrenaline. Adrenaline provides energy for 'flight or fight' which is essential when we need to escape from an immediate physical threat.

Most people feel anxious or fearful about some situations at certain points in their life. CYP might feel heightened levels of worry / anxiety about a residential trip, exam or starting a new class in school, for example. Whilst a certain level of worry / anxiety is considered normal, some CYP may experience overwhelming anxiety which impacts upon their daily functioning and interferes with their ability to cope with situations, including the demands of school.

CYP at risk of EBSN typically experience high levels of emotional distress / anxiety in relation to attending school and may present with one or more of the following behaviours:

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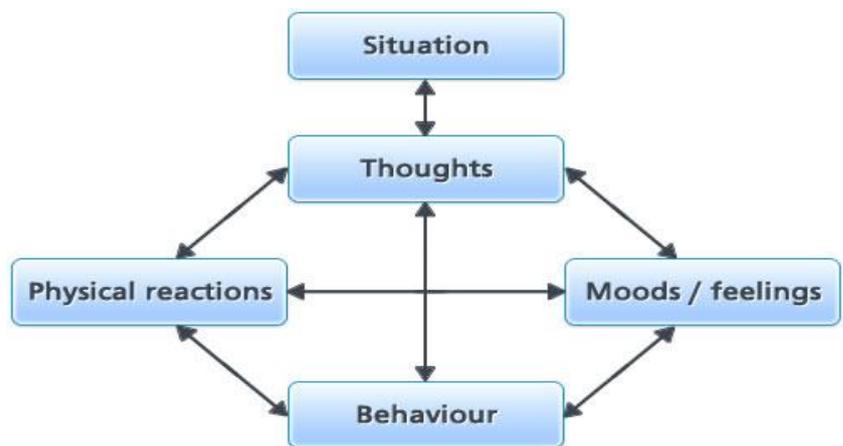
<sup>6</sup> DfE. (2016). *Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff*. DfE.

- crying or pleading
- refusal to get up, to get ready for school or to leave the house
- rumination and worry around school-related issues
- sleep difficulties
- complaint of illness which may be psychosomatic (e.g. headache and tummy ache, occurring when no underlying medical cause can be found and the basis is thought to be emotional)
- defensive aggression (verbal or physical), usually at home.

CYP may display defensive aggression as a means of trying to control a situation that feels 'out of control' (Thambirajah et al. 2008). This is usually directed towards a parent / carer who is trying to encourage a child to attend school. These behaviours can be viewed as signs of anxiety and an attempt by the child to avoid a situation that they perceive as threatening.

A child's **feelings, thoughts** and **physical sensations** can influence behaviour and EBSN. For example, a child may start to worry about going to school, for one or multiple reasons. Worry may be accompanied by unhelpful thoughts such as 'I can't do it', and uncomfortable physical reactions such as a stomach-ache and / or nausea. The thought of attending school or even leaving the house may evoke anxious feelings. Such feelings may start the night before or even a few days before an anticipated return to school. To feel emotionally 'safe' and to avoid these overwhelming feelings, a child may withdraw from the situation, not wanting to get ready for school, leave the house or enter the school building.

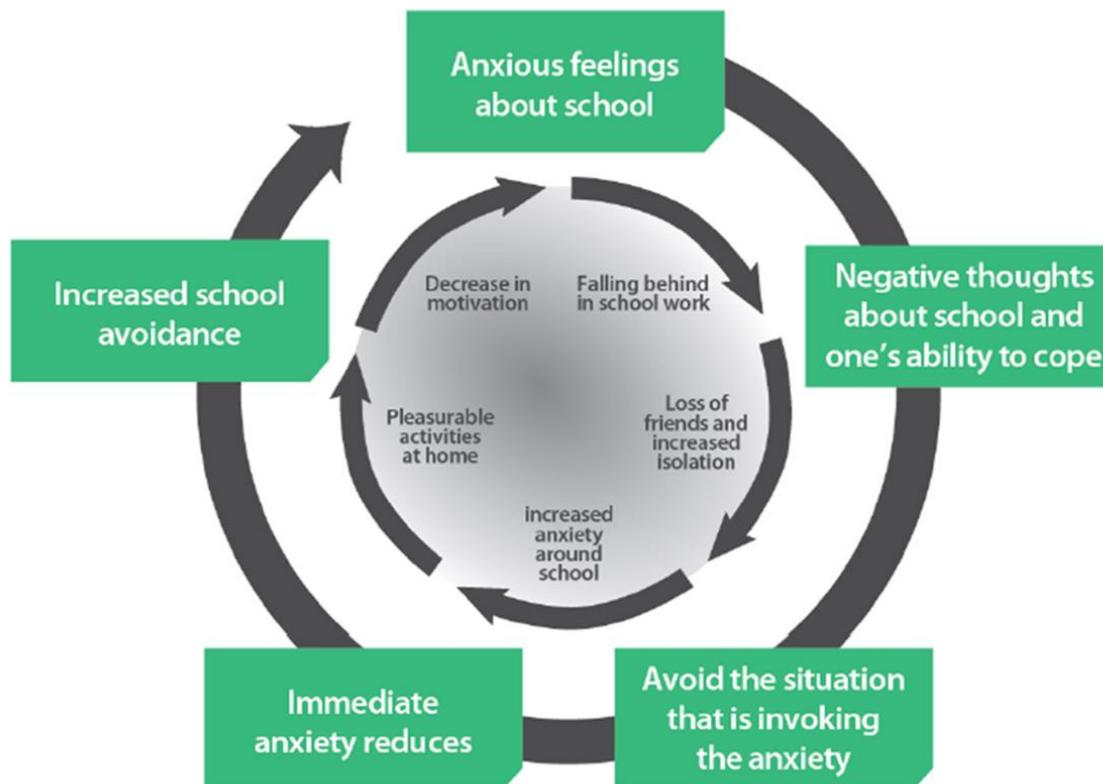
Fig 1. The CBT model can be useful when working with CYP who are feeling worried / anxious about situations within school.



A child's perception of their ability to cope in school is a crucial and often overlooked factor (Heyne & Rollings, 2002). Negative thinking or rumination can increase feelings of worry, which if left unaddressed, are likely to undermine attempts to improve attendance. In these situations, personalised support / intervention will be required to help alleviate feelings of worry / anxiety and address negative thinking.

Whilst avoidance of the uncomfortable feeling or situation may lead to a brief reduction in anxiety, it can make future attempts for school re-engagement harder to achieve in the long term. Avoidance of school may also result in additional factors which serve to maintain EBSN over time, such as: worry about having fallen behind with school-work; reduced feelings of competence and self-belief; increased isolation and impact upon friendships; shift in sleeping patterns; tangible rewards from staying at home eg. online gaming, YouTube etc.

The diagram below illustrates the cycle of reinforcement: initial anxiety resulting in school non-attendance and secondary factors which maintain non-attendance (West Sussex, 2018):



It is important to consider what a child / young person can reasonably achieve with good support and intervention, and reasonable adjustments, rather than enforce unrealistic expectations which are unlikely to be achieved and reinforce a sense of failure. Furthermore, having no clear support and attendance plan in place for a child / young person is neither conducive to school re-engagement or positive educational outcomes. A personalised and flexible approach will therefore be needed.

Reducing demand in the short term is often necessary to secure re-engagement and allow positive experiences of school, before gradually increasing / rebuilding at a pace to suit the child / young person. It is important that all demand is not completely removed, but that the demand is small and manageable with good key adult support in place.

### ***Reduced timetables***

Temporary part-time timetables should only be used in very exceptional circumstances to meet the individual needs of the child / young person (DfE, 2016). Reduced timetables are not a long-term solution and should only be used as a time limited, short term strategy, with the aim always to gradually increase the child / young person's educational provision with the necessary support. A clear and robust plan should be in place to support this.

If a child / young person is not attending school, school staff and parents should:

- Consider ways to maintain their access to wider school activities and increase their sense of school belonging.
- Maintain regular positive communication between identified staff and the child / young person (e.g. weekly home visits or postcards home to show they are being thought about).
- Agree what intervention is needed to help the child / young person to manage their feelings and thoughts, and to promote their coping skills, thus helping them to develop the skills required to manage specific situations they find challenging within school.
- Ensure that consistent routines and structure are maintained at home. Without this, sleep patterns can become disrupted and shift, making it increasingly difficult for a child / young person to engage with education and return to school. CYP's mental health may also deteriorate; increased isolation and prolonged anxiety may result in low mood and signs of depression.

### **Working in partnership with parents / carers**

Effective communication and partnership working with parents<sup>7</sup> is essential when supporting CYP who struggle to attend school. Ensure open and honest communication, and a consistent approach between school staff and parents. Positive relationships built upon compassion and trust are key; ensure that parents feel understood and well supported. The needs of CYP who experience EBSN can mean that families experience increased stress and strain, thus sensitivity and understanding are important.

Families may have been struggling at home for some time and parents may feel at a loss as to what to do. Consider the needs of the family and what additional support may be required; a Team Around the Family (TAF) may be needed. Be mindful of possible trauma that family members may have experienced, including difficult school experiences; keep in

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<sup>7</sup> The term 'parents' denotes adults with parental responsibility for the child ie. Carers; it is used throughout the guidance for ease of reading.

mind 'what happened to you?' (ref Trauma Informed Practice: [Our Model – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](https://www.westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk)).

Work together *with* parents and the child / young person and involve them in all decisions which affect them. A child centred approach helps to promote increased participation and a sense of agency, empowering positive change.

In response to concerns about a child's emotional wellbeing and / or attendance, arrange a meeting with parents to gain their views and gather further information about specific factors which may be contributing to the child's difficulties. Consider the most appropriate person/s to meet with the parents (ie. an adult who has a positive relationship with the family). Involvement from both parents, or parent and supportive adult family member, is often instrumental to success.

When meeting with parents, it is often helpful to ask about:

- The child's development and educational history
- Reported friendship groups (both in and out of school)
- Concerns they or their child may have (eg. in relation to learning / academic progress, social and emotional needs)
- The typical morning and evening routine
- Behaviour and signs of anxiety
- What the child / young person does when they are absent from school
- The impact on various family members, or other aspects of family life
- Differing views and ideas within the family regarding the child's needs and possible ways forward
- Any medical needs or conditions the child / young person may have (see Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, 2015<sup>8</sup>).

Complete the **Identification Tool** (Appendix A) with parents and key staff to identify factors which may be contributing to the child's difficulties and needs which require further support.

Invite parents to reflect upon what has helped or worked well in the past. Questions to ask may include:

- Describe a typical day when your child has / has not managed to go to school.
- Explore exceptions: tell me about the times when your child has managed to get into school. What was different about those times?
- What has been the most helpful thing that you or someone else has done in managing the situation / difficulties so far?

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<sup>8</sup> DfE. (2015). *Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions*.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)

- What their child reports is working well in school (friends, specific teachers or lessons)
- What has helped in the past when things have been difficult?
- What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their child's emotional needs / worry or anxiety?
- What support networks do the child / young person and family have in place?

(adapted from Derbyshire County Council, undated).

Information gathered should be analysed ('push and pull' factors, strengths and needs) and inform actions and strategies / interventions agreed as part of a personalised support plan (see Appendix D: Support and Attendance Plan).

Work with parents to help them to understand how certain responses may help or hinder their child's progress and well-being. Parents can support their child by helping them to identify and talk through their worries. Allowing children to avoid going to school completely is not helpful as they will not learn that it is not as bad as they may predict. Getting frustrated / angry, though understandable, is also unhelpful, as is telling the child to 'stop being silly'. CYP need to know that their fears are being taken seriously. It is fundamental that parents and staff work together to encourage a child to gradually face their fear of attending school, following a structured plan with good support and reasonable adjustments as required.

*See Appendix J: Information leaflet for Parents with strategies to support their child.*

## **Transition: what is good practice?**

Not all young people who experience EBSN will have experienced an unsuccessful transition to their new class, school or college. Most children and young people (CYP) view the move from primary to secondary school with a mix of anticipation, excitement and anxiety. The transition from primary to secondary school presents multiple opportunities for young people to have a fresh start, re-invent themselves, expand friendships groups, be treated in a more adult way and learn new things. The research is unified in suggesting that the process is a 'key rite of passage'<sup>9</sup> in a pupil's life, in which pupils must navigate their way 'through both the formal (school) and informal (peer) social systems'<sup>10</sup>. Alongside the opportunities transition presents are the multiple uncertainties as to what the school will be like: are the teachers stricter, lessons and homework harder, are there bullies? **An effective,**

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<sup>9</sup> Pratt, S., and R. George. (2005). *Transferring friendships: Girls' and boys' friendships in the transition from primary to secondary school*. *Children and Society* 19: 16–26., p16

<sup>10</sup>West, P., Sweeting, H. and Young, R. (2010). *Transition Matters: pupils' experiences of the primary-secondary school transition in the West of Scotland and consequences for well-being and attainment*. *Research Papers in Education*, 25, 1, p21-50

**well-managed transition** will help to ensure that a pupil's learning and wellbeing is not adversely affected by the impact of the changes<sup>11</sup>.

A significant body of research has identified numerous risk factors, across different domains that can negatively affect a pupil's emotional wellbeing. The findings can be used to help schools to identify which pupils are at risk of finding transition more challenging. A pupil's capacity to cope with adversity and change, their resilience, is one component of their emotional wellbeing and transition is an environmental factor that can negatively affect the balance between risk and resilience<sup>12</sup>. **A supported transition is likely to support a pupil's feelings of security and belonging**, both protective factors that enhance emotional wellbeing.

Whilst most pupils adapt to their new setting, evidence indicates that certain groups may be more at risk of finding the transition process difficult: children in care (CiC), pupils accessing Pupil Premium, pupils from ethnic minorities, boys with literacy difficulties, summer born pupils and pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Evangelou et al (2008) noted that pupils with SEND did not necessarily experience a less successful transition; however, they were at greater risk of bullying which in turn is a factor that inhibits a successful transition. In terms of gender, the evidence presents a mixed picture; most studies indicate that girls hold more concerns than boys; however, some studies find girls coping well<sup>13</sup>. Whilst not all pupils identified as potentially vulnerable will experience a less successful transition, others, with cumulative risk factors, may be particularly anxious about another significant change. **Targeted work** to support such pupils is recommended.

Research indicates that pupils who feel well supported and prepared for their transition are more likely to have a successful transition. Such support has included: *video links of the welcoming school, open days, induction and taster days to support orientation, summer schools, procedures to help pupils adapt, relaxation of rules in the first weeks of the new term; post-induction activities and booklets containing key information. Close links with feeder primary schools: visits between schools, in both directions, with secondary teachers visiting the primary school to observe and take classes; taster days; visits for sports and creative arts activities, help to promote successful transition.*

An indicator of successful transition includes pupils who experience social adjustment at transition and a positive outcome; for example, new friendships and increased self-esteem. Opportunities to develop emotional literacy, social skills and promote resilience can be embedded within the curriculum; however, pupils identified as vulnerable are likely to benefit from additional, targeted support in this area in order to facilitate a successful transition.

### **Strategies to support pupils at transition**

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<sup>11</sup> East Sussex Good Practice in Transition Guide 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Young Minds, Hinkley and Bosworth Extended Services (undated). *The Transition from Primary to Secondary School: How an understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing can help children, schools and families*. Young Minds.

<sup>13</sup> Bloyce and Fredrickson (2012) Intervening to Improve the transfer to secondary school, EPIP, volume 27, No.4 p1-18



- Early identification of pupils requiring an enhanced programme of transition by at least spring term of Y6. Agree a personalised transition programme with parents and respective primary and secondary school, with targeted activities to support transition over the summer term through to the autumn term. Arrange a review meeting in the autumn term (Y7) to review how well the pupil has transitioned and agree next steps. PATH\* is an effective planning tool which can support transition.
- Assign a member of staff as a “mentor” / Key Adult to help in times of ‘need’ (eg. to call upon if pupil becomes anxious over losing dinner money). The same person could be the home- school liaison
- Create a person centred One Page Profile\* with the pupil /Pupil Passport
- Provide a map of the new school building; colour code subjects and classrooms; highlight important areas e.g. dining hall, locker, hall, form room, toilets, Learning Support Base
- Modify / simplify the timetable as needed, so that the pupil finds it easy to use
- Create daily checklists so the correct items are taken to/ from school according to daily activities
- Create a user- friendly diary for organising homework
- Set up a “buddy-system” with a designated peer/ group to help the individual move between classes
- Plan for a consistent approach between all lessons. A staff communication system (in diary form) may be useful to pass on information. Remember to consider an Education Support Plan or One Page Profile
- Make provision for a ‘chill out /safe space’ for an individual to access to when needed eg. regulation breaks
- Consider procedures for break and lunchtimes which can often be the most stressful time of the day. Options include a “circle of friends” or a lunch club as a way to structure these times. However, be vigilant about peer conflict / bullying.
- The Autism Service has developed a comprehensive Transition Pack that contains numerous resources to support best practice.

Transition guides to support secondary school transition for pupils, parents and schools:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/moving-on-15042013-d2125.pdf>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/moving-on-top-tips-for-pupils.pdf>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/moving-secondary-school-17042013-d2146.pdf>

\*Person Centred resources for supporting transition, developed by Helen Sanderson:

[Personalising Education | Transition | One-page profile | HSA | Train \(helensandersonassociates.co.uk\)](#)

## Identification and intervention: assess, plan, do & review

**A targeted, systematic and co-ordinated approach is essential for early and effective identification and intervention.**

An EBSN framework to assist schools in early and effective identification and intervention of CYP who struggle to cope in / attend school is outlined below. Each phase includes protocols and suggested actions / strategies. *Note: actions / strategies are not exclusive to each phase and may be considered at different stages of intervention.*

Schools should consider how this framework can be implemented within their school context and be embedded as part of a whole school approach, within wider policies and practices.

**Assess, Plan, Do and Review:** robust and timely assess, plan, do and review (APDR) cycles are essential to ensure that a child / young person's (CYP) needs are effectively identified and met through high quality intervention, enabling them to make good progress and achieve good outcomes. Eliciting the views of the CYP and parents throughout the APDR cycle is fundamental. APDR cycles should take place across each phase.



**Assess / identify** strengths and needs of the child / young person, including factors which may be contributing to non-attendance (eg. child/ family/ school factors):

- **push factors?** (ie. specific factors in school the CYP finds difficult and may want to avoid)
- **pull factors?** (ie. specific factors related to home which the CYP may seek / gain)
- What function is not attending providing the CYP? (eg. to avoid negative feelings or specific situations; to gain comfort / sense of 'safety' from significant others, or pleasure from specific activities...).

- What **strengths** and interests / positive factors may help to promote engagement and attendance?

**Plan and Do:** agree a robust, personalised Support and Attendance Plan with the CYP and parents to increase engagement and attendance. Strategies / interventions should address push and pull factors and build on strengths to promote attendance / engagement. Agree desired outcomes and steps to achieve these which are **realistic** and **achievable**. Create an accessible, weekly visual timetable with the CYP. A well-planned, phased approach is recommended for CYP who have not attended school for a period of time, with flexibility as needed.

Agree a contingency plan for times when school might feel too overwhelming, with arrangements for Key Adult follow up (eg. tel.call between 3.30-4pm as positive 'check in').

**Review** Support and Attendance Plans in a timely manner with parents, CYP and Key Adults (two-week review cycles initially recommended; some CYP may require weekly reviews). Short review cycles help to: promptly address barriers; avoid drift; plan small steps which can easily be achieved and positively reinforced on a regular basis, increasing self-belief and motivation. Celebrate small successes and problem-solve obstacles (eg. What might need to be done differently? Do next steps need to be smaller/ have increased frequency?).

Adjust plan as necessary. Next steps may include:

- Agree successive steps to extend engagement and attendance, with new targets and actions (*Tuesdays are usually easier to commence changes than Mondays*)
- Consolidate and maintain current plan.

With increased and sustained progress in attendance, review dates may be extended to monthly (or six weekly if appropriate to combine with TAF meetings etc).

Initial progress can sometimes be slow and attendance may improve and dip again over time. Setbacks are normal and temporary; positivity and perseverance are key, with fresh starts and small steps forward. Prepare all key people (including child and parents) for 'bumps in the road' so that hope is not lost in the CYP eventually returning to full-time education.

If attendance and wellbeing concerns persist over time or worsen, despite appropriate support / intervention, consult with relevant services for support (e.g. Early Help, Child and Educational Psychology Service, Education Access Team).

## Phase 1: Identify well-being / attendance concerns

### Responsibility: School to monitor and gather evidence

- **Emotional health / well-being concerns** identified\* and discussed with key staff member/s (eg. Classteacher, Head of Year, Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, Pastoral Support, FSW). Share and gather additional information in a coordinated way and agree next steps.
- **Attendance / punctuality monitoring** (including absence due to ill health) - at least weekly, to identify patterns in late or non-attendance. Named person has responsibility for this (ie. Attendance Lead).
- **Attendance / punctuality concerns** identified\* and discussed with key staff member/s (as above) to share and gather additional information and coordinate next steps. *NB. Government guidelines indicate attendance below 95% requires early intervention.*
- Identify a '**Key Adult**' in school who has a positive relationship with the CYP, **to elicit CYP's views** using appropriate tools and respond accordingly (see Appendix C for tools / activities). *NB. CYP views may be different to parents' views.*
- Request a '**round robin**' (updates from key staff / all subject teachers) to gain a wider understanding of concerns / needs and strengths of CYP across school (eg. subject progress, friendship issues, activity during unstructured times, emotional well-being / health). This will help to build a picture of what is working well / less well.
- For CYP absent for more than 5 days, arrange a '**welcome back / catch up meeting**' with parents, CYP and CYP's identified Key Adult (eg. Classteacher / Form Tutor, Head of Year, ELSA, Pastoral Support, FSW). This is an opportunity to: welcome the CYP back; ensure CYP is well emotionally; share and address any concerns in relation to school and home; check CYP is up to date with work; identify any support needed. Ensure a compassionate and supportive approach is taken. Provide additional support for the CYP and parents as needed.
- Consider **emotional and social needs and possible barriers to learning**, including unidentified SEND. Liaise

**A targeted, systematic and co-ordinated approach is essential for early and effective identification and intervention.**

### Actions / Strategies

- **Gain CYP's views using appropriate tools and activities (Appendix C)**
- Meet and greet with an identified staff member / Key Adult each morning (and end of day, as needed)
- Complete a One Page Profile with CYP to identify strengths, what is important and how best to support them. With CYP's permission, share with all necessary staff.
- Identify a Key Adult / Worker for the CYP who will meet with them on a regular basis (at least weekly).
- Key Adult to touch base with CYP throughout the day.
- Colour coded / traffic light termly attendance reports for parents.
- Home-school communication diary/ email contact.

*\*Wellbeing and attendance / punctuality concerns can be identified by any staff member, as well as the member of staff responsible (i.e Attendance Lead, Classteacher).*

with SENCO / Pastoral Support to assess / identify need, as appropriate.

- Consider completing the **Identification Tool** (Appendix B) if you have concerns the CYP may be at risk of future non-attendance / EBSN. Identify appropriate Key Adult to complete with parents.

## **Phase 2: Identification of need**

### **Responsibility: School, Parents / Carers**

*Phase reached if parents inform school of concerns regarding their child's emotional wellbeing or getting them to attend, or school identifies the same concerns.*

- Identify **Key Adult/s to build a positive relationship** with CYP and parents, and **elicit views** using appropriate tools. **Identify possible reasons** for attendance / emotional wellbeing concerns with parent and CYP (*Key Adult may be different for CYP and parents eg. ELSA and FSW*).
- Complete **Identification Tool** (Appendix A) with parents and staff for CYP at risk of EBSN. Identify factors contributing to attendance / wellbeing concerns. *Use this information to inform an action plan (see below).*
- **Key Adult to elicit CYP's views** prior to Support and Attendance Meeting. Respond to views accordingly.
- *If CYP not attending school, complete a home visit to build / maintain a positive relationship and complete CYP voice activities.*
- **Analyse all information** from parents, staff and CYP prior to Support and Attendance Meeting, to identify: push and pull factors contributing to non-attendance; strengths / what is working well to promote engagement and attendance; what motivates and interests the CYP; emotional/ social skills which need support / intervention?
- Arrange **Support and Attendance Meeting/s** with parent, CYP and Key Adult/s; CYP may attend for part of the meeting with preparation and support (*see Appendix D: Support and Attendance Plans*). All views to be shared - CYP's views are essential to these meetings.
- Agree **personalised action plan with parents and CYP**. Agree reasonable adjustments and specific strategies / interventions to support CYP / and parents. The plan

## **Actions / Strategies**

- **Gain CYP's views using additional tools/ activities e.g. card sort, laddering, scale my school day...**
- Identify a 'safe base' / quiet area in school CYP can access at specific times or as needed (eg. break/ lunchtimes, specific lessons etc.).
- Time-in cards / regulation breaks.
- Peer Mentoring (linking CYP with an older peer).
- Assessment of emotional and social needs (eg. SDQ, emotional literacy & social skills) to inform targeted intervention.
- ELSA / Learning Mentor to provide targeted intervention e.g. understanding and managing emotions / worry; positive coping strategies.
- Share EBSN leaflet with parents. Discuss strategies and how parents may best support their child i.e. maintain consistent routine; no computer games / mobile phone during school hours etc.
- Later starts / earlier finishes, as appropriate.
- If CYP is not attending, consider a re-integration timetable.
- Home visits and online video communications may take place to maintain positive connection & intervention.

should be clear, holistic and robust with SMART outcomes and shared accountability of actions. Agree monitoring arrangements (*eg. daily monitoring of...by...*) and timely review date (within 2 to 4 weeks). See *Appendix E: example outcomes, targets and strategies*.

- **Regularly review / update action plan** (within 2 to 4 weeks). Adjust plan as necessary and agree next steps with review date. It is important to agree a clear plan of expectations and engagement *ie. If CYP is still not attending, ensure minimum daily expectation within the plan.*
- **At least two plan, do and review cycles are recommended prior to phase 3** (*unless significant change in circumstances or increased risk/ safeguarding concern*).
- **Liase with SENCO to discuss emotional social needs and possible barriers to learning / unidentified SEND.** Consider tools to assess social communication, sensory processing, emotional and social needs including hidden social anxieties etc.
- Complete SEND Profile as necessary.
- Request **medical evidence** from parents for non-attendance / health needs as appropriate.
- School may consult with / seek advice from the EWS.
- Consider use of Pupil Premium to support (if not SEND).
- Consider if TAF is appropriate.

### **Phase 3: Continued concerns and identification of need**

**Responsibility: School, Parent / Carer, relevant services**

*If concerns persist:*

- *Actions as outlined above, plus:*
- **Engage in reflection and supervision** with appropriate school staff to reflect on needs and how these are being met through the support plan: What is working well / less well? Are outcomes and actions realistic and achievable in given timescales? Is plan personalised to CYP's needs? Problem-solve barriers / what might need to be done differently? Adjust as appropriate, utilising small steps approach. Plan small daily outcomes / steps which can be achieved with appropriate support. Ensure plan is holistic, personalised and robust with SMART outcomes and

### **Further Actions / Strategies**

- **Gain CYP's views using appropriate tools /activities (Appendix C)**
- Access to catch up sessions.
- Access to school resource base / learning support centre for educational provision...

shared accountability of actions. Agree monitoring arrangements and prompt review date (within 1 to 2 weeks). *Short review cycles help to promptly address barriers and avoid potential drift.*

- **Liaise with SENCO** and relevant services to **assess emotional social needs and barriers to learning / unidentified SEND.**
- Complete / update **SEND Profile** as necessary.
- For CYP with an EHCP, an Interim Annual Review might be considered.
- **Discuss initiating TAF with parents** - identify appropriate TAF Lead (consider who has most contact / a positive relationship with the family).
- If TAF in place, consider referral to Early Help for emotional wellbeing / parenting support for CYP and families eg. Parental Mental Health Family Advice Service; Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service.
- **Consult with / seek advice from EWS** to discuss next steps. *Good practice is for school to alert EWS if a pupil's attendance is of concern and interventions by the school have had no impact, regardless of % attendance.*
- **Arrange a home visit** to gain CYP and parent views. A joint visit with identified **Key Adult** from school is recommended. Revisit and discuss factors which might be contributing to CYP's non-attendance/ EBSN (ref. to Identification Tool, CYP views activities etc.).
- **Key Adult to meet with CYP at least weekly** - whether attending school or not - **to build /maintain a positive and trusted relationship** and complete **targeted skills-based intervention**. This may take place in school, a neutral venue (eg. library) or home visit (refer to school policies on lone working). Sessions may focus on supporting wellbeing and emotional social skills.
- Arrange **Support and Attendance Meeting/s** with parents, Key Adult/s and relevant services – meeting may be held off site if CYP is more likely attend for part of the meeting with preparation and support, as appropriate. Alternatively, Key Adult to act as an advocate to share CYP's views and contributions towards their plan. Consider referrals to / consultation with relevant services (eg. Community Paediatrics, CEPS, CAMHS, Autism Service, YPS, Young

- Implement a programme of skills based intervention with CYP - *at home or a neutral community location if not in school.*
- Reduced timetable - **only to be used as a short term plan and if all persons agree it is appropriate** (NB. This is never a long-term solution. It should be time limited with a clear plan of how provision will be increased over time).
- Agree days / time for set work to be sent home and collected for marking (at least weekly).

Carers). *This may be incorporated as part of a TAF meeting, if appropriate.*

- **Regularly review and update action plan** (within 1 to 2 weeks). Adjust plan as necessary, agree next steps and review date.
- School to **ensure a clear and flexible educational provision offer** remains in place for CYP not attending school eg. *to attend Form, breaktime or an identified session with a Key Adult.*

#### Phase 4: Multi-agency action plan and review

**Responsibility: School, Parents / Carers, relevant services (e.g. CEPS, EAT, Autism Service, CAMHS, School Health, FSW, Early Help, Young Carers, YPS etc.); all parties involved in TAF**

If concerns persist, or the child/ family present multiple needs:

- *Actions as outlined above, plus:*
- **Key Adult continues to meet with CYP (at least weekly)** -whether attending school or not - **to maintain regular positive contact / connection and targeted skills-based intervention.**
- **Ensure CYP is at the heart of all decision making.** Elicit CYP's views and involve them in contributing to their plan, as much as practicably possible. Key Adult may act as an advocate for the CYP if they are unable to attend meetings so that their views are listened to and inform their plan.
- **Ensure CYP's additional needs are effectively identified and met through appropriate multi-agency assessment and targeted interventions.** Consider all advice and recommended interventions.
- **Consider further referrals / consultation** with relevant services, as appropriate, to ensure effective identification and intervention of the CYP and family's needs.
- **TAF initiated** - assessment completed by appropriate Lead Professional, with input from all services. Consider a neutral venue for TAF meetings, as required. TAF Advisor can provide advice and support regarding obtaining parental consent, as needed.
- See TAF information & documentation via LiveWell website

#### **Further Actions / Strategies**

- **Gain CYP's views using appropriate tools / activities (Appendix C)**
- Arrange for educational provision in the home/ community location with an identified Key Adult / Worker who is to maintain a positive and trusted relationship with CYP. The longer-term aim is to transfer this into the school setting.
- Lesson 6 – access to a lesson after the school day.
- Telephone consultation with CAMHS.

- **TAF review meetings at least every 6 weeks.** If TAF is not progressing as expected, consult with a TAF Advisor for further advice. In addition, you may: request a Learning Conversation or MAGS through OWW; refer to Early Help for emotional wellbeing / parenting support for CYP and families [Early help and prevention service \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](#)
- In addition to TAF, **interim education meetings focussed on the CYP's educational provision within the plan** are recommended to ensure that educational provision is effectively planned, barriers are promptly identified and addressed and positive engagement is achieved.
- **Daily monitoring and timely reviews of the plan are essential:** identified Key Adult/s from school to monitor progress and arrange daily communication with parents as necessary, to maintain open lines of communication and support actions / strategies to be implemented as agreed. During reviews, adjust the plan as necessary, ensuring SMART outcomes are realistic and achievable.
- **Multiple review cycles** may be required. Initial progress can be slow. Setbacks are normal and temporary. Positivity and perseverance are key, with fresh starts and small steps forward.
- *If progress is not made and attendance and wellbeing concerns persist over time or worsen, despite appropriate support / intervention, consult with relevant services for further support (e.g. Early Help, Child and Educational Psychology Service, Education Access Team).*

### **Phase 5: Continued non-attendance due to EBSN**

**Responsibility: School, Parent / Carer, Local Authority and all relevant services; all parties involved in TAF**

- Actions as outlined above, plus:
- If, despite all interventions implemented through Support and Attendance Plan and TAF, CYP is still unable to attend school and is in a period of non-attendance that extends

Multiagency reflection and supervision may be requested through OWW:

- [Learning Conversations – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](#)
- [Multi Agency Group Supervision – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](#)

### **Actions / Strategies**

- **Gain CYP's views using appropriate tools / activities (Appendix C)**
- Alternative Provision – Home Education Tutor, College or work placements (applicable to Key Stage).

beyond 15 school days (statutory guidelines), consider referral to **Education Access Team for support under Medical Needs**. Prior to a referral being submitted, it is advised to contact the service to discuss the case.

- **A referral to the Education Access Team must be discussed with parents, initiated by school and supported by a medical Consultant who is leading the treatment plan for the CYP.** For CYP experiencing EBSN, this may be a CAMHS Practitioner, supported by a Consultant Psychiatrist from the CAMHS Service.
- If appropriate, the Education Access Team will arrange educational provision for the CYP. This will be an intervention basis with the aim of supporting the CYP to return to school, as their health allows.
- **It is imperative that an identified Key Adult / Worker from school maintains regular positive contact with the CYP *at least weekly*** - to ensure the CYP sustains a positive link and connection with school. Explicit actions that communicate that the CYP is valued, accepted and thought about ('kept in mind') are essential, in addition to actions that promote their sense of belonging and inclusion within the school.
- **TAF review meetings to continue.**
- In addition, **ensure CYP's educational plan and provision continues to be closely monitored and reviewed regularly** (as specified in Phase 4, above).

- Access to an online learning package to support an alternative educational provision (e.g. Apricot Online, Nisai Learning, InterHigh).
- Identified Key Adult from school to maintain regular contact with CYP, at least weekly, and provide additional support and intervention as needed.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Whole School Audit: Good Practice Checklist
- Appendix B: Identification Tool for Children / Young People at risk of EBSN
- Appendix C: Tools and approaches to elicit the views of Children and Young People
- Appendix D: Support and Attendance Plans (includes example, review and CYP plan templates)
- Appendix E: Example outcomes, targets and strategies to inform support and attendance planning
- Appendix F: Advice for teachers when supporting a Child / Young Person showing signs of EBSN
- Appendix G: Signposting, information and resources
- Appendix H: Strategies by a Year 11 student who lives with anxiety
- Appendix I: Artwork by a Year 6 pupil experiencing anxiety in school
- Appendix J: Information leaflet for Parents

**Appendix A: Whole School Audit: Good Practice Checklist**

Systems and procedures for promoting emotional wellbeing and the prevention of EBSN?	Provision in place?	In need of development (Yes / No)	Comments / next steps?
School has a committed and inclusive senior management team – values all students; enables them to feel a sense of belonging?			
All staff working within school are valued. There are clear protocols regarding emotional support / stress management for staff including supervision?			
Continuous professional development for all staff which promotes emotional health and wellbeing, and makes clear how this is everybody's responsibility? (including EBSN)			
Regularly elicits and responds to pupil voice: systems and approaches are embedded within the culture of the school?			
Clear policies on attendance, wellbeing, transition, safeguarding / bullying, equality and inclusion, which clearly set out the responsibilities for all and the support in place?			
Curriculum is appropriately differentiated according to individual need?			
Curriculum includes teaching of resilience, coping and emotional social skills?			
Promotes supportive literature regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health for pupils and parents?			

Clear roles and responsibilities for SENCo, pastoral and emotional wellbeing, and attendance? - including communication between relevant key staff regarding EBSN.			
Are all staff familiar with EBSN? Have they received whole school training on this issue? Can they recognise potential indicators and risk factors of EBSN?			
Clear systems/ procedures are in embedded for early & effective identification & intervention of pupil non-attendance / EBSN? Are all staff familiar with these? ie. <i>who to communicate concerns with; Support &amp; Attendance Plans / reintegration plans</i>			
A member of senior staff is responsible for co-ordinating staff support and overseeing arrangements for pupils experiencing EBSN? eg. SENCo, EBSN Lead.			
Identified staff have responsibility for co-ordinating Support and Attendance Meetings and keeping pupil progress under review through timely assess, plan, do and review processes?			
General information about EBSN can be shared with parents/carers if there are concerns? Key staff can provide additional support to parents re EBSN, as needed?			
There are identified key staff in school who can provide pastoral support to children experiencing EBSN?			

Staff are aware of specific strategies and interventions to support pupils experiencing EBSN? eg. personalised support and attendance plans, identified safe base in school, regulation breaks, Key Adult, ELSA intervention etc			
Which LA support services can your school access to support pupils with EBSN? Is school familiar with how to get support from such services (referral processes)?			

Priority Actions	By Who?	By When?

**Review date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from Derbyshire Educational Psychology Service (Undated) and West Sussex Educational Psychology Service (2018)*

## **Appendix B: Identification Tool for Children / Young People at risk of Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (EBSN)**

A complex pattern of interrelated factors surrounds school non-attendance. Although research indicates several common and interlinking factors, each child / young person will have a unique situation where support will need to be personalised.

The Identification Tool (adapted from Babcock LDP Educational Psychology Service, 2016) incorporates a range of common factors at the level of the child, family and school which may contribute to an increased vulnerability of EBSN. It aims to assist schools to effectively identify CYP who may be at increased risk of EBSN and the specific factors that may contribute. Areas of need identified through the Identification Tool should be discussed with sensitivity and supported accordingly to best meet the child / young person's needs.

### ***How to use the Identification Tool:***

Schools should consider the most appropriate adult to complete the Identification Tool with parents / carers (i.e. an adult who knows the family well / has a positive relationship with the family). The Identification Tool should be completed together with parents / carers and the Classteacher; the child / young person's views should also inform this.

It is helpful to think about the statements with a clear timeframe in mind - over the past week or month is recommended. Statements within the 'Environment' section should be considered over a wider timeframe however.

Read the statements together with parents / carers and the Classteacher. Identify whether each statement has 'often', 'sometimes' or 'never' been an issue for the child / young person over the past week / month, or if this information is 'not known'. Where information is not known, further exploration is needed. Note additional comments, as necessary. High numbers of responses in the 'sometimes' and 'often' columns indicate a higher risk of EBSN.

If statements have been an issue historically (i.e. longer than a month ago), make a note of specific information, including possible factors which may have helped that situation. *Historic information may be indicative of an increased vulnerability of EBSN.*

**Identification Tool for CYP at risk of Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (EBSN)**

Name (pupil) \_\_\_\_\_ DoB \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Over the past week / month, has the pupil ...	Never / not an issue	Sometimes	Often	Not known
<b>Attendance</b>				
Demonstrated a reluctance to leave the house in the mornings				
Been late for school				
Missed lessons or truanted				
Been absent for parts of the day, or whole days				
Shown a reluctance to return to school after a school holiday or a break				
<i>Additional comments</i>				
<b>Learning</b>				
Appeared disengaged or lacked confidence with learning tasks				
Shown reluctance to contribute to class discussions				
Failed to produce homework				
Made limited progress				
Been identified as having learning needs				
Been reluctant to get changed for, or participate in PE/ games				
Experienced difficulties with specific subjects				
Experienced test or exam anxieties, or previously done so				
<i>Additional comments</i>				

Over the past week / month, has the pupil ...	Never / not an issue	Sometimes	Often	Not known
<b>Peer Relationships / Social Development</b>				
Fallen out with friends/ experienced social conflict				
Shown poor social communication skills				
Experienced bullying, or previously done so				
Appeared isolated or avoided interactions with peers				
Struggled during unstructured times (e.g. play/break times)				
<i>Additional comments</i>				
<b>Adult Relationships / Social Development</b>				
Been unwilling to talk to adults about a problem				
Shown reluctance to engage with teacher support				
Spoken negatively about teachers in the school or shown a perception that they dislike most staff				
Had confrontation/difficulties with school staff or a particular teacher				
<i>Additional comments</i>				
<b>School Belonging</b>				
Been reluctant to engage with school activities				
Distanced themselves from school activities (e.g. no longer wishes to attend school clubs as done previously)				
Expressed that they do not like school				
Shown a reluctance to attend school trips				
<i>Additional comments</i>				

Over the past week / month, has the pupil ...	Never / not an issue	Sometimes	Often	Not known
<b>Personal</b>				
Been upset or anxious to leave a parent / carer (e.g. shown signs of separation anxiety)				
Demonstrated low self-esteem or low confidence				
Appeared shy, quiet or passive				
Seemed withdrawn or shown feelings of low mood;				
Appeared anxious, tearful or tense (consider physical signs eg. sweating, fast heart rate, vocal/movement tics)				
Demonstrated aggressive outbursts				
Demonstrated behaviours which may be described as 'obsessive' or 'rigid' (e.g. overly tidy, having set routines)				
Demonstrated a pessimistic nature, been negative about themselves or negative about others				
<i>Additional comments</i>				
<b>Physical</b>				
Had a serious illness or medical condition				
Shown changes in eating habits; had rapid weight gain or loss				
Often seemed tired or experienced difficulties with sleeping				
Complained of feeling unwell, having aches / pains (e.g. sickness / headache complaints)				
<i>Additional comments</i>				

Has the pupil ...	No / not an issue	Yes / Sometimes	Yes / Often	Not known
<b>Environment</b>				
Had a recent change of Key Stage in school (i.e. this term or year)				
Had a change of school / attended more than one primary or secondary school				
Attended a small primary school				
Experienced a deterioration in family relationships				
Experienced illness or bereavement of a family member / pet				
Been exposed to / witnessed domestic abuse				
Been the victim of trauma or abuse				
Experienced a change of home circumstances (e.g. birth of new child, parent separation, house move, loss/change of parent/carer occupation)				
Family members who have negative views or experiences of school, or have avoided school				
Significant others in their life who have experienced Mental Health needs (e.g. low mood, depression, anxiety)				
Experienced practical problems in getting to school (including adult bringing the child/young person to school)				
<i>Additional comments</i>				
<b>Further comments/concerns you may wish to make about this child / young person:            (including in relation to: ethnicity, language, young carer, sexuality / LGBT...)</b>				

*Adapted from Babcock LDP Educational Psychology Service (2016).*

## Appendix C: Tools and approaches to elicit the views of the Child or Young Person



Eliciting the views of children and young people (CYP) who struggle to cope in / attend school is essential. CYP must have the opportunity to express their views and ideas about the difficulties they are experiencing and what they feel would be helpful. Identify the most appropriate adult to elicit the child's views, for example an adult who the child has a positive relationship with and trusts, so that they may share their views openly and honestly. An important part of any work with CYP experiencing EBSN will be for the adult to listen generously, show warmth and empathy. Consider what tools and approaches might be best for each child / young person; this will depend on their age, level of understanding and language, and their preferred method of expression.

Example questions and activities are outlined below. Activities should be adapted and tailored to each child / young person, as appropriate.

*Example questions might include:*

- Tell me / draw a picture to show ...your [thoughts / feelings] about school
- What would make school a really good place to come to in the morning?
- If we could change one thing about school, what would it be?
- What has helped in the past when things have been difficult? What has been helpful in managing worry?
- What would make coming to school easier?
- What would make learning easier?
- What is important to you about your future?

*Example activities might include:*

**Card sort:** provide a range of pictures / statements about school which they sort according to what is important and helpful. For example:

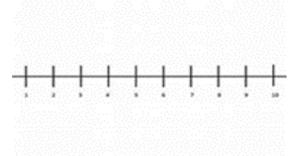
- Cards to illustrate: different aspects of the classroom or school environment. Sort into piles according to: What's ...most important? ...a bit important? ...not so important?
- Cards to illustrate: support strategies. Sort according to: what's ...most helpful? ...a bit helpful? ...not so helpful?

Ask them to select the top three to five cards from the most and least piles. Ask them to tell you more about why they have chosen these cards or if can they share examples to illustrate their views. It is helpful to tailor cards to each child and to include some 'blank' cards to add further statements should additional factors come up in conversation.

See example card sort activity on page 47.

**Scaling:** useful to take a quick measure of how a child / young person might be thinking or feeling. A valuable tool to measure baseline views as well as how things may have changed following a period of intervention. Example questions might include:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being 'I really enjoy school', where would you rate school right now? Explain why.
- How about last term / year?
- What do you like most / least about school?
- What would need to happen for you to rate X at one point higher? What would one point higher look/ feel like?
- What stops you from rating it as one point lower than this?



**Draw a picture of your 'Ideal Classroom'** (or school): helpful to explore the child's ideas about what makes a good / 'safe' classroom, drawing upon what is important to them. Ask them to draw a picture of their 'Ideal or Dream Classroom' (or school). This activity can also be done with Lego, collage / model making materials or computer design packages. The activity can be repeated by asking them to draw their 'Worst or Nightmare Classroom' (or school).

For more information, including example questions, see: 'Building the 'Ideal Classroom' with Personal Construct Psychology and Lego' by Faye Morgan-Rose (2014, updated 2015).

**Visual map of the school:** ask the child / young person to highlight 'safe zones' and 'hot spots / stress zones' on a visual map of the school using colour to rate areas where they might feel 'worry' as well as 'calm' etc. (eg. classrooms, assembly hall, toilets, canteen, corridors, support centre, library, yard).

**The Attendance Toolkit:** practical activities and resources for eliciting children's views and addressing absence. Recommended for children and young people aged 6 to 13. See: The Attendance Toolkit by Catherine Roberts (2015).

**Use TED questions:** Tell me more about that. Explain the situation to me. Describe that to me.

**Externalisation:** this is a way of separating the problematic feeling or difficulty, such as 'anxiety', from the person. Instead of talking about 'an anxious child' or 'your worrying thoughts', which locates the problem with the individual, the difficulty is externalised. 'The Anxiety' is viewed as separate from the child and as such something that can be thought about, taken charge of and better managed. Questions you might ask, include:

- 'What name would you give to 'the feeling' that you have when you think about going to school?'



- 'If it was a character, what would it look like? What would it say?' *Explore all senses. You might ask the child / young person to draw a picture of it.*
- 'How does [name i.e. The Worry] get in the way of you attending school?'
- 'When is [The Worry] in charge and when are you in charge?'

**Scale My School Day:** ask young person to scale how they feel about each part of their school day, from when they wake up in the morning to when they get home from school, and beyond. Identify situations in which they feel more / less able to manage. Present a visual scale, such as an emotions barometer or a 5/10point scale (eg. the scale from 'A 5 Could Make Me Lose control!' by Kari Dunn Buron), to represent how emotions can change. Pictorial illustrations depicting a range of feelings may also be helpful. Ask them to talk through their daily routine and to rate their emotions at each part of their day on a 5/10point scale (eg. 1 being 'not a bother' and feeling relaxed, happy or content; 10 being 'I really can't cope' and feeling a high level of stress / worry / anxiety). Plot a bar chart / graph or table to illustrate the level of emotion experienced throughout the day. It is useful to ask how they feel about specific lessons and different situations they experience in school (social, structured or unstructured). This activity helps to identify when and where the young person may require most support. A next step is to explore strategies which may help them to manage identified parts of their school day. Breathing techniques and positive coping strategies should be explored and practiced with the young person. Below is an example of a partially completed table illustrating how a student scaled their school day:

Time / Event	1 to 5: Emotion intensity rating	Additional comment / views about what happens
Wake up at 7am	4.5	Mum gets me up. I don't like being woken up in the morning; it's easier to get up in the afternoon. Go to bed about 10pm. Takes me 1/2 hr to an hour to get to sleep.
Get dressed / eat breakfast	3.5	Feel a bit better when I've fully woken up.
Leave house to go to school	4	<i>Or 2 if I'm with mum.</i>
Arrive at school	5	<i>Or 4 if I'm with mum.</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> lesson	5	I can't cope. I don't want to be here. I just think how long I've got until I can go home.
2 <sup>nd</sup> lesson	4.5	<i>Or 2.5, if mum was there.</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> lesson	4	
Break	4	I don't like the corridors at break time. It's too noisy. We're no longer allowed to go in the library.
4 <sup>th</sup> lesson	3.5	
Have lunch	3	
5 <sup>th</sup> lesson	2	This is easier for me as I know it's nearly home time.
Go home	1	I'm happy. I get to go home.

**Laddering activity:** provide a range of statements / situations which reflect a young person's daily school experiences (eg. teaching and learning, social aspects, physical environment, travelling to school, uniform etc). Ask them to sort these according to those they feel 'most worried about' and 'least / not so worried about'. Ask the young person to order the statements from the top to the bottom of the ladder if they can (from most worried about, to least worried about). This can provide a useful starting point for planning support and identifying small goals to help the young person to manage their feelings within specific situations. Address and work on situations the young person is least worried about on first. Each goal / step on the plan should be consolidated before moving onto the next. See example laddering activity on page 44. Each ladder should be personalised to the child / young person, including use of pictorials or modified with symbols as appropriate to the child's needs.



See **Voice of the Child Guidance 2017** (Cheshire West and Chester) for information and guidance about working with children and young people, including tools and approaches to elicit their views.

**EBSN Laddering Activity (example statements)**

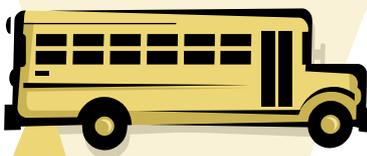
Going into a busy dining hall	Meeting a member of staff in the school car park
Going into an empty dining hall	Putting my uniform on at home
Speaking to another pupil	PE lessons
Going into a lesson (eg. Maths)	Going into a lesson (eg. English)
Seeing pupils around school	Lunch time
Going into an empty classroom	Break time
Going into the reception area / walking into the school building	Travelling to school
The smell of ...	Leaving the house
The noise in/on ...	Teachers asking me a question
Getting a question wrong	Getting something wrong
Other pupils asking me questions	Understanding what I need to do
Understanding what the teacher means	School rules, such as...
Going to the toilets	Seeing my friends in school

# Most worried about

# Least worried about

**EBSN Card Sort Activity (example pictorials)**

Below are things which some CYP feel worried about in school. Sort them into 3 piles which are true for you: least worried about; a bit worried about; most worried about. There are some blank cards to add any other worries which might come to mind.

often worried about	sometimes worried about	not worried about
 <p>Walking around school</p>	 <p>Noise</p>	 <p>Other pupils</p>
 <p>Assemblies</p>	 <p>Transport to/ from school</p>	 <p>Friends</p>
 <p>Maths</p>	 <p>Reading</p>	 <p>Writing</p>



Remembering things for school / lessons (organisation)



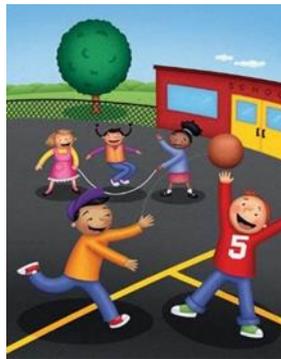
Toilets



Form time



How I feel about me



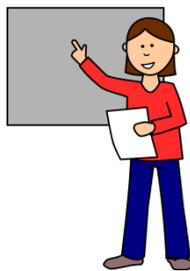
Break times



Lunchtimes



Paying for things (e.g. lunch)



Staff



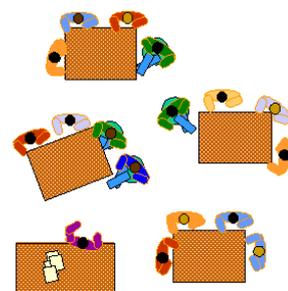
Worry about my family and pets



School uniform



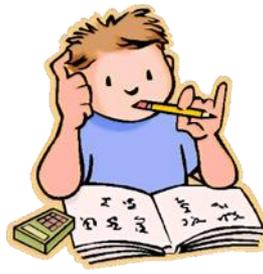
PE



Other lessons



Groupwork



Understanding the task / what  
I need to do



Bullying



Homework



Feeling different

Appendix D: Support and Attendance Plan

Child or Young Person (CYP) name:		Year:	
Date of birth:	Attendance (%):	Sessions missed	
Identification of SEN:			
Date of meeting:		Plan no.	
Who is invited?	Role (Parent, Teacher, EWO etc)	Attending (Yes/No)	

Documents completed <i>(tick if completed)</i> Date completed:	Identification Tool	Ladder / Talk Mat activity (or other) to elicit CYP views	One Page Profile with CYP
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<b>Strengths / What is working well? (include successes and positive exceptions – what was different about the times it was better / they got to school?)</b>

<b>Using information gained from the Identification Tool, Parent and CYP views, identify factors contributing to non-attendance and actions to promote school attendance:</b>	
<b>Factors keeping the CYP away from school? (push)</b> <i>eg. academic difficulties; feeling behind on work; conflict with peers; sensory overload; worries about...</i>	<b>Factors encouraging the CYP towards home? (pull)</b> <i>eg. anxiety leaving parent; inconsistent routines; difficulties with sleep; positively rewarding activities)</i>

<b>Discuss / note possible actions to promote / encourage school attendance and build skills</b> <i>(eg. promote strengths &amp; interests eg. specific curriculum area; build trusted relationship/s with 'safe Key Adult/s'; build relationships with peers; consistent routines; develop specific emotional social skills; build on what is working well etc)</i>
--

<b>Additional views and information / update since last meeting:</b>	
<i>What works well? What is working less well? What changes could make a positive difference?</i>	
CYP views (refer to tools to elicit views; review regularly)	See CYP's views attached
<b>Parent / Carer views (include any changes in circumstance since last meeting)</b>	
<b>Do you think the CYP has any additional or Special Educational Needs that have not been identified?</b>	

<b>Desired outcomes – make SMART: <i>specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound</i></b> <i>(Identify priority outcomes eg. attendance, personal / emotional wellbeing, emotional social skills...)</i>
<i>How would you like things to change in the next two / four weeks? (eg. By end of week 2, CYP will...)</i>
<i>How would you like things to change in the next term / two terms? (eg. By end of term, CYP will...)</i>

<b>Agreed actions / strategies and interventions</b> (eg. meet and greet / regular check ins, time-in card, seating plan, ELSA support, access to quiet base, break/lunch time support, emotional social skills intervention, morning / evening routines etc; consider parent support)	<b>Who will do this?</b>	<b>When?</b>
<b>Daily monitoring and communication between staff and parents / carers (eg. telephone call / email) to keep updated of the situation...</b>		

<b>Review (agreed timescale)</b>	<b>Daily communication (phone call / email) between school and parents / carers to keep updated</b>		
	<b>weekly</b>	<b>within two to four weeks</b>	<b>within four to six weeks</b>
<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b>		<b>Location:</b>	

**Signed**

Parent / Carer:

School (Support Lead / SENCo):

Key Worker:

Other/s:

Date:

***Working together will lead to better outcomes for your child.***

**EXAMPLE: Support and Attendance Plan**

<b>Child / Young Person:</b> EVA		<b>Year:</b> 6
<b>Date of birth:</b>	<b>Attendance (%):</b> 79% <b>Sessions missed</b>	
<b>Identification of SEN:</b> school identified emotional, mental health and well-being needs; literacy needs – WB ARE in Reading / Writing.		
<b>Date of meeting:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	<b>Plan no:</b> 1	
<b>Parties invited</b>	<b>Role (Parent, Teacher, EWO etc.)</b>	<b>Attending (Yes/No)</b>
Mr & Mrs Parent	Parent	Yes
Mrs SENCO	SENCO	Yes
Mr TA	TA support	Yes
Mrs FSW	FSW	Yes

<b>Documents completed</b> <i>(tick if completed)</i> <b>Date completed:</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Identification Tool</b>  24.10.16	<b>X</b>	<b>Ladder /Talk Mat activity</b>  10.10.16	<b>X</b>	<b>One Page Profile</b>  21.10.16
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<b>Strengths / What is working well? (include successes and positive exceptions – what was different about the times it was better / they got to school?)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eva has a good relationship with her TA. She works well in a small group and is usually able to ask for help in her group when she needs.</li> <li>Eva is good at drawing. She loves art.</li> <li>She responds well to praise and encouragement.</li> <li>She can be helpful and likes jobs.</li> <li>At times, Eva has been brought to school by Nan and has managed the morning transition better.</li> <li>Once in school, and feeling settled, Eva tends to engage well for the rest of the day.</li> </ul>	
<b>Using information gained from the Identification Tool, Parent and CYP views, identify factors contributing to non-attendance and actions to promote school attendance:</b>	
<b>Factors keeping the CYP away from school? (push)</b> <i>eg. academic difficulties; feeling behind on work; conflict with peers; sensory overload; worries...</i>	<b>Factors encouraging the CYP towards home? (pull)</b> <i>eg. anxiety leaving parent; inconsistent routines; difficulties with sleep; positively rewarding activities)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence / lates most often on Mondays.</li> <li>Literacy needs - additional support needed for reading and writing (WBARE). Lacks confidence in this area. Limited progress; homework is an issue.</li> <li>Sometimes falls out with peers during unstructured times. Eva likes to 'lead' in play / games. She does not seem to have a core friendship group.</li> <li>Has expressed that she does not like school.</li> <li>Sometimes complains of 'tummy ache' – noted to be in relation to independent writing tasks or after fall outs with peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often reluctant to leave the house and attend school. Eva is often upset to leave her mum.</li> <li>Eva no longer attends dance after school.</li> <li>At home, there have been changes over the past few months as Eva's mum has had a new baby (now age 6 months).</li> </ul>

**Discuss / note actions to promote / encourage school attendance and build skills** (eg. promote strengths & interests ie. specific curriculum area; build trusted relationship/s with 'safe Key Adult/s'; build relationships with peers; consistent routines; develop specific emotional social skills; build on what is working well etc)

Eva has a good relationship with TA. Could this be further developed to support morning transitions?  
 Consider positive morning activity for Eva with TA eg. drawing / mindful colouring.  
 Give lots of specific praise and encouragement – agree positive rewarding activity for increased attendance / engagement.  
 Social skills intervention / friendship group.  
 Review SEND strategies and support needed for written tasks.  
 Could Nan bring into school at least X times per week?  
 Discuss special 1:1 time for Eva and Mum at home.

**Additional views and information / update since last meeting:**

***What works well? What is working less well? What changes could make a positive difference?***

**CYP views (refer to tools to elicit views; review regularly)**

**See CYP's views attached**

**Parent / Carer views (include any changes in circumstance since last meeting)**

**Do you think the CYP has any additional or Special Educational Needs that have not been identified?** Yes. SENCo to further assess reading / spelling skills and complete dyslexia screener.

**Desired outcomes – make SMART: *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound*** (Identify priority outcomes eg. attendance, personal / emotional wellbeing, emotional social skills...)

*How would you like things to change in the next two to four weeks?*

By end of week 4:

Eva will feel *at least 1+* happier about coming into school (eg. 1+ on 10point scale). Eva will name *at least 2* things she has enjoyed about school over the last 4 weeks.

Eva will develop a positive relationship with an identified Key Adult/s.

*How would you like things to change in the next term / year?*

By end of term:

Eva will continue to feel happier about coming into school (rated on 10point scale, baseline / review). Eva will name *at least 2* things she likes about school.

Eva will feel less reluctant to leave mum, to come into school.

Eva will have increased positive social interactions with her peers.

Eva's attendance will also have improved.

<b>Agreed actions / strategies and interventions</b> (eg. meet and greet / regular check ins, time-in card, seating plan, ELSA support, access to quiet base, break/lunch time support, emotional social skills intervention, morning / evening routines etc; consider parent support)		<b>Who will do this?</b>	<b>When?</b>
Identified Key Adult/s to provide a daily meet and greet with Eva to help settle into school and prepare her for the morning / day ahead. Strategies / resources: mindful colouring to help settle / regulate; emotions 'check-in' using Mr Blob Tree; review timetable - ensure Eva feels prepared; option of a special job / choice activity which Eva enjoys.		Mrs TA	Mon – Thurs at 8.40am (20 mins) ELSA, Fri at 8.40am.
Eva to bring an agreed 'special item' (transitional object) from mum into school which she will keep in an agreed safe place. This is a concrete reminder that mum is thinking about her in school. Eva's mum will attach a special note to a little love heart locket.  Eva will keep this safe in her school bag.		Mum and Eva	Daily
Eva to attend a weekly lunch time group in school (e.g. arts and crafts etc.) to promote her social interaction skills / friendships. Eva will have an early lunch pass enabling her to have an early shared lunch with her group, followed by session activity and 'free choice'. Eva to be considered for a social skills programme next term.		ELSA to invite Eva.	Every Wednesday for the next 6 weeks.
Family Support Worker to meet with Mum to discuss further strategies at home. We discussed creating a visual schedule for Eva to follow each morning. Eva will receive a positive reward for following this (e.g. 4 stickers = extra playtime at the park / popcorn and movie / pedicure with mum).		FSW and Mum.	
<b>Review (agreed timescale)</b>	<b>Daily communication (phone call / email) between school and parents / carers to keep updated of the situation</b>		
	<b>within two to four weeks</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>within four to six weeks</b>
<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> 30.11.16 at 1.30pm		<b>Location:</b> Primary School	

**Signed**

Parent / Carer:

School (Support Lead/SENCO):

Key Worker:

Other/s:

**Date:**

***Working together will lead to better outcomes for your child***

**Support and Attendance Plan: REVIEW meeting (No.\_\_\_\_ )    Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Child / Young Person:**

**Date of birth:**

**School:**

**Attended by:**

**Apologies:**

**Purpose of meeting:** Agreed actions from the previous meeting (on DATE) were reviewed during today's support and attendance meeting (see below).

<b>Agreed actions / strategies and interventions</b>	<b>Who will do this? When?</b>	<b>Review – action completed?</b> <i>What worked well? Possible barriers?</i>
Daily monitoring and communication between school and parents, as agreed...		

**Update**

**Agreed next steps** (record below / update next Support and Attendance Plan  
(Plan no: \_\_)

1.

2.

3.

**Who will do this?**

**When?**

**Date and location of next meeting:**

**Signed**

Parent / Carer:

School (Lead/SENCO):

Key Worker:

Other/s:

**Date:**

**Copies:**

Parents:

School (SENCO / Head of Year / Key Worker):

Other services (EWO, Psychology Service):

File

## Child / Young Person Wellbeing and Support Plans

See below, example templates of child / young person support plans:

- My Wellbeing and Support Plan
- My Weekly Review: skills development

The templates are suggestions only and should be adapted accordingly to meet the needs of the child / young person being supported. The plans may be used flexibly – you may decide to use only the My Wellbeing and Support Plan, or both plans for specific purposes as required.

**My Wellbeing and Support Plan** aims to help the child / young person to consider specific strategies and support needed to help them to manage specific situations better in school. With the child / young person's consent, this plan should be shared with relevant teaching and support staff, so that they are aware of the support plan in place and strategies required. The plan should be reviewed regularly to ensure that strategies remain helpful and appropriate eg. half-termly. This plan is recommended for all CYP who may struggle to cope in school.

**My Weekly Review: skills development** provides a skills-based plan with SMART weekly goals / targets which are worked on with the child / young person, with clearly agreed strategies and support / intervention. The skills plan should be reviewed weekly with the child / young person to positively reflect upon their week and to positively review and reinforce progress. It can be used as part of a weekly check-in session with the child / young person and inform further intervention / support which may be required. This plan is optional – it is recommended to support CYP to develop specific skills which are being worked on through targeted support and intervention eg. *to increase engagement / school experience, attendance / punctuality or specific emotional and social skills (max. of two SMART goals recommended at any one time).*

*Example goals / actions to increase punctuality.*

*I will follow my night-time and morning schedules to help me to be ready for school on time.*

*I will arrive at school by \_\_\_\_\_ on at least 4/5 mornings each week (or X% success rate) – informed by current baseline data.*

*Actions: I will be in bed by \_\_\_\_\_ / set my alarm at \_\_\_\_\_ the night before, giving me enough time to follow my schedule. Listen to relaxation App if I can't sleep. My mum will also help me each morning by...*

*Example goals / actions to develop effective strategies to manage worry.*

*I will be able to name at least two effective strategies which help me to manage worry.*

*I will use these strategies to help me manage worry well on at least 60% occasions, with adult support, as needed.*

*Actions: I will practice my breathing strategies and positive self-talk daily (learned in ELSA sessions). I will speak to my Classteacher or ELSA (Key Adults) if I am feeling worried about something. I will use my 'time-in' card when needed during lessons.*

*Example goals / actions to help a young person to go into the canteen.*

*I will walk into the canteen with my buddy 5 minutes early, to buy my lunch.*

*I will try do this at least 3 times per week.*

*Actions: I will leave lessons 10 minutes early using my early lunch pass. I will meet my buddy at Mr Key Adult's office. I will rehearse my breathing / positive self-talk skills. I will eat my lunch with my buddy within the Support Base.*

<i>My Wellbeing and Support Plan</i>		Plan no.
<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>What is working well in school?</b> <i>(likes / strengths)</i> 	<b>What is not working so well in school?</b> <i>(dislikes / worries...)</i> 	
<b>Key Adult/s I can speak to in school are:</b>	<b>What else helps me to manage at school?</b> <i>(eg. breaks, 'safe space', my 'Cool Bag' activities etc.)</i>	
<b>A 'safe space' I can go to in school is:</b>	<b>Other places I feel safe and supported are:</b>	
<b>When I start to feel upset / worry, I notice these things about myself:</b>  <b>When this happens, to help me feel better, I can:</b>  <b>Adults can also help me by:</b>		

**My weekly timetable** *(Identify short term changes to times / days / locations, as appropriate)*

Until \_\_\_\_\_, my school plan includes the following changes to my school day / timetable:

- 
- 
- 
- 

*Create a personalised timetable with pupil, including daily times, sessions, breaks and locations - attach to Wellbeing and Support Plan.*

**My Weekly Review: skills development**

Name		Date	
My SMART goals 	What I will need to do? (to meet my goal) 	Who will help me and when? 	How did I get on? 
1.			
2.			
<b>Weekly review</b> (agree date)		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>What has gone well this week? What am I most proud of?</b>		<b>What have other people noticed has gone well this week?</b> (elicit from Key Adults / peers etc)	
<b>Note any worries / challenges from this week:</b>		<b>How could we address these?</b>	
<p><b>What can I work on next week?</b> <i>(discuss options for successive, small step changes – to start on Tuesday; alternatively, a consolidation week may be required)</i></p> <p><b>New goals / changes to learning plan to be agreed on</b> _____ (first day of week, ready to begin on second day in school)</p>			

**Signed**

Pupil:

School Lead/ SENCo

Key Worker:

**Date:**

**Copies:** Parents, School (Class Teacher / Head of Year / Key Worker), File

## **Appendix D: Example outcomes, targets and strategies to inform support and attendance planning**

Outlined below are key areas from the Identification Tool which may be prioritised for support / intervention within a child or young person's Support and Attendance Plan.

Example SMART targets and steps to achieve these are suggested, as well as example strategies. SMART targets should always be informed by baseline data relating to what the child / young person can do at the present time. Targets should be realistic and achievable within the time frame given, and agreed by all - parents / carers, the child / young person (as appropriate) and identified key staff.

### **Attendance / Punctuality**

#### **Desired Outcome/s:**

- improved school attendance / punctuality by X%
- reduced worry / anxiety about school (measured by child / young person and parent views)

#### **Example SMART target 1:**

*By the end of week two, Rueben will attend school for one to one sessions with Mr Key Worker in the Oasis room, for 30 to 45 minutes, on at least 3/5 occasions.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Head of Year and Key Worker to visit Rueben and parents at home, to check on wellbeing and elicit views. Discuss next steps to help Rueben return to school and agree plan.
- Key Worker to visit Rueben at home and take dog for a short dog walk. Further elicit views with Rueben – to inform session planning and support strategies.
- Key Worker to send video of self in the Oasis room, so that Rueben can see what everything looks like.
- Rueben and his parents to practice journey to school.
- Rueben and his dad to 'meet and greet' Key Worker at 10am in school reception. Go for a shared drink / snack in the Oasis room. Plan next session together.

#### **Example SMART target 2:**

*By the end of week two, I will have arrived to school by 9.10am (between 9am to 9.10am) on at least 7/10 mornings (or X% success rate).*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- I will follow my night-time and morning schedule to help me get ready for bed / school on time. This includes turning electronics off by Xtime...
- My mum will help me each evening / morning by...
- Mrs Key Adult will be at the school reception by 9am to welcome me into school (with a friendly smile!). We will go to 'Oasis' for tea and toast. We will then plan my day.

### Example strategies

- Create a night-time and morning visual schedule with child / young person and parents.
- Create a Sunday evening plan and a positive Monday morning plan with the family.
- Teach and practice strategies to help child / young person to manage the journey to school eg. positive distraction through music or discussion about a positive activity during and / or afterschool; breathing and relaxation or grounding techniques; positive affirmations and self-talk (positive mantras).
- Identified positive and trusted Key Adult for 'meet and greet' and help to prepare child / young person for day ahead / next lesson.
- Identified 'safe base' to start the day and where child / young person may access as needed (agree how).
- Morning regulatory activity to reduce emotional arousal and help self-regulate.
- Parents and child / young person to practice run journey to school in advance.
- Plan rewarding activity for achievement of cumulative step/s (eg. choice of film / favourite meal; extra play at the park / time 'playing out' with friends; tokens towards a half term reward). An appropriate, proportional reward might also be planned weekly / half termly.

### Learning

#### Desired Outcome/s:

- Improved engagement / attendance in specific lessons (or engagement with a lesson modification / appropriate alternative) by X%
- Increased progress / attainment in specific subjects
- reduced worry / anxiety about specific lessons (measured by child / young person, staff and parent views)

#### Example SMART target 1:

*By the end of week two, Amira will show improved engagement within a specific lesson / alternative activity. He will demonstrate good engagement in this lesson on at least 75% of occasions.*

#### How? (steps to achieve target)

- TA to complete card sort with Amira to identify 'most helpful / a bit helpful / least helpful' strategies within the lesson. Agree teacher and pupil strategies to be used within the lesson – visually record on a 'strategy card' or One Page Profile.
- Teacher to plan and provide two choices of activity for Amira, so that he may access a differentiated alternative to complete within the lesson, with adult support as needed (eg. skills based 1:1 or 1:2 drills, rather than a group sports activity in PE).

- Teacher / TA to prepare Amira for an identified lesson so that he knows what to expect. Discuss goals and expectations, including what 'good engagement' looks like. Agree realistic and proportional rewards for improved engagement.
- If Amira gets 'stuck', problem-solve and agree what he will do in advance.

### **Example SMART target 2:**

*By the end of term, Amira will feel happier about literacy and more confident to 'have a go' of set tasks in literacy lessons (eg. as rated on a 10 point scale).*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- TA to provide 'pre-teaching' of learned knowledge / concepts prior to the literacy lesson so that Amira can make meaningful links / connections with new teaching and learning.
- Teacher to discuss task and agree achievable goals and expectations with Amira (eg. to complete at least 4 sentences or 3 / 5 questions from green, amber or blue baskets); agree appropriate rewards for 'efforts' shown.
- Personalised visual resources to support Amira (eg. broken down tasks on a visual task list; check to ensure understanding; writing frames; tasks with clear visual end points)
- TA to deliver programme of targeted, evidenced based reading / writing intervention to address gaps in learning and increase confidence.

### **Example strategies**

- Ensure appropriate differentiation in place to increase access to the curriculum.
- Explore helpful and unhelpful strategies with child / young person to identify strategies which support them best. Agree teacher and pupil strategies to be used within the lesson – visually record on a 'strategy card' or One Page Profile.
- If the child / young person struggles to access specific tasks within a lesson, agree an alternative option for them to choose (eg. alternative options which enable the same outcomes, or a specific skill to develop).
- Agree a phased small step plan to access increasing chunks of the lesson with identified support.
- Prepare child / young person for an identified lesson so that they know what to expect.
- Provide 'pre-teaching' of learned knowledge and concepts (what they already know) so that they can make meaningful links / connections with new teaching and learning.
- Programme of targeted 'catch up' intervention / evidenced based intervention to address gaps in learning and increase confidence.

### **Relationships / Social development**

#### **Desired Outcome/s:**

- Improved social interactions and relationships with peers / adults eg. X will have developed positive and reciprocal relationships with peers
- Developed a positive, trusted relationship with identified Key Adult/s in school
- Able to talk openly and honestly to Key Adults about their thoughts / feelings and communicate when they have a worry / issue in school
- Improved engagement with teacher support

### **Example SMART target 1:**

*By the end of week two, Leo will have engaged positively in a 5minute structured turn-taking game with another peer in school on at least 3 occasions (eg. Snap, Connect 4, Top Trumps or other card game...).*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Leo will play a daily short, structured turn-taking game of choice with Mrs Key Adult.
- Leo will attend Oasis lunchtime club at least twice per week (shared lunch optional) and be positively supported to engage in a turn-taking game with Mrs Key Adult and another peer.
- Leo will be invited to choose a peer to engage in a 5minute turn-taking activity towards the end of the day, with adult support as required.

### **Example SMART target 2:**

*By the end of term, Leo will have developed a positive relationship with Mrs Key Adult; she will be able to express her thoughts and feelings about school to Mrs Key Adult, at least weekly, using appropriate visual resources.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Daily meet and greet in place with Mrs Key Adult to prepare Leo for the day ahead. This includes a fun regulation activity to lower Leo's anxieties and daily 'emotion check in' using a feelings fan or interactive emotions barometer.
- Adults to model naming and expressing of emotions, as well as problem-solving techniques.
- Weekly 'check out' with Mrs Key Adult to review Leo's week – what has gone well? what could be even better? This will be supported by visual pictures / prompts / resources to support Leo's language and communication skills. Reflect upon and celebrate all small successes.

### **Example strategies**

- Daily meet and greet with Identified Key Adult to prepare for the day ahead. This may include a positive / fun regulation activity to lower child / young person's anxieties.
- Daily 'emotions check in' using visual / pictorial emotional literacy tools eg. feelings fan, emotions barometer.

- Adults to model naming and expressing of emotions, as well as problem-solving techniques.
- Additional time and positive shared activities to build a positive and trusted relationship with identified Key Adults.
- Weekly 'check out' with identified Key Adult to review child / young person's week – what has gone well? what could be even better? Reflect upon and celebrate all small successes.
- A targeted group social skills intervention to explicitly teach and practice specific social skills; plan additional activities to practice and generalise specific skills into other contexts eg. paired / buddy monitor jobs, lunchtime clubs, co-operative learning tasks with adult support.
- Targeted programme of ELSA intervention to teach specific social and emotional skills.
- Lunch time games clubs or after school clubs which appeal to child / young person's interests.

## **School Belonging**

### **Desired Outcome/s:**

- increased engagement and participation in school activities
- attendance on school trips

### **Example SMART target 1:**

*By the end of week two, Sam will have accessed small group art / DT sessions with identified peers (for at least 20 minutes) on at least 3/4 occasions.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Prepare Sam for an art / DT activity of choice, which appeals to his interests.
- Consider pre-requisite skills needed to succeed in the activity - teach and practice as required.
- Ask Sam to invite at least two other peers (positive role models will be important); prepare and agree expectations with peers for the activity.
- Identify a quiet location for the activity, where Sam feels most comfortable.

### **Example SMART target 2:**

*By the end of term, Sam will have attended a lunch time club which appeals to his interests, on at least 4/6 occasions, with adult support.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Prepare Sam for lunch time club, including expectations and an opportunity for questions and answers.

- Provide a buddy for Sam during the club. Build additional time for Sam and his buddy to get to know each other in advance, as needed.
- Sam may help set up the lunch time club with Key Adult and buddy.
- Plan option of activity A and B for Sam during the lunch time club, as needed.

### **Example strategies**

- Consider strengths and interests which can be fully utilised and built upon for successful school experiences.
- Fully prepare child / young person for an activity / session.
- Consider pre-requisite skills needed to succeed in the activity - teach and practice as required.
- Build opportunities to develop social skills and positive friendships.
- Provide additional support and reasonable adaptations as required, to fully include the child / young person and to increase participation and engagement.

### **Personal / Physical (Emotional Health and Wellbeing)**

#### **Desired Outcome/s:**

- Increased feelings of safety/security, self-esteem and confidence in specific situations (eg. lessons, social situations etc – measured by child / young person and parent / staff views)
- Developed good emotional regulation skills, having learned effective strategies to manage worry / anxiety about school

#### **Example SMART target 1:**

*By the end of week two, Sasha will be able to leave her parents with increased confidence and feelings of safety / security to enter school with a Key Adult (less distress) on at least 3/ 5 occasions; she will feel better about attending school and name at least two things she enjoys.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Identified Key Adult to continue developing a positive and trusted relationship with Sasha through positive shared time / activity.
- Key Adult and parents to complete 'Mapping the Landscape of Your School' and / or 'My Ideal Safe School' with Sasha to elicit her views of school, including places of felt 'safety' and 'hotspots'.
- Key Adult will provide a daily 'meet and greet' at school reception at 9am to welcome Sasha into school (with a friendly smile!). They will go to 'Oasis' for tea and toast, then plan her day.

- Parents will use clear, positive and confident messages about school attendance with Sasha. A well-established morning routine will be in place and a positive activity will be planned for after school. A fun 'goodbye' ritual will be created with Sasha; she will be given a transitional comfort item to keep safe in her bag to remind her that her mum is thinking of her and how well she is doing in school.

### **Example SMART target 2:**

*By the end of term, Sasha will be able to name at least two effective strategies which help her to manage worry. She will demonstrate use of these strategies to help her manage worry at least 60% occasions, with adult support, as needed.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- A targeted programme to develop emotional regulation skills – delivered by an ELSA or Learning Mentor, on a weekly basis.
- Class Teacher to liaise with ELSA weekly to gain an update of Sasha's sessions and how best to support and reinforce learning / strategies. Input to also be given through PSHE / Circle Time, as a whole class.
- Class Teacher to have weekly check ins (10 mins) with Sasha to review her week, learning from ELSA and how best to support Sasha in using her strategies.

### **Example strategies**

- Teach and practice regulation strategies to help child / young person to manage the journey to school eg. positive distraction through music or discussion about a positive activity during and / or afterschool; breathing and relaxation or grounding techniques; positive affirmations and self-talk (positive mantras).
- Identified positive and trusted Key Adult for 'meet and greet' and help to prepare child / young person for day ahead / next lesson.
- Identified 'safe base' to start the day and where Child / Young Person may access as needed (agree how).
- Morning regulatory activity to reduce emotional arousal and help self-regulate.
- Parents and child / young person to practice run journey to school in advance.
- A transitional comfort item will be provided by parents / carers to remind child / young person that they are being kept in mind whilst at school.
- Plan rewarding activity for achievement of cumulative step/s (eg. choice of film / favourite meal; extra play at the park / time 'playing out' with friends; tokens towards half term reward). An appropriate, proportional reward might be planned weekly / half termly.
- See resource on 'Excessive Reassurance Seeking' (Anxiety Canada) to support parents / carers.
- Complete 'Mapping the Landscape of Your School' and / or 'My Ideal Safe School' with child / young person to elicit views of school, including places of felt 'safety'

where they feel calm / relaxed and 'hotspots' where they may feel increased worry / stress. Use this to inform personalised strategies.

- A targeted programme to develop specific emotional regulation skills – delivered by an ELSA or Learning Mentor. Outcomes would include: to be able to identify and discuss 'worries' and effective strategies which help them to manage worry in specific situations in school, with support.

## **Environmental**

### **Desired Outcome/s:**

- Experiences and specific needs are identified, understood and appropriately supported within the child / young person's wider environment / family context.

### **Example SMART target 1:**

*By the end of term, X / X family members will be engaging with the wider support services they need.*

How? (steps to achieve target)

- Key Adult in school to help identify family support needs and steps to accessing relevant support.
- Key Adult to maintain regular positive communication with the family.
- Key Adults to support parents / carers throughout programme of support / intervention; strategies / support will be generalised to school, as appropriate.

### **Example support services / interventions**

- TAF initiated with parental consent – additional support services / interventions may be accessed for the family / family members as a result eg. Domestic Abuse interventions for child / young person and Parent; access to Family Intervention Worker and parenting support; Mental Health Support; Young Carers Service information and support.
- See ELSA, Winston's Wish or Child Bereavement UK for loss / bereavement support and resources.
- See Parent / Carer EBSN leaflet regarding specific strategies to support their child.
- See CW&C Live Well website for local services, charities and organisations for child / young person and family members.

## **Appendix F: Advice for teachers when supporting a child / young person showing signs of EBSN**

If a child / young person (CYP) in your class is experiencing or showing signs of EBSN, speak to appropriate key staff, including those who may know the pupil best (eg. EBSN Lead, pastoral staff, SENCo, TA, ELSA or identified Key Worker). Each CYP's experience and needs will be different. Familiarise yourself with their educational profile and personalised plan (e.g. Support and Attendance Plan); it is important to know their strengths, understand what they find difficult and what helps them best. A personalised One Page Profile, completed together with the CYP, is recommended. This may be shared with all teaching and support staff as necessary. Ensure the CYP's One Page Profile is up to date and is reflective of their current views and needs. If you have any queries, seek advice from the staff member responsible for the plan or EBSN Lead within your school.

Whilst approaches will need to be personalised to each child / young person, below are general strategies to consider which may help to support a CYP who experiences or shows signs of EBSN in your class (informed by Babcock LDP Educational Psychology Service, 2016):

- Be welcoming and accepting and reassure the CYP (at an appropriate time) that they will not have to catch up on all the work missed through absence.
- Calm and positive approaches are often best; avoid confrontation and power battles. Be mindful of language used with the CYP and recognise how they may be feeling (overwhelmed, emotionally dysregulated, nervous, fearful / anxious).
- Authoritarian management styles often increase anxiety. Instead, focus on strategies to establish positive interactions and a positive relationship with the CYP.
- Take time to get to know and learn about the CYP: what are their strengths and interests? What matters to them most? What are their needs and how do they like to be supported?
- Prepare work for CYP when not in lesson and be sure to mark and return the work with positive feedback on a regular basis. This shows that the work the pupil completes is being valued.
- Ensure a sense of normality and consistency; avoid asking where the child has been.
- Performance-orientated classrooms can increase anxiety by creating a sense of pressure and expectation. Be aware of this and notice how the CYP may be feeling.
- If the CYP has been absent, it may be appropriate to talk to the class and tell all pupils not to ask the CYP where they have been. However, check with the person co-ordinating the support and attendance plan before doing this. A Key Adult should also gain the CYP's views on this.
- Be aware of signs of anxiety and be responsive to this, with flexibility as needed. Remember, anxiety is usually underlying the child who may present as 'uncompliant' or 'aggressive'. Talk to the CYP about a plan if necessary, e.g. regulation breaks;

agreed sign / signal when feeling overwhelmed / in need of a break; seating arrangements etc.

- Organise a positive focus / settling activity for the CYP which they can do when they first arrive at school to help them to settle / regulate eg. mindful colouring; monitor / special helper job; tea and toast with Key Adult / breakfast club; preferred activity which helps them to calm / regulate.
- Consider tools / resources which may support the CYP eg. The Incredible 5 Point Scale, my emotions toolkit / 'Cool Box', identified 'safe base' for regulation, Zones of Regulation etc.
- Consider a buddy system if appropriate and pair with a suitable pupil in any group situation.
- Use praise and reward but not excessively - consider how the CYP prefers to receive positive recognition.
- Work needs to be achievable and appropriately differentiated. Worry / anxiety can have a dramatic impact on performance, affecting a CYP's focus/ concentration and speed of work; this needs to be taken into consideration. The following strategies may benefit the CYP: breaking instructions and tasks down into smaller chunks; additional checks to ensure understanding; clear visual models; additional visual / concrete supports eg. task list, visual resource. Discuss strategies with SENCo as needed.
- Maintain positive links and regular communication with parents/ carers to share important information and ensure a positive and consistent approach in working together.

*See Appendix C for tools and activities to elicit the CYP's views.*

*See Appendix G: signposting, information and resources.*

## Appendix G: Signposting, information and resources

*For school staff, parents / carers, other adults*

**MindEd** - [www.minded.org.uk/](http://www.minded.org.uk/)



Free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for adults: advice, support and e-learning modules. See links for 'Families' and 'Professionals and Volunteers' and search chosen topics. Modules include: 'Avoiding School and School Isolation', 'Worry and Anxiety Matter'. [mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people](http://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people) Includes interactive learning modules, easy read documents (downloadable pdf) and videos, such as:

- Refusal To Go To School → Won't go to school
- Talking to my Child
- Top Parenting Tips (includes information on helping children to understand their feelings and how to respond to anxiety...)
- Transitions During Education

**The National Autistic Society** – [www.autism.org.uk/](http://www.autism.org.uk/)



Information, support and resources for parents / carers, staff and interested adults. See resources to help overcome barriers to the inclusion of children and young people with Autism, such as: 'School stress and anxiety – how it can lead to school refusal and impact upon family life' available here:

[aet-how-school-stress-can-lead-to-school-refusal-and-impact-on-family-li.pdf](http://aet-how-school-stress-can-lead-to-school-refusal-and-impact-on-family-li.pdf) ([camhsdorset.org](http://camhsdorset.org))

**Anxiety Canada** - [www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com)



Useful information, resources and advice for adults, including self-help resources for teens. See: '12 Step Back to School Checklist for parents' to help minimise student anxiety on the first day.

**Winston's Wish** - [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

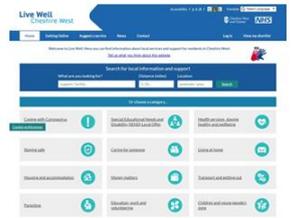


Information and guidance to help children and young people cope with their grief. Free and confidential helpline.

**Young Minds** – [youngminds.org.uk/](http://youngminds.org.uk/)



UK's leading charity championing the well-being and mental health of young people. Support for parents and professionals, as well as young people. Includes information for young people on 'Looking After Yourself', blogs and a parents helpline.



**Live Well Cheshire West:** [www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)  
Information and services for adults and children in West Cheshire. Includes links to Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) for parents / carers.  
[www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass/north-west/cheshire-west-chester/](http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass/north-west/cheshire-west-chester/)

**Our Way of Working - [Our Way of Working – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](http://westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk)**

Developing a consistent approach to working with families using shared language, frameworks and resources informed by trauma informed practice and motivational interviewing. Also see Covid19 Recovery Tool for advice and information for adults and children on a range of topics to support health and wellbeing:

[Covid-19 Recovery Model: Recognise, Respond, Link – West Cheshire Children's Trust \(westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk\)](http://westcheshirechildrenstrust.co.uk)

### **For Young People**

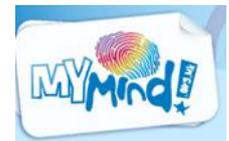


**Young Minds – [youngminds.org.uk/](http://youngminds.org.uk/)**

*Information as above.* Support for young people. Includes information on 'Looking After Yourself' and blogs.

Young Minds Vs - [www.youngmindsvs.org.uk/about\\_youngminds\\_vs](http://www.youngmindsvs.org.uk/about_youngminds_vs)

Young Minds Vs Fight the pressure. Includes topics on: school stress, bullying and getting help. Access to social media links and blogs.



**My Mind - [www.mymind.org.uk/](http://www.mymind.org.uk/)**

Local CAMHS website. Information and guidance for children and young people, parents / carers and professionals. Access practical resources and tools to help support children's emotional health and well-being. The Box is a self-help section with practical activities and tools for children and young people.

**My Well-being! - [www.startingwell.org.uk/](http://www.startingwell.org.uk/)**



Information and support for children and young people's health and well-being. Young people can chat online to a member of the My Well-being Online Team for further support.

**Kooth - [kooth.com/](http://kooth.com/)**



Free, confidential online support for young people. Children and young people can access information on topics such as bullying or loss, and can also chat to an online counsellor.

**Anxiety Canada in youth - [Anxiety in Youth - Anxiety Canada](http://Anxiety in Youth - Anxiety Canada)**



Information and self-help resources for young people, including videos and personal stories.

**Mood Juice** - [www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk)

Information and advice to those experiencing troublesome thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Range of self-help tools and guides eg. Anxiety, Depression, Bereavement, Sleep Problems, Stress - better for older teens.

Sleep

**NHS choices**

Helpful information on sleep hygiene; useful for primary aged children and younger high school students: [www.cwpcamhscentre.mymind.org.uk/mysleep-guide](http://www.cwpcamhscentre.mymind.org.uk/mysleep-guide) Tips for Teenagers: NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/sleep-tips-for-teenagers/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/sleep-tips-for-teenagers/)

## Apps

**Think Ninja** – tips and strategies to help teens cope with anxiety and low mood.



**MindShift™** - designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety.

**Headspace** – mindfulness tool; listen to guided mindfulness meditations.



**SmilingMind** – mindfulness tool; separated for age-appropriate needs.



**SAM: Selfhelp for Anxiety Management** – self-help information and activities, including an anxiety tracker. Suitable for young people.



**Chill Panda** – calming activities; suitable for primary aged children. For information about the App, see: [chillpanda.co.uk/](http://chillpanda.co.uk/)

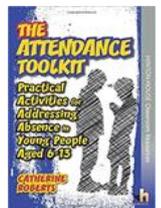


**Sitting Still** - practice mindfulness to help children to manage worry.



**Publications / documents** – aimed at different ages / developmental stages.

Roberts, C (2015). *The Attendance Toolkit: Practical Activities for Addressing Absence in Young People aged 6 to 13*. Buckingham: Hinton House Publishers.



Ironside, V. (2011). *The Huge Bag of Worries*. London: Hachette Children's Group.

Cook, J (2012). *Wilma Jean the Worry Machine*. Tennessee: National Center for Youth Issues.

Al-Ghani, K. (2012). *The Panicosaurus: Managing Anxiety in Children Including Those with Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Collins-Donnelly, K. (2014). *Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook for Children aged 5 – 9*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.



Collins-Donnelly, K. (2013). *Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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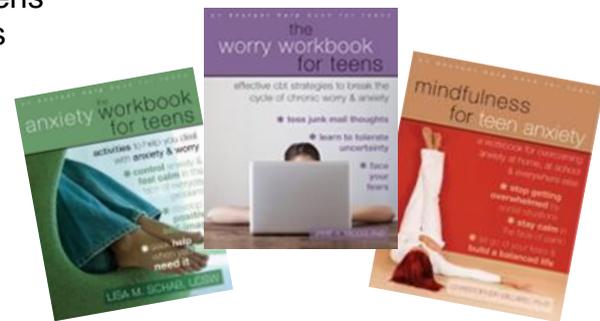
Reading Well - books on subscription.

Visit your local library for shelf help books - providing advice and information for young people on topics such as anxiety, bullying and exams.

See: [reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-s-mental-health](http://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-s-mental-health)

Series of **instant help workbooks for teens**, by **New Harbinger Publications**, which include:

- the relaxation and stress reduction workbook for teens
  - the think confident, be confident workbook for teens
  - the anxiety workbook for teens
  - the worry workbook for teens
  - mindfulness for teen anxiety
  - conquer negative thinking for teens
  - the shyness and social anxiety workbook for teens
- .... and many more.



See: [www.newharbinger.com/self\\_help/category/all](http://www.newharbinger.com/self_help/category/all)

### Example strategies / skills for targeted work with children / young people

It is important to assess each child / young person's emotional literacy skills, including their understanding of emotions and emotional regulation skills (eg. the skills / tools they have to manage worry / anxiety, or the situations in which worry / anxiety may be present). Assessment should inform targeted support and intervention for the child / young person, as appropriate for their stage of development. Examples of strategies / skills when working with children / young people may include:

- Identification of Worry / Anxiety and the times and places it is around.
- Communicating feelings and thoughts with 'safe' Key Adults.
- Practising relaxation and breathing techniques to help relax / calm.
- Practising positive self-talk and affirmations.
- Create positive coping cards.
- Practice positive visualisation.
- Listening to set music (distraction / relaxation).
- Self-monitoring and management.



- Exploring unhelpful / helpful thinking patterns through cognitive behavioural activities: identification of 'thinking traps'; finding the evidence for negative thoughts; replacing unhelpful thoughts with more balanced and healthy thinking etc.

### **Training and support for Schools**

Mental Health First Aid: Two Day / One Day – delivered by Mental Health First Aid England. See [Youth · MHFA England](#) – to book a course.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training – delivered by the Child & Educational Psychology Service. Book online at: [eCWIP for Education - Cheshire West Industry Professionals](#) or contact your link CEP, for further information.

The Child & Educational Psychology Service offer bespoke training packages for your school. Examples include: Promoting Emotional Mental Health and Well-being; Building Resiliency. Contact your link CEP to discuss your training needs.

The Autism Service delivers a range of training courses for mainstream schools e.g. Building a Young Person's Transition Toolkit; Autism and Girls. Please see the Autism Service Training Directory for more information, including how to apply.

CAMHS Consultation Service. Face to face or telephone consultations for school staff and professionals.

If in Chester, Ellesmere Port and surrounding areas, call: 01244 393 200.

If in Winsford, Northwich and surrounding areas, call: 01606 555 240.



## Appendix H: Strategies used by a Year 11 Student who lives with Anxiety

*“The Anxiety hasn’t gone away but I have learnt to control it so that it doesn’t take over my life.”*

A Year 11 student who lives with anxiety, yet has managed to stay in school and push through his battles, has shared some of his coping strategies below to help and encourage other young people:

- Try to start the day positively – look at the day as being a good day rather than a bad day
- Having mints during panic attacks. This helps to take your mind off the worries
- Positive thinking – think about some of your favourite memories such as: holidays, friends, activities you enjoy
- Sending messages or having a phone conversation with your family during break times
- Listening to music that helps you to become calm
- You have to be in school – try to do your best, work hard and get through the day. Don’t miss out on your education
- Counting down the hours until home time. They always get less and less as the day goes on
- Break the day into sections e.g. “I have completed 2 lessons, that means I only have 3 left”
- Breathing Exercises – focus on your breathing and take deep breaths
- Humour – think of something that makes you laugh so you are thinking about something different
- Try and talk to your friends about how you feel. You may not be alone with your anxiety
- Exercise more. Go for a walk or get involved in a physical activity. It produces happy chemicals in your brain
- Don’t be afraid but include yourself in more conversations with others. The day will go quicker and you will find yourself focusing on other things.

**Appendix I: Artwork by a Year 6 pupil experiencing anxiety in school**

Creative activities such as art, music and poetry, can be a powerful way of helping children and young people to express how they are feeling.

A Year 6 pupil, from a local primary school in Winsford, was happy to share his artwork within this guidance. This was part of a bigger programme of work he completed with his Key Adult / ELSA in school to help him to express his different feelings and to learn strategies to manage these feelings both in school and at home.



*"Fear, panic, loss of breath, sick, dizzy" - "not knowing what is coming next"; "not looking forward to what is next"*

*"Sad, alone, unhappy" (feeling sad crossed over with feeling worry / fear)*



*"Fear and anger"  
"so mad, there are no words"*



*"Joy, relaxed, calm relief"  
"Happy...talking to people, my food"*



## **Appendix J: Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (ESBN):** **Information for Parents**

Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (ESBN) is a term used to describe the needs of children and young people who have difficulty attending school due to high levels of worry or anxiety. This can often result in prolonged absence from school.

Children may report feeling unwell (e.g. stomach-ache or nausea etc.) and may express negative thoughts such as 'I can't cope' or 'I can't do it'. Naturally, children will try to avoid these uncomfortable feelings by not going to school. Whilst this feels better for a short time, it makes it harder to face up to going to school the next day, and in the longer term.

*The more a child/young person stays off school, the more worried they will usually feel about going.*

You have been given this leaflet as there are signs that your child may be struggling to attend school / experiencing ESNB. Your role is important in helping your child to overcome their current difficulties and to help get them back to regular school attendance. See advice and strategies below.

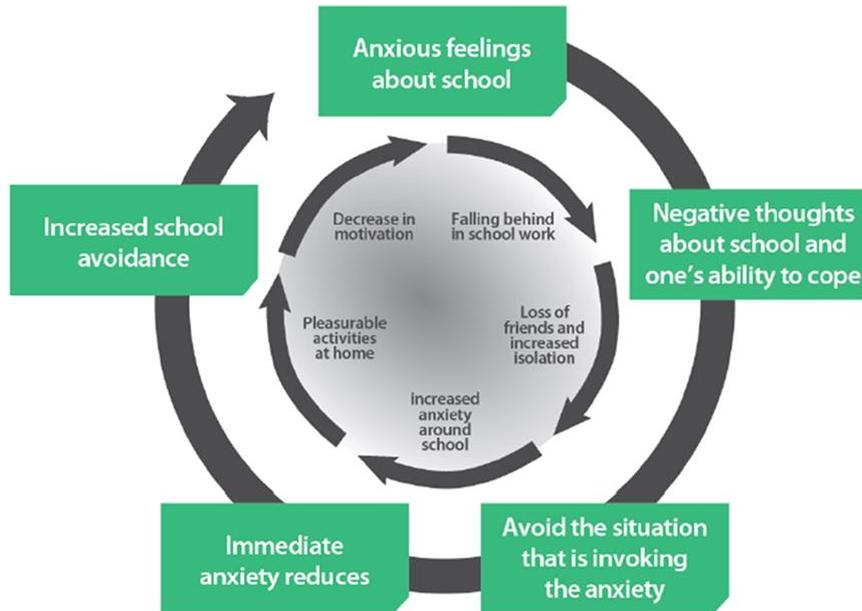
*Good school attendance is associated with more positive educational outcomes, career prospects and general life opportunities.*

3 key things to keep in mind:

- 1. Understanding anxiety and why attending school may feel difficult:** anxiety is the feeling of fear or panic. It is a normal response to a perceived or real threat. Everyone will feel worried or anxious at some point in their life. Children may worry about a school trip, exam or starting a new class. Whilst a certain level of worry is normal, excessive worrying or anxiety can become a problem, especially when it stops children from doing what they want or need to do. Signs of anxiety may include: crying, refusing (e.g. to get out of bed, to get dressed, to leave the house), sleep difficulties, negative thinking and worry about school-related issues, becoming withdrawn (e.g. not speaking, staying in their room), reports of feeling unwell (e.g. headaches, stomach-aches, "I feel sick", "My heart is racing") but no underlying medical cause. Learning to manage worry is part of growing up. Help your child to share their worries and discuss ways to address these together with school.
- 2. Promote a positive coping approach:** focus on what's going well, aspects of school they enjoy and skills they are learning to get better at e.g. "You managed it yesterday. You can do it today. It will get easier".
- 3. Keep attending school / a small steps approach (facilitate exposure):** generally, the longer the period of absence from school, the harder it can be to return. Additional worries can also occur, such as falling behind in schoolwork, changes in friendships, reduced self-esteem and

self-belief. It is important to help your child to address any worries as soon as possible and to try and keep going to school.

The diagram below shows how EBSN behaviours can develop:



A small steps approach can help your child to gradually build back up to full attendance with good support and reasonable school adjustments. This may include sitting in the car in the car park for X minutes, going into the building and sitting in a quiet room, meeting a Key Adult your child feels 'safe' with for a fun activity, attending a sports activity or some favourite lessons.

### What can I do?

- Ensure a united and consistent approach – all family members to use the same approach.
- Maintain consistent routines and good organisation at home - everyone gets anxious when they're rushing or if you can't find things etc. Ensure that your child:
  - gets to bed at a reasonable time
  - has the necessary clothes and equipment ready for school the night before
  - gets up in good time
  - washes, dresses for school and eats breakfast
  - is ready by the time they ought to leave home for school.

Encourage your child to take responsibility for this routine. For example, give them an alarm clock or a visual morning schedule.

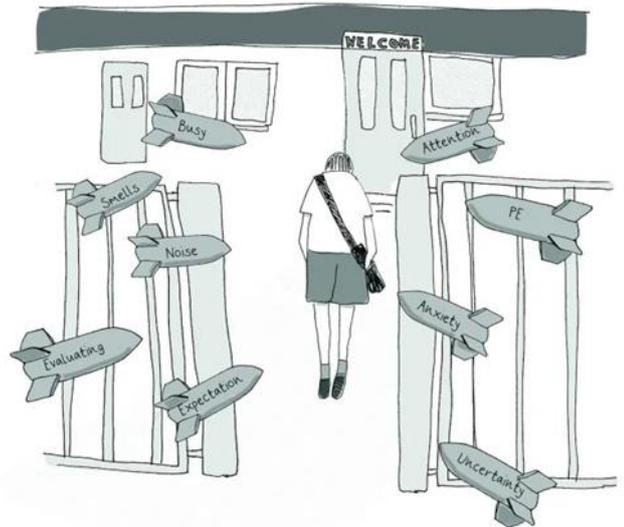
- Be supportive yet firm. If your child says they feel unwell and you think they are well enough to attend school, show that you understand how they might be feeling but remain firm that they need to attend school every day. School will monitor your child and contact you if needed.

- Keep calm and model confidence: if you seem worried or frustrated, your child will pick up on this. *Be like a swan – gliding along serenely on the surface (even though your feet are paddling away furiously under the water).*
- Give clear and positive messages about school attendance:

Vague messages about school attendance	Clear messages about school attendance
<p>“Are you going to school today?”</p> <p>“Don’t worry. There’s nothing to be scared of. It will be okay.”</p> <p>“Why are you doing this? You’re upsetting the whole family.”</p> <p>“Dad and I don’t know what to do if you won’t go.”</p> <p>“If you can’t get there today, it’s only going to be harder tomorrow.”</p>	<p>“I’ve asked you already. It’s time to get up for school.”</p> <p>“Dad and I will do whatever we have to in order to get you to school.”</p> <p>“We cannot allow you to remain at home.”</p> <p>“I know this is hard, but it has to happen. You have to go to school.”</p> <p>“Today after school, we can go ... (something they like, e.g. go and play in the park, go and get pizza for dinner, play with....).”</p> <p>“You have five minutes to get dressed for school.”</p> <p>“I can see that you feel upset about going to school, but you still have to go. Tell me what you are worried about, so we can talk about it.”</p>

- Focus on positive aspects: help your child to reflect upon the things that they enjoy and that go well. Ask: ‘what are you most looking forward to in school today?’; ‘tell me three things that were good in school today.’
- Try different ways of travelling to school e.g. go in the car instead of walking, riding a bike instead of using the bus, a different family member escorting to school. Also consider asking one of your child’s friends to call for them each morning to travel to school together. Use distraction techniques en route e.g. playing a game such as I-Spy or listening to favourite music.
- Help your child to talk about their worries and the things that they find hard, and to think of ways to address these (problem-solve). For example, “If (the worst) happens, what could you do?” or “Let’s think of some ways you could handle that situation.” This gives an opportunity to coach your child on how to manage specific situations.
- Positively reward facing feared situations: lots of praise for ‘facing the fear and doing it anyway’.
- Maintain regular communication with school: have a key person who you can contact (emails, texts or phone calls) so that both school and home are aware of what’s going on. Also encourage your child to keep in touch with friends and school during periods of non-attendance e.g. ask them to email their work to their Classteacher.

- Take your child to see your doctor to eliminate the possibility of medical illness. Tell the school as soon as you suspect that stomach-aches or headaches may be symptoms of worry / anxiety rather than an underlying medical issue.
- If your child is not attending school, keep the same routines in place as if he/she were attending e.g same getting up time, put on and wear school uniform during the day. Refuse access to TV, mobile telephone, computer games or other home entertainment until after the learning day is over. Do encourage your child to socialise with friends after school hours.
- Meet with school to discuss your child's wellbeing and attendance, and factors affecting your child's ability to cope. Discuss what might help make your child feel safe and less worried in school. Agree a support plan (eg. Support and Attendance Plan) including actions at home and at school that may help (eg. *agreed morning routine, a parent joining their child at breakfast club, a daily 'meet and greet' or a weekly session with a learning mentor; if not in school, no access to entertainment devices during the school day*). The support plan should be regularly reviewed (initially fortnightly) to check that all steps are having a positive impact.
- Worries and anxieties about school are not uncommon. You are not on your own. There are professionals who can help you and it will get better with time.



**The long-term goal is for your child to return to school full time. The goal will probably be achieved by a series of small steps. At times it may feel like two steps forward and one step back. Take heart that you are still moving forward, in the right direction.**

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