

Noticing the signs of Emotionally Based School Avoidance



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- Is your child being overwhelmed by their emotions which is making it very difficult to attend school?
- Has your child sometimes found it difficult to attend, has a lot of time off, or is not going to school at all?
- Does your child have lots of tummy aches, headaches or other signs that might show they are anxious?



- Has your child experienced upsetting or difficult life events, for example a loss or a change that is making it harder for them to go to school?
- Is your child attending school but is really struggling: maybe they are finding it hard to separate from you or have worries that they can't put their finger on?



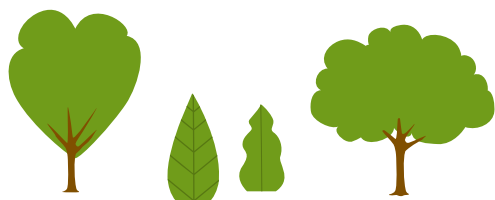
You are not alone...

To find support for you and your child, contact:

School SENDCO

Wakefield Parent/Carer Forum -

www.wakefieldparentcarers.co.uk





Be kind to yourself

Remember you are doing the best you can. Accept yourself in the moment and give yourself some self-compassion - you cannot always get it right and it's okay to take some time out.

Time for you

It's important to take a little time and space to look after yourself. Take some time to do something that you enjoy and recharge your batteries.



Regulate your emotions

Take the time you need to find your calm and regulate your emotions. You cannot support a child who is unregulated and stressed if you are too.

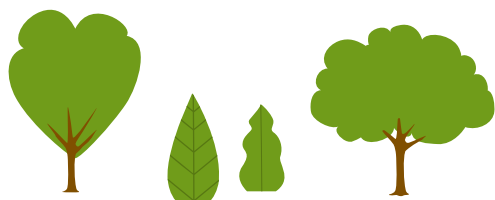
Stop and breathe

When things are difficult, just stop and observe your breathing for a few moments. Put your hand on your heart and just pause.



Look for the positives

Identify 3 positives at the end of each day - what is working well? Neutralise any negative thoughts by re-framing them into more effective ones.





Soothe

Soothe and calm your child when they are distressed using calming phrases to reassure your child that they are safe. “I am here, I’ve got you” or “It’s okay, you’re safe and I’m going to stay with you.”

Understand

Make sure your child knows that you understand how they are feeling. Explain that you know that it is hard for them now, but things will get better in time.



Positive about school

Encourage your child to focus on the positive aspects of school instead of negatives. For example, friends, favourite lessons and teacher, activities they enjoy.

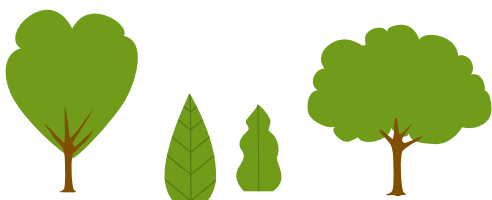
Learning time

Set aside time for learning within usual school hours. This will keep them in the habit of learning and will make it easier for them when they are back in school.



Good relationship with school

Keep a good relationship with school wherever possible with regular communication and updates. Try and keep a positive united front, only raising any concerns in private with the school.





A child-centred plan

Work together with school to create a plan to help your child return back to school. Ensure that your child's views are central to the plan and that everyone has agreed the best way forward.



A gentle approach

Focus on having small manageable steps for your child to start accessing school again. Celebrate and consolidate each small step before expecting more. Don't worry if there are hiccups along the way.

Be aware of triggers

Talk to your child about things that trigger them in school and agree a strategy for your child to let the school staff know they are struggling.

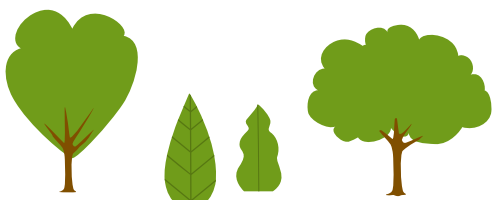


Key person

Agree a key person to work with your child and a safe space where your child can go when they are feeling overwhelmed. This will help to regulate their emotions and be ready to learn.

School evening/morning plans

Evenings and mornings before school can often be hard. Think about a positive routine that can start on an evening. Maybe plan something for your child to enjoy when they come home from school.





Mindfulness

Simple mindful activities have been shown to help us feel calmer, find focus, accept kindness and let go of worries.

Practise breathing

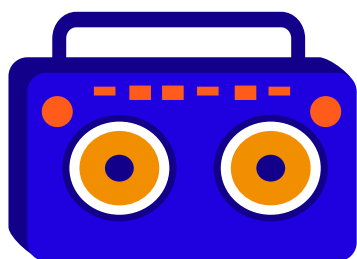
Breathing is an effective technique for reducing stress and anxiety quickly. Taking long, deep breaths helps calm our mind and give us something to focus on. Have a go at five finger breathing together.



Grounding

Sit comfortably and try to notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can feel
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 deep breath

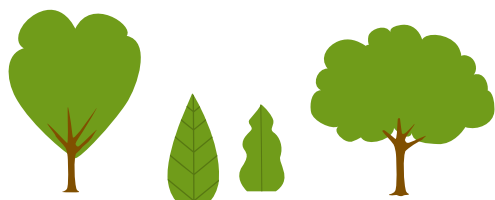


Listening to music

Try playing your child's favourite music at home. It can lower blood pressure and heart rate as well as reduce stress hormones.

Three good things

Help your child to identify 3 positives at the end of each day. Try to make up a good news book and revisit it at the start of the next day.





Manage big feelings together

Take a minute to support your child to manage their big feelings. Co-regulating with your child helps them to feel calm and safe. Show them how you do it - MIRROR ME - copy my breathing.



Acknowledge their worries or concerns

Listen to and validate your child's thoughts, feelings and worries. Help them understand that it is normal for us all to feel anxious at times and reassure that you will help them get through this.

Teach anxiety coping strategies

Help your child to develop a toolbox of coping strategies for their anxiety such as grounding, deep breathing and visualisation. Practise these together.

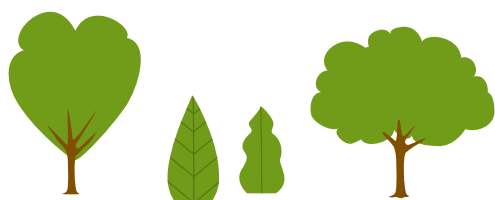
Be curious

Don't aim to fix your child but walk alongside with childlike curiosity. It's okay not to have all the answers. Try to find ways to problem solve together.



Time to talk

Setting regular time aside to check in and talk about feelings can reduce worries building up. For example get in the habit of having a little chat at the same time each day, just before bed.





Physical health

Being active, eating a nutritious diet and getting a good night's sleep help us to have more energy and feel more in control to manage big feelings.

Exercise regularly together

Physical activity releases natural feel good chemicals that can reduce stress and anxiety. It can also help you to sleep at night.

Routine

Creating calming repetitive routines and rituals can really help to ease your child's anxieties. Try creating a visual timetable to organise your day.



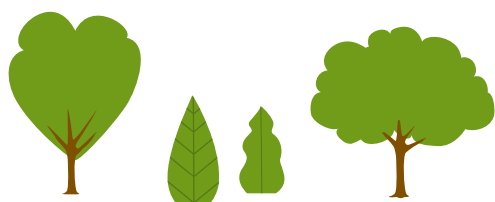
Gratitude journal

Try keeping a family gratitude journal. Writing down something you are grateful for together each day can help to relieve stress by focussing on and sharing positives.



Family time

Spending quality time together can bring your family closer. Spend time outside, play board games, get dancing or watch a movie. Anything that is fun and makes you all feel good.



Worries and concerns regarding my child's attendance difficulties



When attending a meeting to support your child or young person, it can be helpful to record your EBSA concerns in one place...

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SCHOOL

HOME AND FAMILY

SOMETHING ELSE

HEALTH

FRIENDSHIPS





Before you have a meeting with school, have a think about your child's difficulties attending school.

MY CHILD'S BEHAVIOURS AND DIFFICULTIES AT HOME...

MY CHILD IS MORE ANXIOUS IN SCHOOL WHEN...

MY CHILD IS LESS ANXIOUS IN SCHOOL WHEN...

THE IMPACT OF EBSA ON ME AND MY FAMILY...

