



## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO EMOTION BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE (EBSA)

School-phobia, school related anxiety or 'school-refusal' is when a young person feels so fearful or anxious about school that they are unable to attend. This school refusal is often referred to as emotion-based school avoidance (EBSA).

It is difficult to definitively say what causes EBSA as each young person's experiences will differ. However, common causes include:

- Anxiety around making friends
- Academic Disorganization
- Social Anxiety
- Academic Anxiety
- External causes (e.g. bereavement, loss, family divorce, trauma)
- Academic Pressure
- Unrecognized/undiagnosed SEN

One of the most important steps in supporting your child struggling with EBSA is **understanding what is causing your child anxiety**. Below are a broad range of strategies that parents may find useful:

- Support your child by creating a morning routine or timetable that feels most achievable to them
- Offer your child the opportunity to take something from home into school that makes them feel comforted
- Recognize and celebrate small achievements
- Try to take the pressure off around common school anxieties (e.g.: homework)
- Keep the focus on trying and not achieving
- Provide your child with a flexible start to the day – (e.g.: arriving at first break so that they can see some friends, play and benefit from some outside time before continuing with their day)
- Assist your child in turning their timetable into a visual timetable
- Encourage your child to join a school sport, club or society that can provide them with a place in which they feel they belong and are valued

School Anxiety and Refusal (2021)

For child-centered, situation specific support and strategies for children with emotional based school avoidance anxiety, please get in touch with our counsellor, Emily - [e.duvill-roniger@wordsfirst.uk](mailto:e.duvill-roniger@wordsfirst.uk) OR Words First - [info@wordsfirst.uk](mailto:info@wordsfirst.uk)