EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE:

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS, SETTINGS AND SUPPORT AGENCIES WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

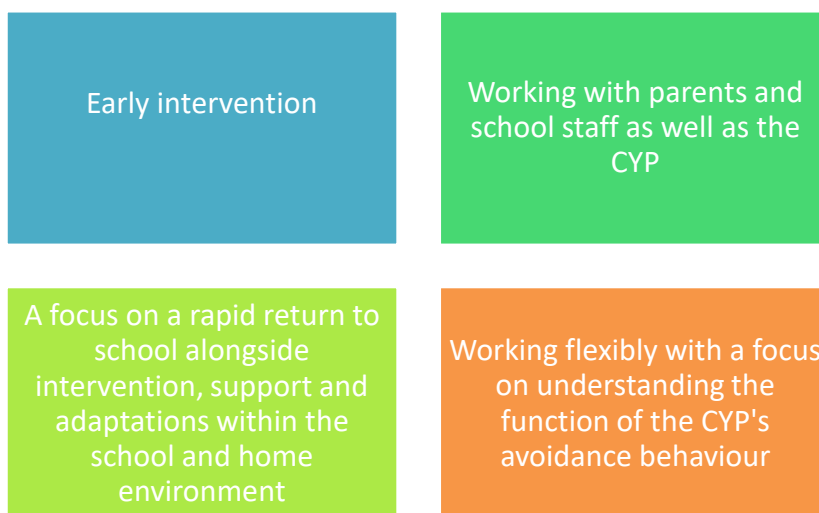**Wakefield Educational Psychology Service**

Contents

Introduction

Wakefield Educational Psychology Service has produced this guidance by drawing on the current evidence base and information from the literature and from other Educational Psychology Services. In particular, we would like to acknowledge West Sussex Educational Psychology Service, Sheffield Educational Psychology Service alongside Solar and the Community Educational Psychology Service from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. In the writing of this package we have drawn from their work; referencing as "the Solihull or West Sussex guide". The full references can be found at the end.

This document has been written for school staff and other professionals to provide information and guidance on how to support children, young people and their families experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). It also contains leaflets for children and young people (CYP) and parent carers.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term sometimes used to describe some children and young people who do not attend school due to emotional factors. The difficulties associated with school non-attendance are far-reaching and can have a negative impact on long-term outcomes including: reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and reduced employment opportunities (Gregory & Purcell, 2014; Hughes et al, 2010; Lyon & Cotler, 2007). Progress towards a successful reintegration can be slow and at times may feel like you take one step forward and two steps back.

Although EBSA is a complex issue, let's remain hopeful as positive outcomes are achievable. Staying curious, feeling confident to try a different approach, remembering that no one is to blame for the situation along with a culture that promotes staff and student well-being, can all support a successful reintegration. Many of the factors associated with positive outcomes will already be present within your school's existing good practice and include:

Early intervention	Working with parents and school staff as well as the CYP
A focus on a rapid return to school alongside intervention, support and adaptations within the school and home environment	Working flexibly with a focus on understanding the function of the CYP's avoidance behaviour

Factors associated with positive outcomes for successful reintegration (Baker & Bishop, 2015)

This guidance has been divided into six sections. The first section provides background information and some suggestions for whole school approaches which can support the wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) and staff as well as reducing EBSA. The following four sections link to each part of the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle.

As part of **Assess**, you will find information on EBSA signs and risk factors, school push and pull factors and some ideas about how to gather information to build a rich picture of the situation.

Under **Plan,** there are suggestions about how you can bring together all the information gathered and use it to inform an action plan and a support plan.

The **Do** strand of the guidance describes strategies and interventions that can be effective in supporting the reintegration of a CYP who is experiencing difficulties coming to school.

Advice on using assessment measures to monitor the progress of an intervention and adjust the plan for next steps is featured in the **Review** section.

The package finishes with signposting to **resources** that can support you in this process.

Throughout the document, reference is made to several appendices. The appendices include additional information and tools that can be used and tailored to the needs of your school, CYP and situation. For example, Appendix 11a gives a summary of approaches underpinned by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy principles that could be used with a CYP who is experiencing EBSA. You may also want to discuss some of these suggestions in more depth with your school's Educational Psychologist, who will be able provide further support and guidance.

The approaches, tools and templates suggested in this guidance are not an exhaustive list but are intended for you to explore, consider, draw upon and adapt alongside your existing good practice.

What is EBSA?

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) also known as school refusal, Emotional Based School Refusal (EBSR) or Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA), can be used to describe children and young people who do not attend school due to emotional factors. This absence can often lead to long periods of time away from school. EBSA is different from absence for physical illness and truancy. Most young people experiencing EBSA can be highly anxious and show significant distress about attending school. In many instances, they remain engaged with education and want to return to school even though they feel unable to do so. Often, the young person's anxiety will reduce during weekends or school holidays.

Prevalence of EBSA

Rates of school refusal are generally estimated to be between 1 and 2% of the overall school population (Gulliford & Miller, 2015). However, as the emotional component of EBSA is difficult to measure, an accurate picture of the prevalence of EBSA nationally is not known but is likely to be much higher. Current research indicates that there are no significant links between EBSA and gender, with an equal prevalence of males and females experiencing difficulties (Ingles et al, 2015; Kearney, 2008). In addition, there does not appear to be a link between EBSA and socioeconomic status (King & Bernstein, 2001). The literature suggests that EBSA prevalence is higher amongst secondary-aged students (Elliott, 1999; Gulliford & Miller, 2015) with rises around periods of transition between school phases (King & Bernstein, 2001). Onset of emotionally based school avoidance may be sudden or gradual.

Causes of EBSA

EBSA is a complex issue and it is likely that several factors, rather than one single cause, contribute to a young person finding attending school difficult. Each child and situation is unique. Some factors are complex and interlinked. For example they might include the young person, the family and the school environment (Thambirajah et al 2008).

We also understand that the onset of school avoidance appears to be at or at around the time of transition between key stages. Research, for example, continues to shows an increase in emotionally based non-school

attendance around the time that young people move from primary to secondary school (Nutall & Woods, 2013; Pellegrini, 2007; Thambirajah et al, 2008).

"All behaviour is communication"

To be able to support CYP who are struggling to attend school, we need to try to understand the functions of the behaviour and consider what the CYP gets from avoiding school. Kearney and Silverman (1990) identified that school non-attendance usually serves one of four functions:

To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, e.g. anxiety or low mood	*To avoid situations that might be stressful, e.g. academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment*
To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, e.g. parents or family members.	*To pursue tangible reinforcers outside of school, e.g. going shopping or playing computer games during school time*

Functions of school refusal (Kearney & Silverman, 1990)

Anxiety and EBSA

Anxiety is recognised as a significant component of EBSA. Anxiety is a normal part of our human experience; short-lived and lower levels of anxiety can be useful to us as stress responses linked to survival. However, heightened levels of anxiety can interfere with everyday life and can have a significant impact on our functioning. The HBSC report (2018) stated that "Over a fifth (22%) of young people reported that they had experienced a high level of emotional problems and other emotional difficulties during the last 6 months."

With regards to EBSA, a young person may experience anxious and fearful thoughts about attending school and their ability to cope within school. Physiological symptoms can include shaking, sweating, nausea, vomiting etc. and may begin the night before or even a few days before school. Young people may also display one or more of the following behaviours; crying, pleading, sleep problems, refusal to get ready for school / to leave the house / enter the school, worry around school-related issues and psychosomatic illness.

In addition, the parent or carer may find themselves on the receiving end of some hostile behaviours as the young person or child strives to avoid the threatening situation and to control a situation which feels 'out of control' (Thambirajah et al, 2008).
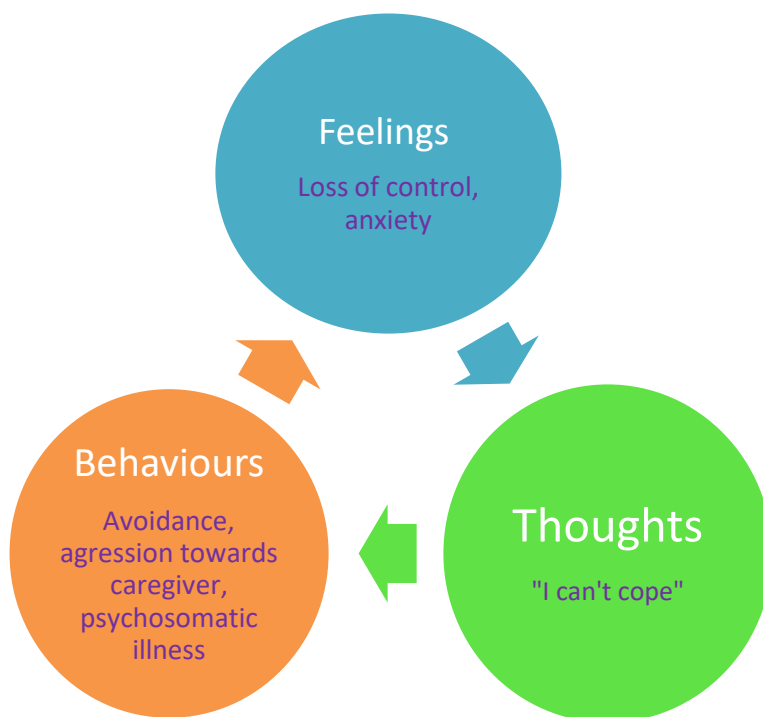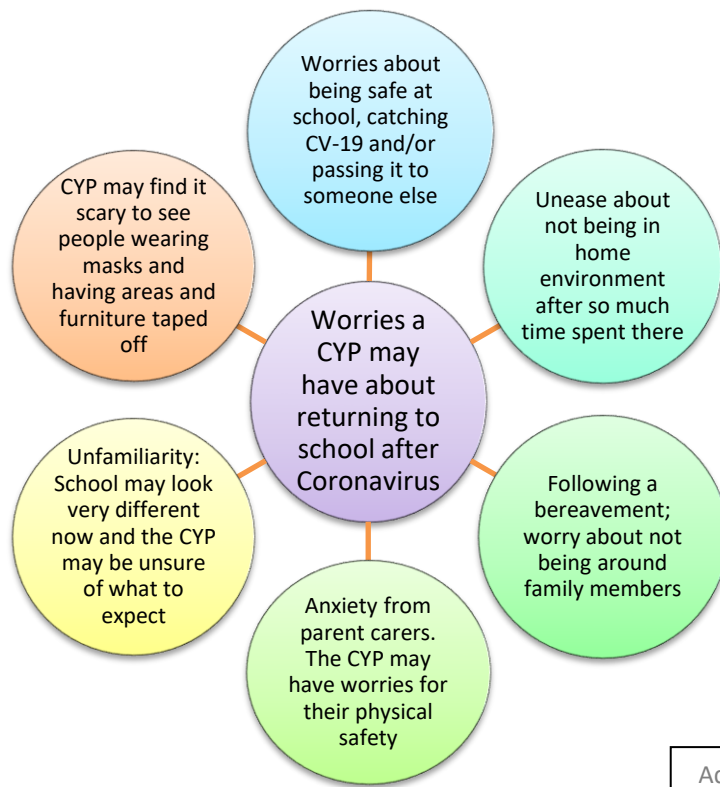
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) helps us to understand the way in which thoughts, feelings and behaviours are connected.
(See Appendix 11a)

It should also be noted that some young people experiencing EBSA, can appear to function well when they are in school, or may socialise well in different situations and environments. This discrepancy can lead to potential misunderstandings of a complex situation.

Prolonged absences and EBSA

A number of guidance documents were developed by Wakefield EPS that focussed on preparation for school return, bereavement & loss and managing emotional well-being CYP & staff. Work was started on this guidance following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, some suggestions here may be useful to CYP experiencing anxiety about returning to or reintegrating into school due to situations surrounding Coronavirus, but are also applicable to prolonged and/or repeated absences. In addition, some children may experience an increase in school-related worries due to the ongoing situation, as highlighted in the figure below. These worries and anxieties are normal reactions to the current changing and unfamiliar situation; experiencing them does not mean that the CYP will go on to have difficulties attending school. However, it is useful to take these factors into consideration during preparations for a return to school and to put appropriate support in place. Establishing a sense of safety will be important for many CYP and this can be supported through sharing visual and verbal information about safety behaviours in schools, preparing CYP for what their school environment will look like, re-establishing routines and re-connecting with staff and peers. On-going and open communication with parents will help schools to recognise which children may need additional support as they transition back to school.
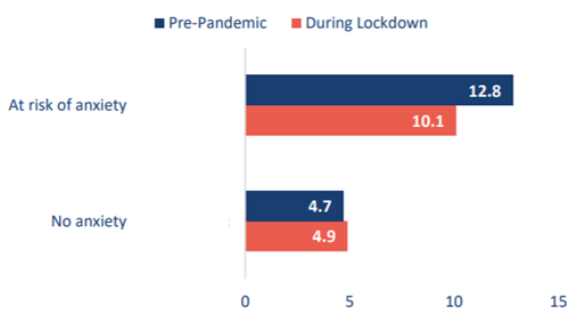
Worries a CYP may have about returning to school after Coronavirus

Central: Worries a CYP may have about returning to school after Coronavirus

- Worries about being safe at school, catching CV-19 and/or passing it to someone else
- CYP may find it scary to see people wearing masks and having areas and furniture taped off
- Unease about not being in home environment after so much time spent there
- Unfamiliarity: School may look very different now and the CYP may be unsure of what to expect
- Following a bereavement; worry about not being around family members
- Anxiety from parent carers. The CYP may have worries for their physical safety
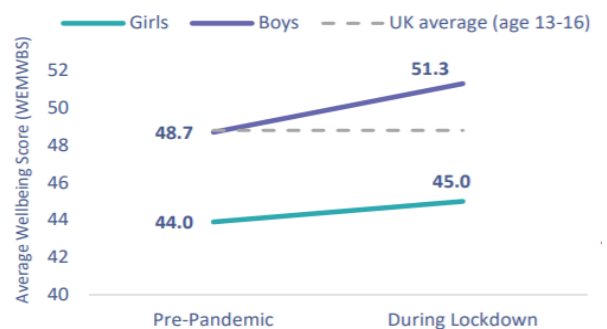
Adapted from the Bolton guide.

For further information and resources to support CYP with coronavirus related worries and anxieties, please visit the Covid-19 page on the Wakefield Local Offer website. COVID 19 (mylocaloffer.org)

Interestingly, recent evidence seems to suggest young people's mental health improved during lockdown as did their connectedness to school. (NIHR 2020)

Change in Anxiety Scores (HADS)

- Pre-Pandemic ■ During Lockdown

At risk of anxiety: Pre-Pandemic 12.8, During Lockdown 10.1
No anxiety: Pre-Pandemic 4.7, During Lockdown 4.9

Change in Wellbeing by Gender

Girls — Boys — — UK average (age 13-16)

Average Wellbeing Score (WEMWBS)

Boys: Pre-Pandemic 48.7, During Lockdown 51.3
Girls: Pre-Pandemic 44.0, During Lockdown 45.0

Following the re-opening of schools and the uncertainty regarding Covid cases regionally and nationally, the question is: Can we use this information to prevent a rise in anxiety to pre lockdown levels? Schools could consider whether they can continue practices developed during lockdown that may explain the increase in sense of connectedness for students. There may need to be a focus on supporting students who felt less connected to school and those who had high anxiety prior to lockdown. Vulnerable groups including LGBTQ+ or students with disabilities who saw little change in anxiety, depression and wellbeing during lockdown are also likely to require more support when they return to school (Widnall et al 2020).

The improvements (reduced levels of anxiety) may be due to the removal of stress factors often found in school environments such as the pressure of academic work and challenging peer relationships. Emotional regulation

work and anxiety management strategies suggested in this guide can support with these but may need further thought in light of this evidence.

Whole School best practice

Taking a whole school systemic approach to EBSA; considering how the factors relate to each other and viewing the problem as *between* the factors rather than *inside* the child means that responsibility does not lie within one part of the whole. Acknowledging the value and supporting the mental health and well-being of all individuals within a system is key. Viewing the problem as a temporary one that does not assign blame to any factors makes it open to change (Thambirajah et al 2008).

By asking "can we create an environment where no EBSA exists?" schools are already employing many strategies that support CYP who may experience school related anxiety. We suggest that schools complete a whole school audit of the interrelated factors within the organisation, which can help to foster an anxiety friendly environment. Many of the suggestions and approaches advocated here such as focussing on relationships, curiosity, connection and belonging, fit within a Trauma Informed approach that many schools already use. By looking at the systems already in place and creating opportunity for open discussion, you will develop a solid foundation that works for your school. A suggested whole school EBSA audit based on the below principles can be found in Appendix 1.

Public Health England produced guidance for school leaders to promote emotional health and wellbeing in schools based around eight principles. These have been adapted and extended in the diagram below to include EBSA specific ideas for leadership and management to include within their whole school approach.

Well-being scales and measures for CYP (Appendix 4)

All staff aware of EBSA lead

Bullying is addressed; through policies, awareness of hot-spots on site and by providing safe spaces

Support for staff to reflect on own well-being
Offer supervision for staff

Anxiety related training
All staff have a shared understanding of EBSA and are aware of risk factors and strategies

Whole school and college approach to emotional health and well-being

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Transition ideas

Transitions are a very important part of anyone's life and especially so with children moving from primary to secondary school. Most children can make this change by adapting successfully to their new environment, routines, larger numbers of pupils and teaching styles, as both primary and secondary schools are well versed in preparing students for this. However, some students will find this change harder than others.

Primary schools are very good at sending information about specific pupils with a cause for concern to the relevant secondary schools. To support this further, a list of students identified as being at risk of EBSA could be sent alongside information about the risk factors and plans in place. A few more EBSA specific suggestions in addition to normal transition arrangements are given below.

Primary school recommendations:

- Devote time in the summer term to talking about secondary school in positive terms; debunking myths and solving problems with humour
- Work through a transition preparation programme in collaboration with the secondary schools
- Help children with:
  - finding their way around on a floor plan
  - following timetables
  - thinking about organisation of bag packing, equipment and so on
- Provide extra visits to the secondary schools combining SEND students with those from other schools

Secondary school recommendations:

- Nominate staff members to welcome students; meet and greet, hold check-ins etc.
- Facilitate visits by year 7, 8 and 9 students to primary feeder schools to have informal discussions with Y6 pupils
- Hold an open evening allowing students to walk around the school and meet some staff
- Take photos and videos of areas of the school and key staff, for familiarisation over the summer holiday
- Provide a map and an exemplar timetable for familiarisation over the summer holiday
- Highlight the positive aspects of the secondary school
- Provide personalised transition visits if necessary

Parents and carers recommendations:

- Talk in positive terms about the move
- Discuss it in terms of a 'fresh start' for children that have not experienced a positive time in school
- Help your child develop independence skills by encouraging them to organise themselves with small aspects of their day during the summer break
- Look at and talk about the floor plans / time-tables / key staff
- Walk past or drive to the new school to familiarise your child with the building and entrance and local area
- Practise catching the bus if this is what your child will be expected to do

- Help your child budget for lunch and drinks if they have any shopping or visits with friends during the summer
- Ensure that your child has the correct uniform and the various equipment stated on any paperwork sent by secondary schools
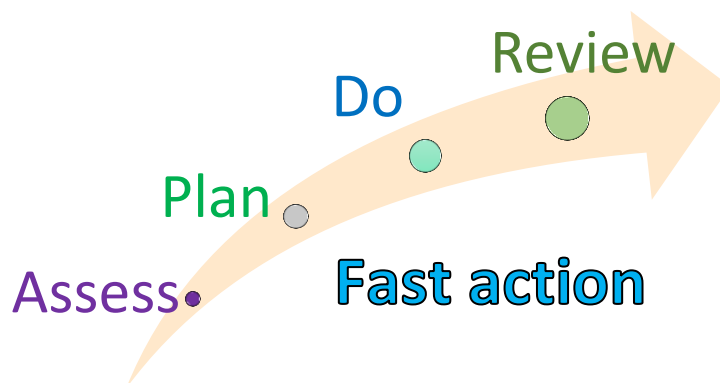
Early Identification

Early identification is key and best practice would mean that there is a whole school approach to this that develops staff awareness and understanding of EBSA. In order to recognise the possible indicators of EBSA; remain curious about your CYP's behaviour, try to refrain from making assumptions and share information with colleagues to establish a holistic picture. (Solihull guide page 10).

Possible indicators include:

- Difficulty attending school with periods of prolonged absence
- Child reluctant to leave home and stays away from school with the knowledge of the parent/carer
- For younger children, a reluctance to leave parents or get out of the car
- Regular absence without indication of anti-social behaviours
- Frequent absences for minor illnesses
- Patterns in absences, for example, particular days and/or subjects, after weekends and holidays
- Reluctance to attend school trips
- The young person expresses a desire to attend classes but is unable to do so
- Anxiety on separation and inappropriate dependence on family members e.g. worry expressed about the safety of those at home
- Evidence of under-achievement of learning potential
- Social isolation and avoidance of class mates or peer group
- Challenging behaviours, particularly in relation to specific situations at school
- Severe emotional upset with excessive fearfulness, outbursts of temper and complaints of feeling ill on school days
- Depression and sense of isolation resulting in, low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Confusion or extreme absent mindedness shown in school due to lack of concentration resulting in, lower attainments
- Physical changes i.e. sweating, sickness, aching limbs, headaches, panic attacks, abdominal pain, rapid weight loss or gain

West Sussex guide page 11

If a CYP is displaying any of these behaviours in a significant fashion, it is important that **fast action** is taken to follow the **Assess**, **Plan**, **Do**, **Review** steps.

Plan Do Review Assess Fast action

Assess

During the initial stages of your journey to understand any CYP displaying school avoidant behaviours, add to your knowledge of risk factors, early identification and assessment procedures. Building on your existing strategies to spend time listening to and showing you value the CYPs experience will enable you to develop a deep appreciation of their needs. By drawing on the experience of school staff and parent carers and communicating their understanding of some of the issues throughout the system you will begin to build up a rich picture of the interrelated aspects. This section outlines a range of tools that can be utilised.

Risk factors associated with the development of EBSA

A range of well documented factors place some children at a higher risk of EBSA. These are usually present alongside other changes in circumstance and it is important to bear in mind the interactions between home, school and the wider influences on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Schools having an awareness of these risk factors can be an important preventative strategy.

Signs and Risk Factors for Emerging School Refusal

School factors	Family / home factors	CYP factors
• Bullying (the most common factor) • Difficulties with student-teacher relationship and unpredictability at school • Social isolation and loneliness • Teacher stress • Difficulties in particular subjects • Academic demands/high levels of pressure and performance orientated classrooms • Transitions: from primary to secondary, KS3 → KS4 • Transition between home and school; transport, entry to classroom/building • Exams	• Changes to home environment; divorce, separation, parental illness (mental & physical) • High levels of family stress • Overprotection from parent • Dysfunctional family interactions • Being the youngest child • Loss and bereavement • Family history of EBSA • Young carer • Parental psychopathology	• Age (5-6, 11-12, 13-14) • Anxiety and/or depression • Somatic complaints • Difficulties with emotional regulation • Negative thinking, low self-esteem, and limited problem solving ability • Learning difficulties, developmental problems or ASD if unidentified / unsupported • Fear of failure and low self confidence • Separation anxiety / attachment issues with parent • Trauma and ACEs

A tool that profiles risk factors can be found in Appendix 2.

Push and Pull factors

It can be helpful to be aware of the differences between push and pull factors when attempting to identify those at risk of EBSA.

➢ Push factors – these push the young person **towards** attending school
➢ Pull factors – these pull the young person **away** from attending school

They are likely to be present across all of the influences in a young person's life and so it can be really useful to identify and analyse them. The Solihull guide tool for mapping these factors can be found in Appendix 3

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and EBSA

Feelings of anxiety are commonly regarded as an integral part of Autism Spectrum Disorders. The CYP's difficulties in understanding, predicting and controlling aspects of their physical and social world can cause distress, which can fluctuate overtime and in different situations. Common triggers of anxiety for those described with ASD include: changes in the environment, unfamiliarity, changes of routine, increased or decreased sensory sensitivity to stimuli such as light or noise although these are not limited to those with a diagnosis of ASD. The Autism Education Trust has produced an example of a sensory audit which can be used as an assessment measure and can be found on the AET website.

Formal assessment measures

Appendix 4 provides links to a variety of measures that can be used to further understand the anxiety a young person is experiencing, and can also be used as a discussion tool to illicit the young person's perspective, as well as being used pre and post intervention. Teachers and TAs are very accomplished in differentiating resources and consideration should be given to the format in which these are presented to the CYP.

Information gathering and analysis

There are a range of tools that can be used to gather information from CYP, parent carers, family, staff etc, to build up a rich picture of the factors affecting the CYP's anxiety and/or attendance so that appropriate and supportive strategies can be developed further. See **Appendices 5 to 8**.

Gathering the view of CYP

When gathering the view of the CYP, it is important to consider who is best placed to do this; who has a good relationship with them? Which member of staff will make them feel most comfortable?

Remember that any child currently avoiding school may become anxious when asked to discuss returning; they may be managing their feelings of anxiety by employing avoidant behaviour, so any talk about returning may raise their anxiety as you are proposing taking away their coping mechanism (Solihull guide page 20/21). Let them know that you are aware it may be difficult for them to talk about it with you, but that you would like to know what they think and feel. Empathise with the young person and don't dismiss their anxieties and worries.

The information booklet for young people, produced by Wakefield EPS, may also be useful in supporting a conversation alongside giving them a list of websites to visit for information.

Tools used to gain the young person's view will vary depending on the CYP's age, level of understanding and language. You know the young people in your schools well, so tailor the suggestions to their strengths and

individual needs. Visual supports and drawings can be helpful to support a conversation as many CYP find verbalising their thoughts, feelings and wishes challenging. Several tools are described below. We would not suggest that all of these are used, but they be used to assist with a formulation (see page 17) and analysis; alongside other information gathering tools.

Timetable review

A tool often used by adults working with students showing school anxiety is to offer CYP the opportunity to review their timetable and places around school, identifying which lessons and areas are associated with a lot, some, or no anxiety. Using a red, amber and green anxiety code may help. Bear in mind that some CYP may experience anxiety just by thinking about some lessons / lunchtimes / break times / transition to or from school and may need the support of an empathetic adult during this activity Exploration of the issues arising from this can provide useful information.


Collaboratively agree upon a code; for example:
Green = I am happy here or I enjoy this subject
Amber = I feel ok here or I find this subject alright

Red = I feel uncomfortable here or I do not enjoy this subject

Images taken from the Solihull guide

Anxiety thermometer or scale

Using an anxiety thermometer or scale can help the young person to start to make links between their emotions and environmental/contextual triggers. Consider the physical environment (toilets, hall, corridors, changing rooms, outside), times of day (arrival, home time, break and dinner times) and specific lessons and activities (reading aloud, group work, writing, tests). Using a map of the school building can be helpful when exploring the impact of the physical environment on their anxiety.
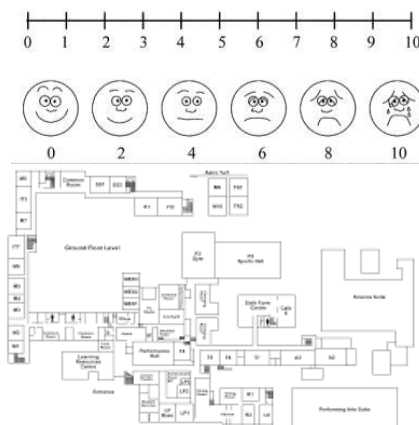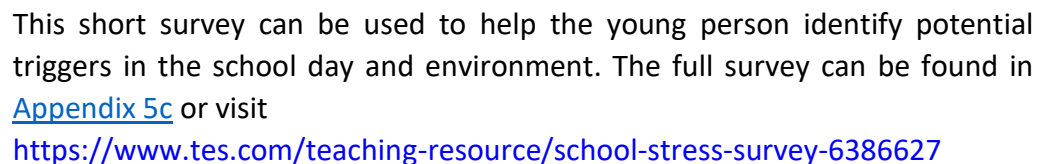

Card Sort: Function of School Avoidance
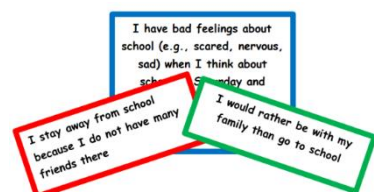
This card sort activity, based on a School Refusal Assessment Scale developed by Kearney (2002), has been devised by Sheffield EPS as a tool for staff to use to develop a greater understanding of a young person's school avoidance. The cards and guidance on how to use them with a CYP can be found in Appendix 5a.

Ideal Classroom/School

This tool developed by Williams and Hanke (2007) can be used to gain an insight into which features of the school (people, environment, lessons etc.) young people would like to change and why. This activity can be undertaken using Lego, play equipment and/or drawing. There is a tutorial video for the Ideal self here https://www.drawingtheidealself.co.uk/ alongside a manual with instructions and questions. Guidance and a script for using the Ideal School with a CYP can be found in Appendix 5b.

School Stress Survey

This short survey can be used to help the young person identify potential triggers in the school day and environment. The full survey can be found in Appendix 5c or visit https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/school-stress-survey-6386627

Life Graph

Collaboratively developing a life graph or path with the young person may help them to consider when their EBSA started, what else was happening in their lives at this time, what events and experiences led up to this point and how they interpreted these, as well as looking at what they would want in the future. Caution should be taken when using this tool, as discussion of life experiences is likely to illicit strong emotions for some young people.

Scripts

A good example of a set of scripts to use to gather the child's view comes from the Solihull guide and can be found in Appendix 5d. There are also many school-based resources available to ascertain the voice of the CYP on the Sheff Kids website

http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultssite/pages/communicrateworksheets.html?LMCL=ZVCthI

5 point scale

The 5 point scale can be used with young people of all ages, as a way of supporting them to understand and manage overwhelming feelings and to explore emotions. CYP can then use the scale to describe how they are feeling, and what these feelings may look or sound like; they can explore situations that may make them feel a certain way and move to describing how to reduce overwhelming or difficult emotions. The scales that the CYP makes can be used as a communication tool for example, making into a keyring or using different coloured cards or bracelets to let adults know that they feel a certain way.

There are free downloadable resources available at https://www.5pointscale.com/

Externalisation

It can sometimes be helpful to support the CYP to externalise the anxiety, so that the CYP can start to view their anxiety as separate from their essential self. This is a great opportunity to get creative and have fun using paints, playdough, clay and collage materials as you explore the anxiety with the CYP. You could try asking:

- What would you call the feeling you have when you think about going to school?
- If your anxiety was a 'thing', what would it look like?
- Can you draw/paint/make it? What would it say?
- How does … get in the way of you coming to school?
- When is … in charge and when are you in charge?

Multi Element Plan (MEP) cards

These cards can be used flexibly to explore the young person's view of themselves in relation to school and to identify potentially helpful and unhelpful environmental factors. The cards can be found on page 36 of the following document from Derbyshire County Council 2008: http://www.em-edsupport.org.uk/Pages/Download/0eeb08d2-0ae6-4f11-94b8-764f5c283cfb
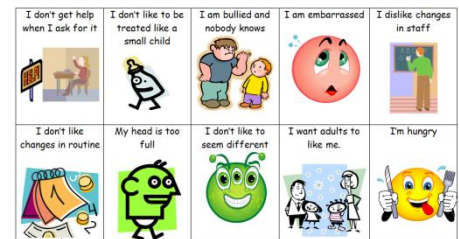
## Gathering the view of parents and carers

Building a collaborative partnership with parents is often essential to bring about positive outcomes for a young person experiencing EBSA. Some parents may find conversations around their child's difficulties challenging, so establishing a curious, empathetic and no-blame approach is important. Wakefield EPS has also produced a parent information booklet that can support this process.

Sensitively collecting background information, parent's views and information about the current situation can be collated in an initial meeting.   See Appendix 6 for suggestions of questions and areas to cover. It is helpful for schools to identify a member of staff as a key point of contact who will be able to communicate regularly with parents and to agree how and when this communication will take place.

Gathering the view of school staff

To build a full picture of the current situation, ideally collect information from all school staff who work closely with the young person. In a secondary school, this may involve seeking information from every subject teacher as well as other staff. The young person may show different strengths and difficulties across different subjects and in different environments so it is beneficial to have a comprehensive view of the young person in various situations. Valuable information may come from each staff member that may help to identify triggers and strategies for the child's anxiety.

Information to be collected from school staff could include:
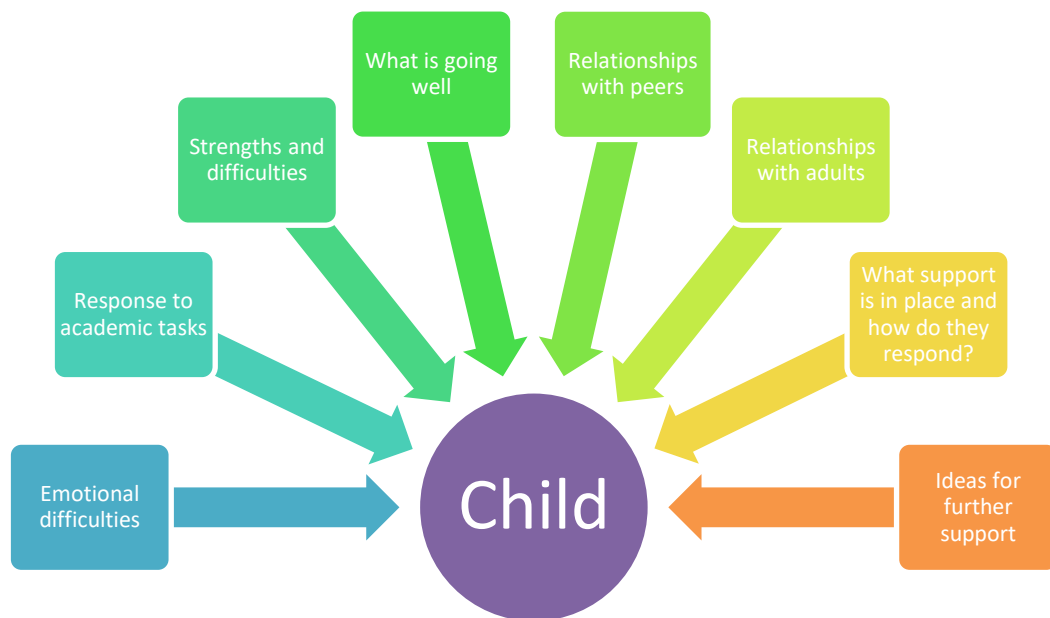
It is also important to consider whether the child has unidentified special educational needs, medical needs or a disability. If they are not already involved, school staff should consult with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). See Appendix 7 for an example of a form used to gather information from all staff working with a young person.

Plan

Effective planning takes into account the views of the young person, their family and the adults who know and support them. Looking at different sources of information and views can help to produce a shared understanding of the situation and help to develop shared goals. These goals can be included within action and support plans, providing a starting point for moving forward.

Formulation

Formulation is the process of making sense of a person's difficulties; it is a way of standing in their shoes and seeing the issue from their perspective.   Formulations should take into account:

"All behaviour is communication"

- Strengths and aspects of resilience
- A holistic view of difficulties and how they may relate to one another
- The context of a person's relationships,
- Social circumstances,
- Life events,
- Psychological theories

The formulation about why a young person might be avoiding or finding it difficult to attend school should be included in the reintegration support and action plan.

Appendix 8a contains a useful formulation tool for use by school staff.
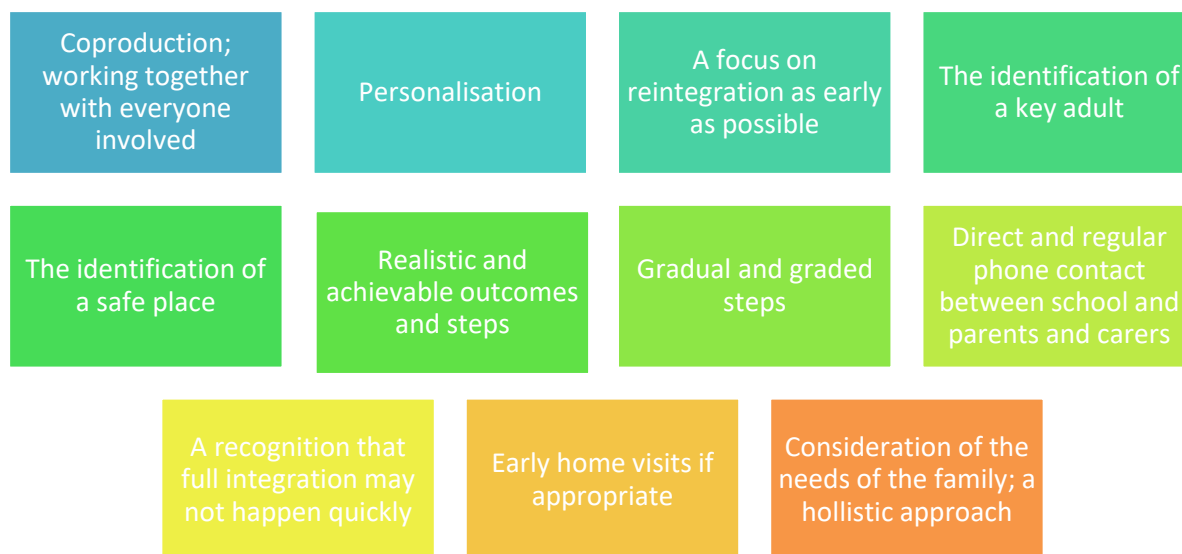Appendix 8b includes additional questions to consider at each stage.

Reintegration – support & action plans

The research in this area has identified elements of support that should be in place in order to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration. Once the **Assess** process has occurred, a return to school action plan should be produced. At this stage it may be useful to consult the **Do** section of the guidance for suggestions of helpful strategies and interventions that can be incorporated into the action plan.

Return to school action plan

Features of an effective return to school action plan include:

Coproduction; working together with everyone involved	Personalisation	A focus on reintegration as early as possible	The identification of a key adult
The identification of a safe place	Realistic and achievable outcomes and steps	Gradual and graded steps	Direct and regular phone contact between school and parents and carers
A recognition that full integration may not happen quickly	Early home visits if appropriate	Consideration of the needs of the family; a hollistic approach	

For an example return to school action plan template, see Appendix 9.

A temporary part-time timetable, or Phased Reintegration Plan as they are called in Wakefield, may be necessary to support the young person's reintegration back to school full-time. However, all parties must agree that this is not a long-term solution and should work towards the outcome of a full return to school. The legal guidance we follow, stipulates that a Phased Reintegration plan must be a one-time strategy per academic year and not be repeated indefinitely. Information on the proforma to complete and where to send to the LA can be found from contacting the Wakefield School Exclusion Team for further information at exclusions@wakefield.gov.uk.

There will be times when a young person may find the plan more challenging, such as at the start of its implementation, following a weekend, or a period of illness. If the young person does not attend or carry out the agreed actions one day, start again the next day with an optimistic outlook. It is okay to be flexible, it might be necessary to move back a step in the plan to build greater confidence before moving forward.

"the best is yet to come"

Return to school support plan

In addition to the action plan, it may be useful to work with the young person on their support plan. The support plan includes elements of the action plan and helps the child to see the 'agreed actions' taken by themselves, by school and by their family to support their reintegration.

The support plan can include agreed information about timetable changes, access to key adults, information about a 'safe place', strategies to help reduce anxiety, as well as agreements about how friends and family can help.

It is crucial that all school staff are aware of the young person's difficulties and the agreements that are included in the support plan.

An example of a return to school support plan can be found in Appendix 10.

Do

The causes and factors involved in the young person's school avoidance (explored through the assessment and planning process) should be used to tailor an approach which works well for the young person and the setting.

Any plan and approach will need to be reviewed as adjusted as necessary.

The list below contains general strategies, strategies specific to anxiety and worry, and environmental adjustments to support a person in school. We are confident that as you read through the list below many of these approaches will already be familiar to you in your practice. There may be a few suggestions here that you hadn't considered yet or they may spark an idea for you to adapt to your school and the young person you are working with.

Ideas to help a young person that is currently not attending are listed at the end of this section.

General Teaching Strategies:

- Regular contact and **communication between the child, family and school**, including the use of virtual or telephone check-ins.
- Ensuring **home learning** is shared, marked and that feedback is provided so that the young person knows that they still belong and are a valued part of the school community.
- A focus on building the young person's **self-worth and value**, for example through giving roles of responsibility.
- **Personalise their timetable,** including possible staggered start and end times to avoid potentially anxiety-provoking or overwhelming situations. It may be helpful to consider the quieter times during the day. Once the child feels more comfortable in the school building, gradual steps can be taken with the young person to build up their time in school
- Working with the child and family to create a **Monday morning plan** which provides the best possible transition into school. If the child is able to attend school on a Monday, they are more likely to be successful at attending school later in the week. Many families start the plan on a Sunday evening to support the young person in getting a good night's sleep.
- Ensuring a **sense of normality** and consistency when the young person is in school and avoid asking where the child has been.
- Identify **key adult/s** who can be available and accessible. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the benefits of an emotionally supportive teacher-child relationship.
- A warm, **friendly** and well planned arrival and **welcome to school**. If children are anxious, their first contact with school is very important. Support the young person so that they

experience a sense of welcome and belonging whenever they attend. Front line staff (such as the reception team) may be the first faces they see so ensure these staff are involved in the support plan and understand the importance of their role.

- Work with the young person and family to ensure there is **a plan in place for dropping off and arrival** in to school; including what activities they will engage in and how the transition to school can be eased. Involve the young person, talk to them about how the start of the school day could be changed to reduce their worries and anxieties.
- Ensure that the young person feels that their feelings around the difficulties in getting to school are **believed** by the adults around them.

Strategies around worry and anxiety:

- Enable **readiness for learning**. A young person who is experiencing EBSA may arrive in a heightened state of anxiety and could benefit from support to help them move to a state more conducive to learning. Some tips for how to manage anxiety on arrival are shared in the Anxiety Management tools in Appendix 12.
- Support the young person to **learn about anxiety and ways to manage** their own worries and anxieties. This may involve approaches underpinned by CBT principles (see Appendix 11a) as well as exploring a range of other anxiety management tools (see Appendix 11b). Involvement of parent / carers and school staff in this learning has been found to boost the effectiveness of an intervention
- Agree a **signal** for when the young person feels overwhelmed. Work with the child to help them to recognise what happens in their body before they feel overwhelmed and agree a signal or a response, such as showing a card which let the adults know how the child is feeling.
- Consider a **solution-focused approach which focuses on the future and the young person's aspirations:** There are many ways to do this including the Miracle Question activity (see Appendix 13 for information about using the Miracle Question to ascertain a young person's view and to help them to find solutions to their problems).

Environmental Strategies:

- Identify a **safe space** (for some young people, rooms such as the school library or a pastoral area can be less stigmatising than a learning support base).
- Regular opportunities for the young person to **reset**. Build in moments through a child's day when they can emotionally regulate and restore a sense of control and calm. Resetting activities could include a walk outside, mindfulness, colouring or listening to a song.
- **A clear, predictable and consistent environment**. Creating a sense of safety is important for all students and staff but is especially important for young people experiencing anxiety. Ensure the child knows what to expect, and when, throughout the day. A visual timetable or a first / then board can be useful to support this. Social stories are another way of providing structure. For students with Autism predictability can be especially important. Consideration should be made as to whether a sensory audit should be carried out and whether suitable adaptations to their environment are necessary.

Supporting the Young Person and their Family

- Tailoring the **support and guidance offered to parent carers** to the individual needs of the family. Some parents may welcome training in implementing strategies to prevent the reinforcement of avoidance behaviours; others may be keen to learn more about relaxation techniques or establishing positive sleep and morning routines. Parents of children with ASD may benefit from

support from the Wakefield Autism Support Project (WASP Wakefield Autism Support Project | KIDS). The Wakefield Children First Hubs can offer advice and guidance to parents through self-referral. Turning Point may also provide support (https://www.turning-point.co.uk/). The WeHeartCBT website offers resources for parents including a three session guide to help managing your child's worries; visit https://weheartcbt.com/for-parents

- Frequent **home visits** can be used to build positive relationships, teach anxiety management techniques or deliver an intervention matched to the young person's needs. Where home visits cannot take place regularly, links can still be maintained through telephone conversations or video calls. (This will need to be considered in line with any Covid-19 working arrangements or any Safeguarding arrangements).
- Supporting the young person and their family to learn about **healthy lifestyle behaviours**, such as diet, exercise, sleep routine and environment and how these can contribute to emotional well-being.

Approaches based on the function of behaviour

It may be helpful to frame any strategies and interventions around the four functions of EBSA behaviour. Different functions may respond better to different approaches and in some situations a variety of approaches will be needed focusing on the school, family and the child.

Function: To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school

If the function of the child's behaviour for avoiding school is to avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school (anxiety, stress or low mood), interventions could also involve:
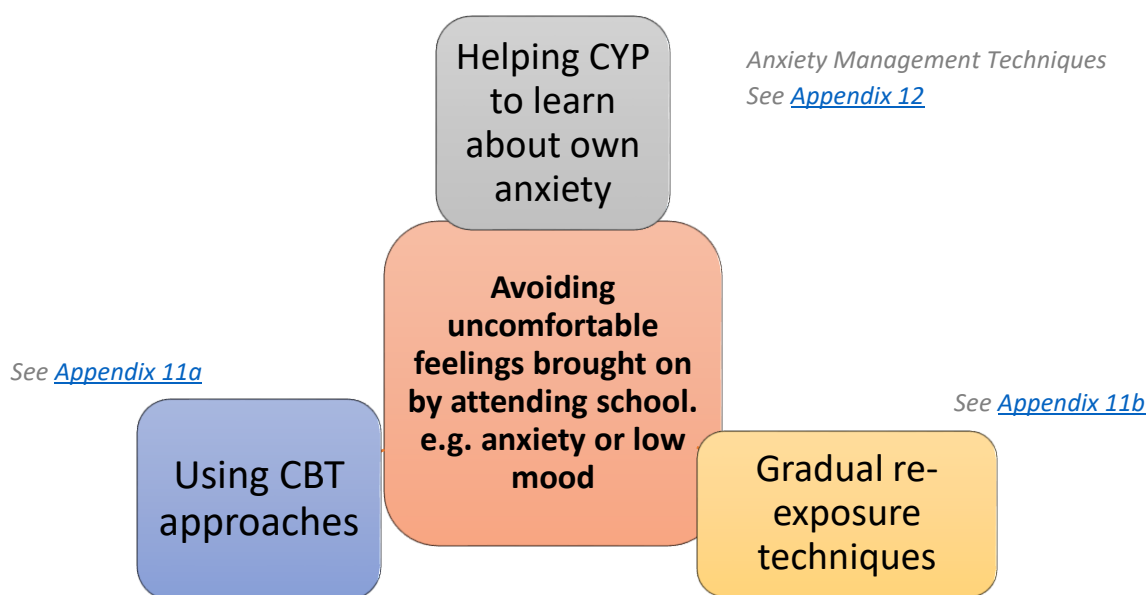
**Function: To avoid situations that might be stressful**

If the function of the child's behaviour for avoiding school is **to avoid situations that might be stressful** (academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment), interventions could also involve:
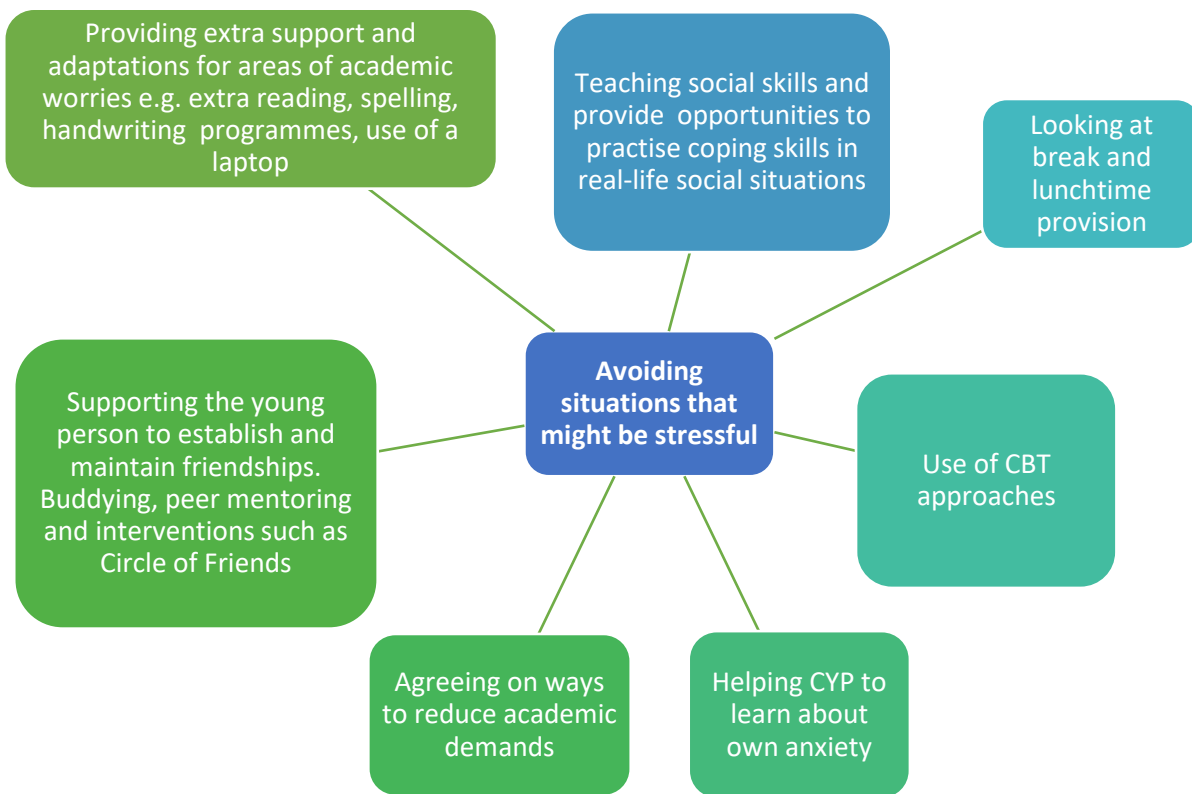
Function: To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention

If the function of the child's behaviours for avoiding school is **to reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others** (parents or family members), additional interventions could involve work with the parents to support them in developing skills and techniques in:
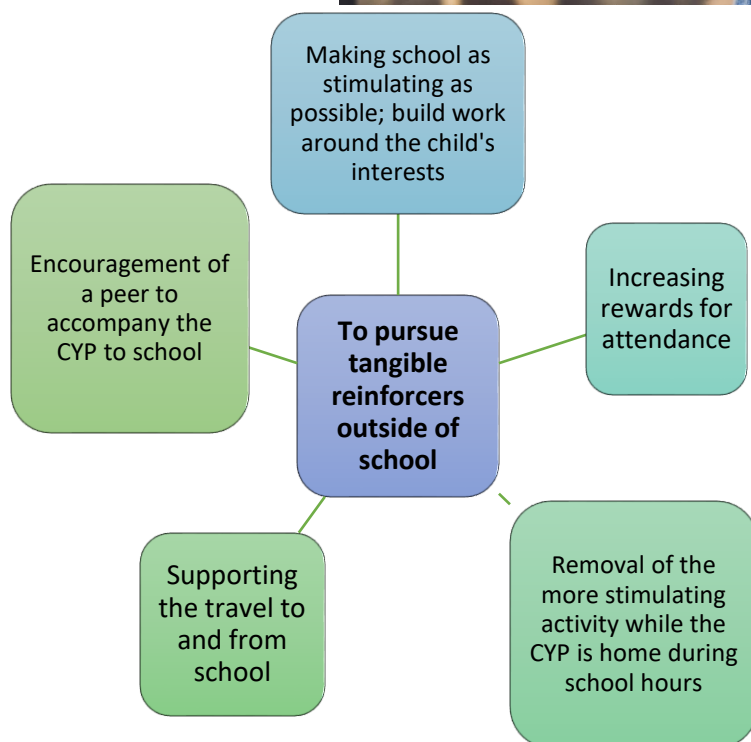
- Establishing morning routines
- Managing school avoidance behaviours such as tantrums and physical/somatic complaints
- Problem-solving
- Focusing on positive behaviours
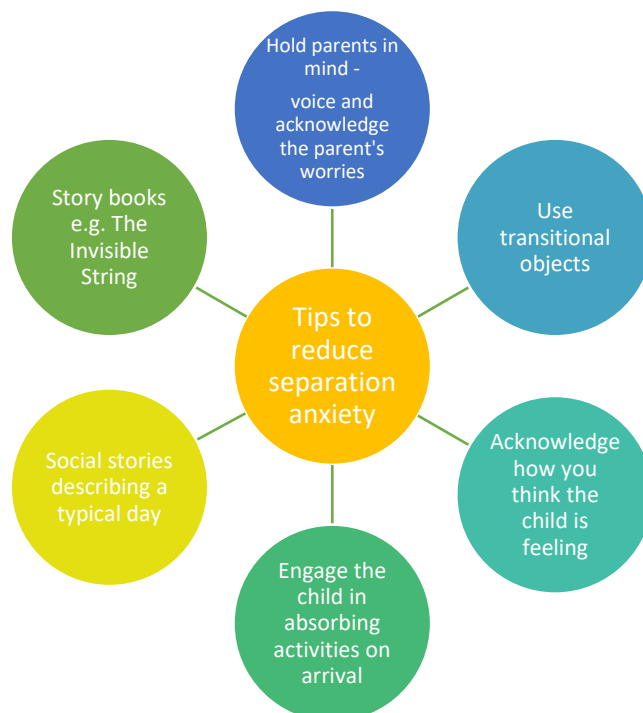
Information on social stories can be found on Carol Gray's website https://carolgraysocialstories.com and the book: The Invisible String by Patrice Karst is available to buy from many retailers. Wakefield EPS and WISENDSS can also support with social stories.

Function: To pursue tangible 'reinforcers' outside of school

If the function of the child's behaviour for avoiding school is **to pursue tangible 'reinforcers' outside of school** (going shopping or playing computer games during school time), additional interventions could involve:

Making school as stimulating as possible; build work around the child's interests

Encouragement of a peer to accompany the CYP to school

To pursue tangible reinforcers outside of school

Increasing rewards for attendance

Supporting the travel to and from school

Removal of the more stimulating activity while the CYP is home during school hours

Suggested strategies if the CYP is not currently attending school

By following the approaches outlined to help with both the identification and early support of children at risk of EBSA, it is hoped that many young person will be supported to return to full time school before the school avoidance behaviour becomes entrenched.

However, it may be that in some cases, the young person continues to struggle to attend school over a longer period and will require a more flexible approach to their support and interventions. Where possible, it is important to maintain links and a sense of connection and belonging with the child and family. This can be achieved through:

Letter writing From peers and staff to CYP

Home visits

Sharing of tasks and homework

Regular key adult contact with CYP

Allow CYP to visit school in a safer way
Clubs
Favourite teacher
With parents?

Virtual tasks and contact

Suggest interventions for parents

Resources from gathering view of CYP to be used at home by parent or key worker

Gradual steps
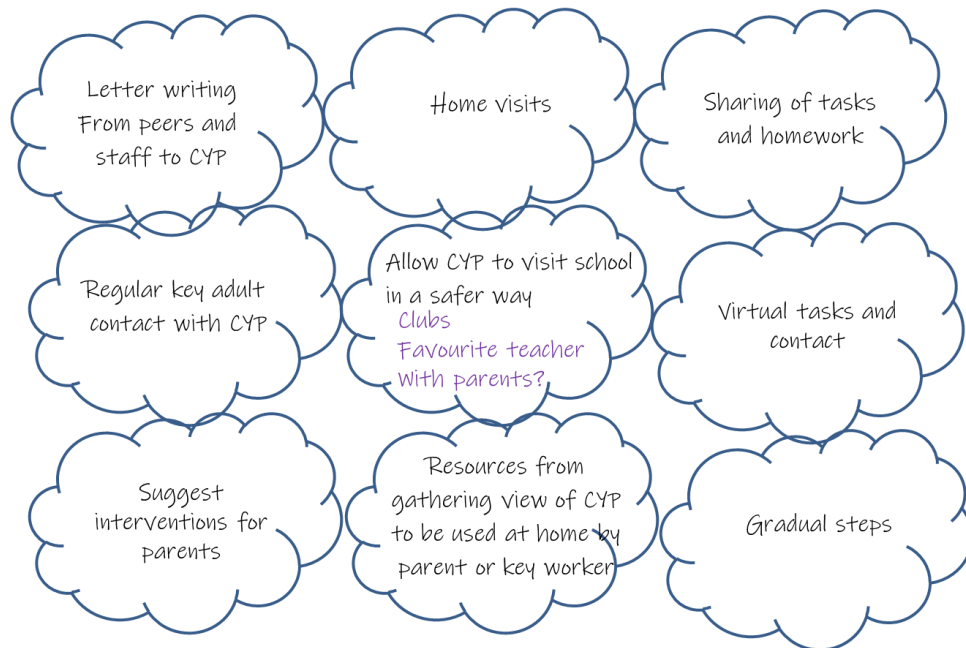
Review

Review

It is helpful to have realistic expectations; school avoidance is unlikely to be fixed overnight or by a single person. Celebrate successes no matter how small and look to making those gradual changes if the issue seems stuck.

With complex cases, support is available from other agencies such as CAMHS, the Educational Psychology Service, WISENDSS and others seen in the resources section below.

Reviewing your approaches at all levels as regularly as you are able to will help you to revise and develop your support. You may have made changes to **whole school** approaches so a check in with your audit might be advisable at this stage. Looking with the **young person** at their anxiety levels assessed through scaling or another assessment method could be a rewarding way of measuring progress or simply a pointer to adapt a plan or intervention. Differences in responses on individual items on an assessment measure before and after intervention may indicate positive change.

Review of plans

The action plan and support plan should be regularly reviewed with input from the young person, parents and key staff and other professionals. Dates for the review should be set during the action planning stage.

The review is an opportunity to monitor and celebrate progress made towards the outcomes, consider any new information or changes to the
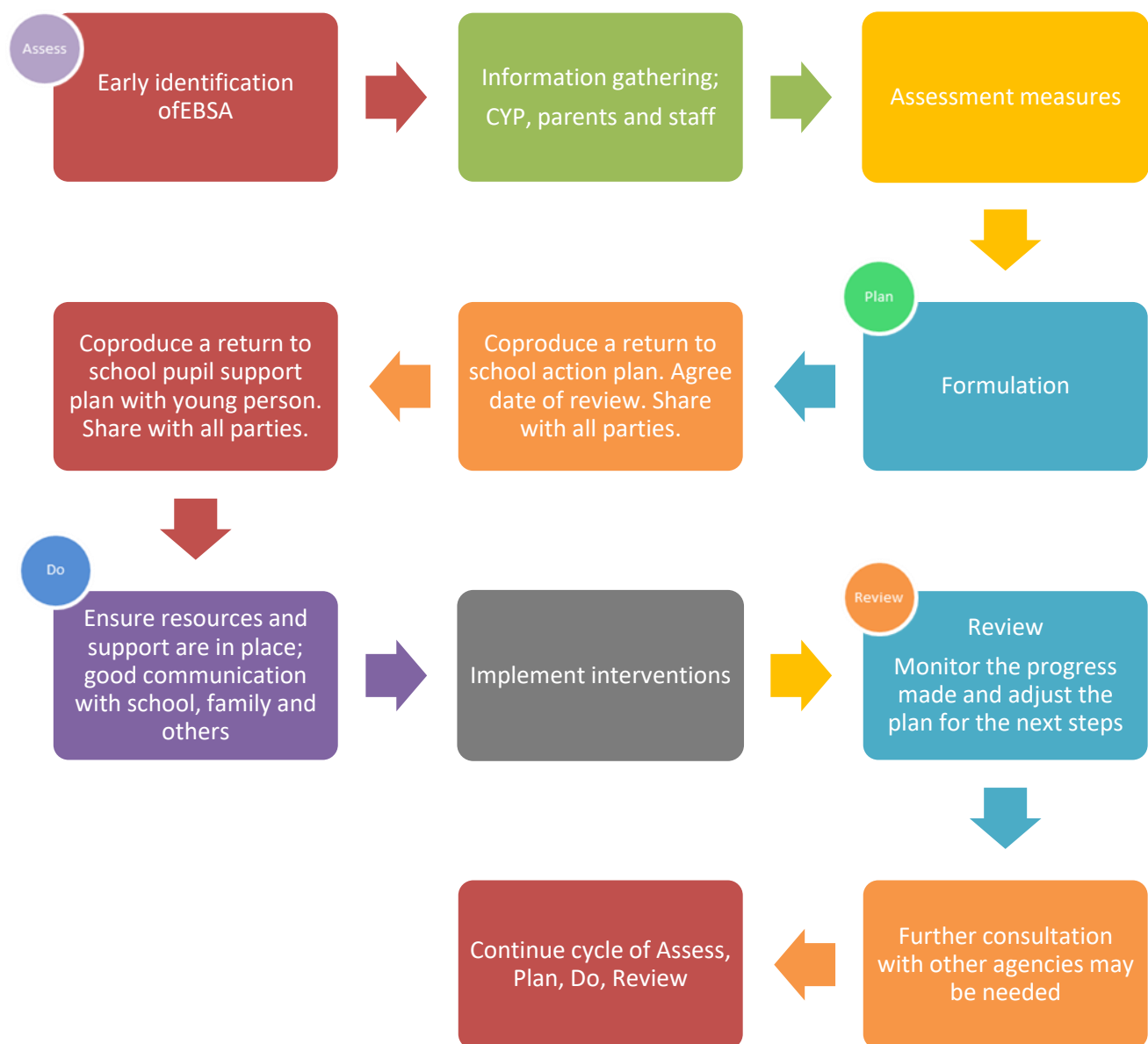
celebrate success!

situation and plan next steps. Plans may need maintaining or adapting to incorporate new outcomes or actions. The review is also an opportunity to identify if there needs to be further consultation with, or referrals to other agencies.

When the situation is positive and the young person is attending the times or activities agreed, it is important to follow the gradual steps outlined in the action plan. It may be tempting to skip a stage or increase expectations of attendance, however, this may not be helpful and could impact on the sense of trust the young person has with the school.

EBSA Support Cycle

Assess

Early identification ofEBSA

Information gathering; CYP, parents and staff

Assessment measures

Plan

Coproduce a return to school pupil support plan with young person. Share with all parties.

Coproduce a return to school action plan. Agree date of review. Share with all parties.

Formulation

Do

Ensure resources and support are in place; good communication with school, family and others

Implement interventions

Review

Review
Monitor the progress made and adjust the plan for the next steps

Continue cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Further consultation with other agencies may be needed

Support and Resources

Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is part of Wakefield Council. They work with individuals and groups of children, teachers, parents/carers and other agencies who may be involved with a child and their family, across a range of settings. The Educational Psychologist (EP) supports schools to develop their practices for inclusion and enable the school to meet the needs of pupils with complex needs, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Phone 01924 307 403   Email eps@wakefield.gov.uk

Web: Educational Psychology Service (mylocaloffer.org)

Wakefield Inclusion & Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Support Services

Wakefield Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Support Service is a service for educational settings that offers advice and training to schools within Wakefield Authority.

We are committed to offering support and training at an individual or whole school level in the areas of Autism, Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) SEMH and Learning Support.
- We provide a team of Inclusion teachers with individual areas of specialisms
- We offer an extensive support package from consultation and assessment to collaborative working with key school staff to deliver targeted interventions to support individual pupils.
- Bespoke training to school staff to develop and enhance good inclusive practice.

SEND Inclusion Advisory Teachers from what were CIAT, SEMH and LSS teams have been aligned to one of the larger Clusters:
1. Castleford and Airedale and Pontefract and Knottingley;
2. Normanton and Featherstone and South East
3. Wakefield Central and North West and South West.

Within each team there is a balance across each of the areas in terms of the specialisms. We are committed to offering support and training at an individual or whole school level in the areas of Autism, Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Behaviour and Emotional regulation and Learning Support.

Support from our service can be accessed through:
- Named SENSS Single point of contact – schools are aware of their link advisory teacher.
- Direct contact through our mailbox senss@wakefield.gov.uk
- Telephone 01924 303660

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is based in Normanton Town Hall. The role of an Education Welfare Officer is to advise parents/carers of their responsibilities and promote regular school attendance.

We work in partnership with schools to assist and support the integration of pupils into education by planning appropriate action to help them overcome their difficulties with school attendance.

The EWS will make appropriate contact with parents and young people and assess circumstances which have led to the breakdown of school attendance. Working with schools, parents/carers and other agencies to improve outcomes across a range of settings.

The EWS also advise and guide parents/carers in interpreting Admissions, EHE provision, Children Missing Education and Child Employment

Phone 01924 307413 / 307451

 E mail - ews@wakefield.gov.uk

ㅤㅤㅤㅤeducationcme@wakefield.gov.uk

ㅤㅤㅤㅤehe@wakefield.gov.uk

The Wakefield School Exclusions Team (SET)

The School Exclusion Team (SET) is based at Normanton Town Hall. We are the Local Authority's team that advises on exclusion from schools. We make sure that the government's exclusion guidance is followed to minimise disruption to a pupil's education.

We advise school staff, parents or carers, governors, professionals and others seeking support on the exclusion process. We support schools to use alternatives to exclusion and work in partnership with other services. We provide training to all involved in the exclusion process.

We also monitor all exclusions from maintained schools and academies in our district to produce data for reporting purposes to the government and Ofsted.

We provide an 'Exclusions Helpline' 5 days a week.

Phone: 01924 307319

E mail: exclusions@wakefield.gov.uk

Children First Hubs

The Children First Hubs work with families or young people who would like some extra support to deal with a difficult situation. Getting help early can stop things from getting worse and becoming harder to manage.

Children First Hubs will work alongside the professionals already involved with your family and can offer short term co-ordinated packages of support for a range of issues including:

- Family relationships
- Behaviours that are challenging
- School attendance
- Emotional and mental health
- Domestic abuse
- Parental conflict
- Housing issues
- Employment and debt problems

Castleford & Airedale:

Tel: 01977 724350
Email: cfhnortheast@wakefield.gov.uk

Pontefract & Knottingley:

Tel: 01977 724350
Email: cfhponteknottingley@wakefield.gov.uk

Normanton & Featherstone

Tel: 01924 307878
Email: cfhwakefieldwest@wakefield.gov.uk

South East:

Tel: 01977 722305
Email: cfhsoutheast@wakefield.gov.uk

South West:

Tel: 01924 303181
Email: cfhsouthwest@wakefield.gov.uk

Central:

Tel: 01924 303272
Email: cfhwakefieldwest@wakefield.gov.uk

Wakefield Virtual School

Children in Care and previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. The Virtual School Head and associated duties are a statutory function of a local authority and has a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential.

The duties are wide ranging and include:

- Raising the educational experiences, aspirations and outcomes of Children in Care
- Ensuring that the educational attainment and progress of CiC are monitored and evaluated as if these children attend a single school
- Ensuring the attainment and achievement gap is closing (compared with National Statistics)
- Ensuring the robust allocation and monitoring of Pupil Premium Plus to schools to improve the attainment of CiC and close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Supporting and monitoring the completion of high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes
- Providing training, support & development to all corporate parents and key stakeholders
- Providing advice to parents and guardians of previously looked after children in order to support their effective advocacy

Contact: virtualschool@wakefield.gov.uk

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

The CAMHS team works with children and young people with a range of difficulties that seriously impact on CYP's mental health and emotional well-being.

Direct referrals to the Community CAMHS teams are accepted from GPs, qualified social workers, educational psychologists and paediatricians. Health visitors and school nurses may refer with explicit agreement of the GP.

Tel: Wakefield CAMHS SPA team: 01977 735865

Website **www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/camhs-wakefield**

Wakefield Early Support Advice Information and Liaison (WESAIL)

Wakefield Early Support, Advice, Information and Liaison (WESAIL) provides a free, confidential and impartial service - which means we do not take sides and try to ensure everyone is given opportunities to express their views and feel listened to.
WESAIL provide information, advice, support and signposting according to need by either by telephone or where needed on an individual or targeted basis or through events and workshops. We share details of events on the Local Offer, our Facebook page and provide information through the Information Network.
WESAIL offers information covering a range of matters relating to Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) including education, health, social care, personalisation, personal budgets along with benefits and leisure.
The aim of the WESAIL service is to support children, young people, their parents, carers and families by providing information to navigate systems and processes so that they can play an active role in decision making about matters relating to their or their children's health, education, social care to support and empower them in meeting their child's needs and promoting self-advocacy.

Telephone: 07961 897036
Email: WESAIL@barnardos.org.uk
Website: https://barnardossendiass.org.uk/wakefield-sendiass/
Like our Facebook page: Wesail Wakefield

Further resources

Anxiety UK

Information and resources for parents of children who are experiencing anxiety.

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

WeHeartCBT

A collection of resources aimed at helping CYP who are struggling with anxiety and/or low mood. Resources are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and aimed at mental health professionals, schools and families.

www.weheartcbt.com/anxiety

Young Minds

Information, advice and publications on mental health with detailed sections on anxiety for young people, parents/carers and professionals. Includes a parent survival guide and monthly live parents lounge sessions with mental health professionals.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Not Fine in School

A parent-led organisation supporting families experiencing school refusal and attendance difficulties along with raising awareness of related issues. Lots of videos and support as well as guides for schools and families.

https://notfineinschool.org.uk/

MindEd

Some free online courses on how to support young people with mental health difficulties.

https://www.minded.org.uk/

MindEd for Families

Online advice and information to help you to understand and identify early signs and best support your child.

https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/

Contributors:

Wakefield Educational Psychology Service. With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Sheffield Educational Psychology Service for kindly sharing their resources and supporting our work.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - EBSA Whole School Audit

Leadership and Management	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
A designated member of SLT with responsibility for over-seeing arrangements for EBSA students			
Clear systems and processes for the early identification of EBSA with all staff			
Clear roles and responsibilities for Emotional Wellbeing leads and SENCO			
Governors have a knowledge and awareness of the complexities surrounding EBSA			
A committed and inclusive SLT which values all students and helps to foster a sense of belonging for all			
Reference to addressing social and emotional wellbeing including school avoidance within improvement plans and policies			
Ensure new initiatives and programmes reach across school and are sustainable			

Ethos and Environment	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
A safe and inclusive school environment e.g. bullying 'hot-spots' and stigma addressed, information available in different languages, good access for differently-abled, safe spaces, a range of playtime/break activities			
Supportive literature available for young people and parents			
Displays promote emotional wellbeing e.g. anti-bullying displays			
Relationships between staff and students and between students is recognised as being important to emotional wellbeing			
Systems in place to support foster a sense of belonging e.g. school council, house systems, circle time, performances and team sports			
A culture of communication and processes that ensure all young people's concerns can be addressed			
A safe, nurturing environment, where young people's self-worth and self-efficacy is encouraged			
Access to indicated provision e.g. safe places within school, key person			
Clear policies on attendance, behaviour, bullying and transition, highlighting support available and everyone's responsibilities			

Staff Development, Health and Wellbeing	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Regular whole school staff training in the fundamentals of young people's mental health (Healthy Minds)			
Whole school training on anxiety and EBSA			
Staff are aware of how anxiety may present in CYP and have strategies to respond at different stages			
All staff have a shared understanding of EBSA, are aware of EBSA risk factors, indicators and specific strategies and programmes to support young people showing signs of school avoidance			
Clear protocols regarding emotional support and stress management for staff including supervision if appropriate			
Work-life balance for staff is promoted			
Some INSET and staff meetings dedicated to staff wellbeing			
Support for staff to reflect on and to take actions to enhance their own wellbeing			
An appreciation of the contribution that every member of the school team makes			
Develop and use staff expertise and enthusiasms			

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Teaching of skills including resilience, problem-solving, coping skills, conflict resolution and how to understand and manage feelings			
High status given to PSHE and links made to other areas and whole school events			
Appropriate differentiation according to individual needs			
A wide and flexible curriculum, including enrichment and vocational opportunities			
Lessons around emotional and mental health are taught in a safe environment, e.g. with ground rules, avoiding triggers, using distancing techniques, ensuring pupils know where / how to ask for help if affected and pastoral support			
Monitoring and evaluation of lessons around emotional and mental health			

Pupil Voice	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Pupils have an authentic voice in teaching and learning			
Processes such as circle time, focus groups, and consultations	35		
Participatory groups such as the class / school council, Healthy Minds champions, eco-committee, healthy schools and peer mentors, including peer-led approaches			
Structures in place so that all pupils can be involved in decision-making, including those with additional learning needs			
Giving pupils opportunities to take responsibility for some aspects of school / college life e.g. peer support, reception duties, enterprise activities, school performances, charity events			

Identify needs and monitor impact	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Staff are aware of EBSA warning signs, risk and resilience factors etc.			
Staff have regular review meetings to discuss and identify any at risk or vulnerable students			
Identification and addressing of the emotional health needs of potentially vulnerable pupils e.g. young carers, those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, children in care, those at risk of exclusion from school, pupils with SEND etc			
Effective routes for self-referral for pupils, young people and staff to seek help if they have a concern or are in need of support e.g. worry boxes, school support, email addresses, visible Pastoral Leads, resources, agencies etc			
Provision and interventions designed to meet the emotional and mental health needs of pupils are monitored and evaluated for impact using the graduated response of assess, plan, do review			
For Healthy Minds schools, school use the Healthy Minds survey to identify the strengths and needs of the individual school community, followed by the Healthy Minds action plan Healthy Minds			
Well-being scales or measures used to identify pupil's emotional health and wellbeing needs.			

Targeted Support	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Targeted support is matched to pupil's specific needs through quality assessment practices			
A range of evidence-based interventions used by the school to meet the needs of targeted pupils	37		
Collaboration with other professionals working with the students			
Awareness by staff of the role of other agencies with regard to assessing and supporting students experiencing EBSA			
Awareness by staff of the processes and procedures for support and referral within and outside of school			

Working with parent carers	Current picture	Next steps	Comment
Communication to parents and carers about how the school supports pupils' emotional and mental health needs e.g. through home-school booklets, on the school website			
Clear processes and points of contact for parents and carers if they have concerns or information regarding their child's emotional or mental health, behaviour or any other concerns			
Resources (or appropriate sign-posting to resources) available for parents and carers which facilitate discussion of common issues such as change, losing friends, fear and divorce e.g. through books, leaflets, displays and school website			
The welcome and inclusion parents and carers in the school community, e.g. through participation in learning activities, assemblies, parent-teacher associations, policy development, etc			

Adapted from Emotional and Mental Health: A Resource for Schools, Derbyshire County Council

Appendix 2 - Profile of risk factors tool

Taken from West Sussex Emotionally Based School Avoidance Good practice guidance for schools and support agencies.

The risk factor profile consists of five key areas, each of which contain a number of items you are asked to consider in terms of their possible importance in influencing an emotionally based attendance problem. When completing the schedule, it is important to be as objective as possible, and to base assessments on evidence. Thus it is recommended that completion of the schedule is a joint venture, wherein checking and questioning can lead to the best judgements in terms of item importance. During the process of completing the schedule, it may be useful to note factors associated with particular items, such as:

- This has been an issue in the past, but doesn't appear to be now
- This has been an issue in the past, and has persisted as an important item

Items are not quantified by a typical rating scale, as one single item (e.g. death of a parent) could be proportionately much greater than a rating scale could accommodate. As such the schedule asks you to make notes on the key items of importance you identify.

If the resultant profile suggests to you that the pupil is at risk of emotionally based school refusal, continue with the cycle of assess, plan, do, review.

Name of child or young person: Key adult in school:

Date:

Loss and change	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Death of parent, relative, friend					
Death of pet					
Sudden traumatic event					
Sudden separation from parent					
Moving house, school, area					
Loss of classmate					
Parent, relative, friend illness					
Note on key items					

Family Dynamic	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Inappropriate parenting					
Birth of new child					
Parents separated					
Parents arguing/fighting					
Practical problems bringing child to school					
Problems with parental control					
Jealous of sibling at home					
Note on key items					

Social Personal	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Being bullied					
Seems to have few friends/friendship issues					
English as an additional language					
Dislikes play/break times					
Few leisure interests					
Note on key items					

Curriculum/Learning issues	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Low levels of literacy					
PE and/or games issues					
General learning difficulties					
Subject specific difficulties					
Exam or test anxiety					
Difficulties with a particular teacher/adult					
Problems keeping up in lessons					
Note on key items					

Psychological wellbeing	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Often seems tired					
Low self esteem					
Appears depressed					
Appears anxious					
Keeps feelings to them selves					
Has a pessimistic nature					
Note on key items					

Other issues	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Unknown
Note on key items					

Push and pull factors tool

Pull factors

Push factors

Neighbourhood

School

Peers

Family / Home

Child / YP

Taken from Collaborative working to promote Attendance and Psychological Wellbeing Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council 2019

Appendix 4 - Assessment measures

Spence Children's Anxiety scale

This is a psychological questionnaire designed to identify symptoms of anxiety in children and young people aged 8 – 15. Answers are scored and then interpreted. The test takes around 10 minutes to complete and is available in various languages. http://scaswebsite.com/

SDQ questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 3-16 year olds, giving information on 1) emotional symptoms, 2) conduct problems, 3) hyperactivity/inattention, 4) peer relationship problems, 5) prosocial behaviour.

It can be used as a pre and post intervention measure and is available in various languages. Information on scoring along with the questionnaires can be found at the website below. http://www.sdqinfo.org/a0.html

Scaling anxiety

5 Point Scale; this is both an assessment measure and an intervention. The 5 point scale can be used for young people of any age and is a tool to both assess current feelings of anxiety and to assist with developing coping strategies. Resources are free to download from here https://www.5pointscale.com/scales.html.

Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (and Subscales) (RCADS)

The Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) is a 47-item, youth self-report questionnaire with subscales including: separation anxiety disorder, social phobia, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and low mood (major depressive disorder). It also yields a Total Anxiety Scale and includes a parent version that assesses parent report of youth's symptoms of anxiety and depression across the same six subscales.

https://www.childfirst.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/163/2018/03/RCADSUsersGuide20150701.pdf

Sensory audit

Anxiety can be increased by sensory stimuli not normally noticed by others. With some children and young people, sensory stimuli may be one of the main sources of their anxiety and as such, it may be useful to assess their sensitivity to various sensory stimuli. An audit form can be downloaded from the Autism Education Trust website here

https://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/37.1-Sensory-audit-tool-for-environments.pdf

The Core (Child Outcome Research Consortium) group website has a range of other assessment measures which practitioners may find useful. https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/

Kearney's School Refusal Assessment Scale

Referenced heavily in the main document, Kearney's research and scale provide sound evidence based tools for professionals working with EBSA children and young people. Scores are added and compared to standardised values to give a measure of anxiety. It can be used pre and post intervention

https://www.oxfordclinicalpsych.com/view/10.1093/med:psych/9780195308297.001.0001/med-9780195308297-interactive-pdf-003.pdf

For Healthy Minds schools

The Healthy Minds survey can be used to identify the strengths and needs of the individual school community, followed by the Healthy Minds action plan. See Healthy Minds website

Stirling children's well-being scale

This is a holistic, positively worded scale, developed by the Stirling Educational Psychology Service, that is suitable for educational professionals looking to measure emotional and psychological well-being in children aged eight to 15 years. *Stirling Wellbeing Scale*

Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS)

A positively worded scale that can be used to measure well-being with young people aged 13 and over. It is recommended that it is used with samples of over 100 people. The shorter version, which has seven questions, can be found at WEMWBS

Anna Freud Resources

Further information about using well-being measures can be found here Anna Freud Organisation Well-being Measures Guidance

PASS software

A number of schools nationally and organisations internationally (https://gl-assessment.co.uk/partners) have used the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) software to assess all pupils' well-being, discover hidden barriers to learning and plan interventions. It takes 20 minutes for the CYP to complete and is an online resource producing results which are colour-coded using a simple traffic light system – a powerful way to identify areas of concern across a small group or whole cohort of pupils. https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/pupil-attitudes-to-self-and-school-pass/

PASS SOFTWARE

Appendix 5a - Card Sort: Function of School Avoidance

This card sort activity, based on a School Refusal Assessment Scale developed by Kearney (2002), has been devised by Sheffield EPS (shared with permission) as a tool to support staff to develop a greater understanding of a young person's school avoidance. The 24 statements are colour-coded by the function of behaviour identified by Kearney and Silverman (1990). By asking a CYP to sort the statements or by talking about each one, mentors may find that using the cards can support an understanding of the function of the school avoidance behaviour.

Blue, Function 1: To avoid something or situations that elicits negative feelings or high levels of stress or anxiety (e.g. fear of the toilets; the noise in the playground; lots of people moving all together in the corridors between classes, tests/ exams)

Red, Function 2: To escape difficult social situations (e.g. feeling left out at playtime, reading out loud in class or other public speaking/group task, working as part of a group)

Green, Function 3: To get attention from or spend more time with significant others at home (e.g. change in family dynamic, concerned about the well-being of parent)

Yellow, Function 4: To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating (e.g. watch tv, go shopping, play computer games, hang out with friends).

How the statements could be used with a CYP:

- Cut up the statements
- Ask the CYP to sort the statements into three groups, shown on the white cards: A bit like me, most like me and least like me
- Using the key below, consider if any patterns are noticeable and whether some functions are more prevalent than others
- If the CYP is comfortable, discuss the statements to help build a richer picture

Consider together how this information can help to plan the next steps

I have bad feelings about going to school because I am afraid of something related to school (e.g. tests, school bus, teacher, fire alarm)

I stay away from school because it is hard to speak with the other kids at school

I would rather be with my parent(s) than go to school

When I am not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), I leave the house and do something fun

I stay away from school because I will feel sad or depressed if I go

I stay away from school because I feel embarrassed in front of other people at school

I think about my parents or family when in school

When I am not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), I talk to or see other people (other than your family)

I feel worse at school (e.g., scared, nervous, sad) compared to how I feel at home with friends

I stay away from school because I do not have many friends there

I would rather be with my family than go to school

When I am not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), I enjoy doing different things (e.g., being with friends, going places)

I have bad feelings about school (e.g., scared, nervous, sad) when I think about school on Saturday and Sunday

I stay away from places in school (e.g., hallways, places where certain groups of people are) where I would have to talk to someone

I would rather be taught by my parents at home than by my teacher at school

I stay away from school because I want to have fun outside of school

If I had less bad feelings (e.g., scared, nervous, sad) about school, it would be easier for me to go to school

If it were easier for me to make new friends, it would be easier for me to go to school

It would be easier for me to go to school if my parents went with me

It would be easier for me to go to school if I could do more things I like to do after school hours (e.g., being with friends)

I have bad feelings about school (e.g., scared, nervous, sad) compared to other kids of my age?

I often stay away from people in school compared to other kids of my age

I would like to be home with my parents more than other kids my age would

I would rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids of my age

Most Like Me

A Bit Like Me

Least Like Me

Think about the type of school you would want to go to. What would it be like?
What would be there?

Instructions
Part 1: Drawing the kind of school you would NOT like to go to.
Help your child to make a sketch or talk to you about the type of school they would want to go to by reading out these questions.
 1. **The School**
Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of this paper.
Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

 2. **The Classroom**
Think about the sort of classroom you would not like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school. Draw some of the things in this classroom.

 3. **The Children**
Think about some of the children at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

 4. **The Adults**
Think about some of the adults at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of the adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

 5. **Me**
Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

Part 2: Drawing the kind of school you would like to go to:
 6. **The School**
Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of the middle of this paper.
Tell me three things about this school. What kind if school is this?

 7. **The Classroom**
Think about the sort of classroom you would like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in this school. Draw some of the things in this classroom.

 8. **The Children**
Think about some of the children at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children

 9. **The Adults**
Think about some of the adults at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

 10. **Me**
Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

IN MY IDEAL SCHOOL THERE WOULD BE . . . .
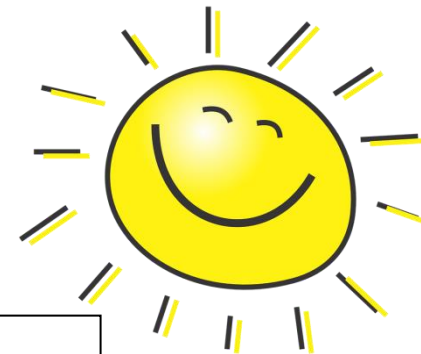
IN THE SCHOOL I WOULD NOT LIKE THERE TO BE . . . .

Example of the type of school I would not want to go to

Example of the type of school I would want to go to

With thanks to www.HumansNotRobots.co.uk for sharing this resource

Instructions

Administration

1. Ask the student to meet with a teacher, mentor or teaching assistant they are familiar with.

2. The member of staff goes through each item in sequence and asks the student to rate themselves, by highlighting or putting a cross through the *best fit* answer.

3. With each item, the member of staff also asks the student to identify reasons. The student is unlikely to find this easy – questions such as *"What happens during this part of the day?", "What do you see?", "What do you hear?"* are more likely to elicit a response rather than *"Why did you put this?"* Make a note of any indicative words / phrases such as 'teacher shouting', 'swearing', 'queuing up', 'too busy' etc. on the recording sheet.

If the student identifies another student as causing stress, write their name as initials to maintain confidentiality.

4. At the end of the items, it may also be useful to ask students to undertake a similar rating activity with their timetable to identify any subjects / peer groups they may find stressful. These can also be noted on the recording sheet.

5. Finally, ask the students if there is anything else that they find particularly easy and enjoyable or particularly 'annoying', 'difficult' etc. about school. These can also be noted on the recording sheet.

Scoring

The scoring below is not an exact science – it is based on averages / a 'rule of thumb' rather than standardisation.

12 → 18	19 → 36	37 → 48
High and regular stress levels. Student will require additional support in managing their day-today stress levels.	Specific points of stress that may need further attention. Possibility that the student is 'masking' high stress levels.	Based on the answers given, student appears to generally have low day-to-day stress levels in school.

School Stress Survey

☹	I very often or always feel stress at this. I can't cope with it.	😐	I sometimes feel stress. I don't like it but I can cope.	☺	I feel OK about this. I can cope with it easily.

1. Getting Up & Ready

☹ – 😐 – ☺

2. Journey To & From

☹ – 😐 – ☺

3. Assembly

☹ – 😐 – ☺

4. Corridors

☹ – 😐 – ☺

5. Written Work

☹ – 😐 – ☺

6. Break Times

☹ – 😐 – ☺

7. Teacher Q&A

☹ – 😐 – ☺

8. Team / Group Work

☹ – 😐 – ☺

9. Lunch Times

☹ – 😐 – ☺

10. 1 to 1 with Adults

☹ – 😐 – ☺

11. Tests

☹ – 😐 – ☺

12. Homework

☹ – 😐 – ☺

School Stress Survey – Recording Sheet

Item	Score ☹=1 😐=2 ☺=4	Indicative Words / Phrases
1. Getting Up & Ready		
2. Journey To & From		
3. Assembly		
4. Corridors		
5. Written Work		
6. Break Times		
7. Teacher Q&A		
8. Team / Group Work		
9. Lunch Times		
10. 1 to 1 with Adults		
11. Tests		
12. Homework		
Total Score:		

Timetable Issues	
Other Issues	

Appendix 5d - Suggested Scripts

A good example of a set of scripts to use to gather the child's view comes from Solihull's guidance, p21.

	What makes it more likely that I will come to school?	**What makes it less likely that I will come to school?**
Child/ YP	• How I would describe myself as a learner… • Things I like about school… • What I find easy… • What I am good at…	• How I would describe myself as a learner… • Things I don't like about school… • What I find hard… • What I am not so good at…
Family/ Home	• Some good things about my family are… • I would describe my family as… • How others might describe my family… • Things I miss about school when I am at home… • To help me get / feel ready for school in the morning, I like to…	• Sometimes I don't like leaving my family/home and coming to school because… • I would describe my family as… • How others might describe my family… • When I stay at home, I like/enjoy… • Things I miss about home when I come to school… • People I miss at home when I come to school…
Peers	• Other children at school and/or friends make me feel… • People I enjoy spending time with at school… • During my free times (break, lunch etc.), I like to… • Social situations/activities that I look forward to in school…	• Other children at school and/or friends make me feel… • Activities / social situations that I do not look forward to in school… • I don't like play/free times in school when…
School	• I would describe school	• I would describe school as…

	- as… - Lessons I enjoy… because… - Things about school that I find difficult… - When I think about school, I feel… - I would describe my teachers in school as… - Things that people do that helps me in school…	- Lessons I don't enjoy… because… - Things about school that I find enjoy… - When I think about school, I feel… - I would describe my teachers in school as… - Things that I feel worried about in school…
Neighbourhood	- Things I link about the area I live in… - When I'm not at school, I spend time doing… - Where I like spending time when I'm not at home… - When I'm not at school, I spend time with…	- Things I don't like about the area I live in… - When I'm not at school, I spend time with… - When I'm not at school, I spend time doing…

Appendix 6 - Information Gathering from parents with prompts

School staff may find it helpful to use these themes and question prompts during the initial meeting with parents. Sensitivity and active listening skills will be crucial at this stage.

Theme	Possible questions
Family dynamics It can be helpful to gain an understanding the young person's life journey and significant events which may have impacted upon their lived experiences.	• Could you describe your family? Or draw your family tree? • Who is X closest to in the family? Has this always been the case? • Have there been any changes within the family recently? Or are there any upcoming changes in the near future? • Was anything different in your family at the time that you noticed X's difficulties increasing? • Have there been any significant life events that X has experienced? Or any important losses/bereavements/long-term illness? • When X does not attend school, how does this impact upon the family? What are you doing if X does not go to school?
Strengths, interests and aspirations	• What is X good at? What do they like doing? • Do they have any hopes for the future? Do they know what they want their life to be like when they are an adult?
Developmental and educational history	• What was X like as a young child? • Can you tell me about their early experiences at school? The primary school, at the start of secondary school?
Relationships	• Does X talk about any other children? What does s/he say? • Does X talk about any adults within school? What does s/he say? • Who does X get on with…who doesn't X get on with? • Does X interact with other students out of school? • Which friendship groups are significant?
Academic progress	• School should be aware if the young person has identified SEN needs and should ask about these needs and the support in place. • If there is no identified SEN school should ask if they have any concerns, or if the child has spoken about difficulties.
Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety	• When X is worried what does it look like? • What do they say they are feeling? • Is X's sleeping and eating affected?
The child's view – fears and worries	• Has X spoken to you about what X finds difficult about school? What do they say?
The child's view – going well in school	• Has X mentioned anything that is going well in school? (e.g.teachers, lessons, friends)
Typical day	• What does a typical day look like for X / yourself when they do/do not attend school? • Take me through it, what happens from the moment they wake, to the moment they sleep…
Parental views on the reasons for EBSA	• Why do you think X has difficulty attending school? (ask each parent separately) • If (other parent/ sibling/Grandparent) were here what would they say? • Are there any differences of views about the reasons and what should be done within the family?
Exceptions These questions can help shift the focus away from the presenting problem, to consider aspects within a situation which are working well or supporting the young person not to get worse.	• Tell me about the times when X is not feeling X • Tell me about the times when X is feeling less X • Tell me about the times when X has coped well • Tell me about the days/times of day when you think something has gone well for X. What is different during these times? • Tell me about the times when X has managed to go to school. What was different about these times? • Tell me what other people have done that has been useful/helpful for X.
Previous attempts to address the problem	• What has helped in the past when things have been difficult? • What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their anxiety?

Appendix 7 - Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) School Staff information gathering form

[insert name] is currently experiencing difficulties attending school, as such we would like to gather as much information as possible from any staff member working with them. Please complete this form providing as much information as possible. Feel free to leave any sections blank. Please treat this information as confidential.

[insert name] has stated that they are / are not happy for you to discuss this with them. Their key staff member to contact is [insert staff member name]

Name of young person	
Your job role	
Description Please describe this young person	
Strengths What is going well?	
Difficulties What things do they find difficult?	
Emotional difficulties Have you observed any emotional difficulties at school? What have these been? When did/do they occur?	
Response to academic tasks Are they engaged and motivated with their learning? Are they making progress? If not, why do you think this may be?	
Relationships with peers How do they get on with their friends/ other peers	
Relationships with adults How do they get on with you and other adults?	
Support What support do you provide? How do they respond to this support?	
What is your understanding of their attendance problems?	

Any other information you feel is important	
Further support Have you got any ideas for further support? What do you think would help in school?	63

Appendix 8a - EBSA Formulation Template

Name		School	
Year group		Key school staff	

Other agencies involved:

Description of behaviour

Risk factors – school, child, family

Strengths and protective factors

Formulation and integration of various factors

Appendix 8b - EBSA Formulation Template – Suggested Questions

Taken from West Sussex's and Solihull's guidance

Name		School	
Year group		Key school Staff	

Other agencies involved:

Description of behaviour

- What is the current rate of attendance?
- Are there any patterns to non-attendance e.g. particular lessons or days?
- When did the behaviour first occur?
- What does the behaviour look like? What does the child/young person say about specific fears and difficulties?

Risk factors – school, child, family

- Developmental and educational history (health, medical, sensory or social factors)
- Any changes in family dynamic? (separation, loss, birth of a sibling, health issues of other family members)
- Any other needs within the family?
- Use Profile of Risk Factors tool in Appendix 2 to record risk factors

Strengths and protective factors

- What strengths does the CYP person have?
- What are the CYP's aspirations or ambitions?
- What positive relationships do they have at home and school?
- What positive experiences have they had at school?
- What was different about the times when the young person was able to get to school?
- What has been helpful in the past?

Formulation and integration of various factors

- What is people's understanding of why the young person is demonstrating these behaviours?
- Are there any differences of views?
- What risk factors have been identified (child, school and family)?
- What strengths have been identified that can be built on?
- What is the **function** of the behaviour – is it:
  - To avoid something or situations that elicit negative feelings or high levels of stress (e.g. fear of the toilets, playground noise, busy corridors, tests/exams).
  - To escape difficult social situations (e.g. feeling left out at playtime, reading out loud n class, public speaking, working as a group).
  - To get attention from or spend more time with significant others (e.g. change in family dynamic, concerned about the well-being of a parent).
  - To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating (e.g. shopping, playing computer games, spending time with friends).
- Are there any maintaining factors?

Appendix 9 - Return to school action plan template

Name: **Year group:**   **Date:**

Coproduction; working together with everyone involved	Personalisation	A focus on reintegration as early as possible	The identification of a key adult
The identification of a safe place	Realistic and achievable outcomes and steps	Gradual and graded steps	Direct and regular phone contact between school and parents and carers
A recognition that full integration may not happen quickly	Early home visitis if appropriate	Consideration of the needs of the family; a hollistic approach	

Contributors:

Who is involved?

Key adult: **Safe place:**   **Date of next review:**

Regular communication between home and school will take place:

When? Who? How?

Hoped for outcomes:

What do we hope to see as a result?

Steps	Agreed Action	Pre-action evaluation	Post action evaluation
What is a realistic expectation given our starting point? How can we write this as a SMART target?	Intervention/Strategy What? Who? How often? For how long? Consider school, family and child	What is the current situation?	What is the situation now? Are outcomes reached? Has progress been made towards the outcomes?

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Hoped for outcomes

Each action plan will be bespoke to each CYP; the number of steps required will vary from CYP to CYP.

Return to school support plan

Name: Date:

At school these things can make me feel upset:

My Monday morning plan:

When I get to school:

My key adult/s in school is/are:

I can speak to my key adult/s at (times):

I can speak to my key adult/s in (place):

Places in school I can go to where I feel safe and supported:

I can go to my safe spaces at/when:

At break times and lunch times I will:

Until _____ my return to school plan includes the following changes to my attendance:

(Identify any changes to days or times they come in)

Timetable changes:

(Identify any changes needed and what should happen/where they should go instead)

My agreed signal for when I am starting to feel overwhelmed is:

Any other changes:

Identify any other changes to routines (break, lunch times, changes between lessons etc.), classroom expectations (not expected to read aloud, work in pairs etc.) or homework.

When I start to get upset, I notice these things about myself:

When I start to get upset, others notice these things about me:

Things I can do to make myself feel better when I'm at school:

Things that other people (staff and friends) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school:

Things that my family can do to support me to attend school:

This plan will be reviewed regularly so that it remains helpful.

Review date:

My signature   Key adult's signature   Parent signature

Other people who have access to the plan are:

What is CBT?	CBT looks at the relationship and interaction between our thoughts (cognition), our feelings (emotions) and our actions (behaviours). Specifically, our thoughts determine our feelings and our behaviour. Unhelpful or unrealistic thoughts can cause us distress and problems.
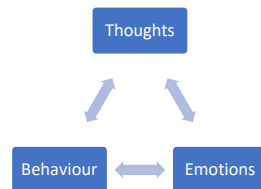
The CYP is encouraged to focus on the problems they are experiencing, consider why the problems are occurring and explore strategies to help address these. The CYP takes an active role in solving their problems.

Key Concepts	Within CBT, thought patterns are believed to form the basis of behaviours, so the CYP is supported to identify:

- unhelpful (negative, unrealistic) thoughts
- unhelpful behaviour patterns
- the links between their thoughts and behaviour
- ways to challenge their negative thoughts and behaviour

CBT has a robust evidence base (Hofmann et al, 2012) and has proven to be an effective form of intervention for use with CYP in schools (Stallard, 2005, Werner-Seidler et al, 2017).

What does the research say?	Typical difficulties that can be supported through CBT-based approaches include: emotional regulation difficulties, social relationships and barriers to learning (NICE, 2013). The time limited, goal-orientated and flexible nature of CBT is well suited for use within educational settings (Mennuti et al, 2012).

References as cited in the Solihull guide. |

|	
Examples of interventions	
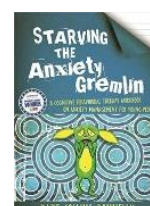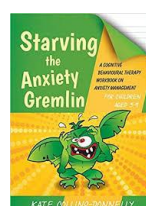
using CBT principles	**Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People** and **Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management.**

Kate Collins-Donnelly has written two books that can be worked through by children and young people. Activities involve puzzles, stories, quizzes along with writing and drawing activities. Chapters and activities can be 'dipped into' and relevant pages may be photocopied.

https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/products/children-and-anxiety/starving-anxiety-gremlin/
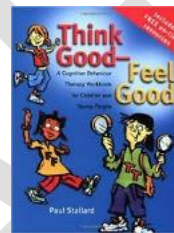
Think Good, Feel Good A Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Workbook for Children and Young People

Paul Stallard has written a practical resource in print and online with a range of activities and worksheets. The book contains 10 modules that can be worked through as a complete programme or sections can be adapted for individual use.

FRIENDS For Life, Fun FRIENDS and My FRIENDS Youth
Are school-based anxiety prevention and resilience building programmes developed by Dr. Paula Barrett in Australia.

FRIENDS is an acronym for the skills taught throughout the programme:

F Feelings

R Remember to Relax -have quiet time.

I I can do it! I can try (Inner helpful thoughts)

E Explore Solutions and Coping Step Plans.

N Now reward yourself! You've done your best!

D Don't forget to practice.

S Smile! Stay calm, Stay Strong and talk to your support networks!

CBT information and worksheets can be accessed for free at https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/cbt/none

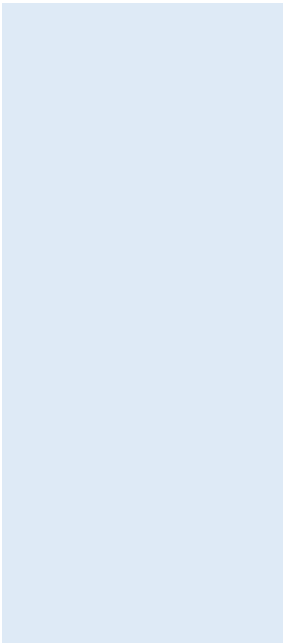|	
What is gradual exposure?	Gradual exposure involves gradually facing your fears and worries by gradually putting yourself into situations that you would normally avoid because of your anxiety. This can be done by creating an exposure ladder or anxiety/avoidance hierarchy. Gradual exposure can form part of a CBT approach.
Key Concepts	• This approach is based on the belief that the more we do something that we are afraid of, or are exposed to something that we are afraid of, the less afraid we tend to be and the easier it becomes to be in that situation. • The goal of exposure is to gradually expose ourselves to whatever it is that we are avoiding, which helps us reduce the anxiety. • We are more likely to reach our goals if we don't avoid, but by doing the exposure exercises the anxiety can actually become less, so we feel better. • Desensitization: We can make our brain less sensitive to certain anxiety triggers through experience and over time. Exposure and desensitization are just one set of skills used in CBT. It works best when we know what triggers our anxiety, and are aware of avoidance and safety behaviours that we use when anxiety presents itself.
What does it involve?	1. Draw a ladder. 2. On the top rung of the ladder, write the final step that you want to achieve. This will differ depending on the child, it may be a full week in school, a day, a full lesson or going into the lunch hall. 3. On the bottom rung of the ladder, write the first thing you want to do to face your anxiety. This needs to be an action that is currently in reach. 4. Put other steps on the rungs, gradually building up to reach the top rung.

5. Ensure steps are small and achievable.

6. Start to carry out the action on the first step.

7. Measure your anxiety on a scale of 1 -10 or 1 -100, with 10 or 100 being the most anxiety-provoking situation.

8. Move on to the next rung when you feel ready.

9. Reward yourself for achieving each step.

10. If one step seems unachievable, think about how you could break it down further and smaller, more manageable steps.
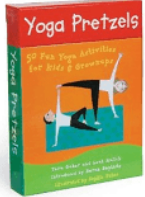
It is important to work with the young person to think about what **coping technique** (e.g. thinking, grounding, relaxation, distraction) they will use as they work though the rungs on the ladder and what **support** will be in place for them within school.

	Relaxation and Distraction exercises

There are lots of different exercises and strategies that can help people to relax, either as part of their daily routine or when they notice they are starting to feel anxious. Here are just a few for you to explore. The young person may need support in trying out a range of techniques to find what works best for them.

Yoga	Some CYP find yoga helpful in helping them to relax. Cosmic Kids yoga has many videos suitable for younger children. https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga
Breathing exercises	There are many different breathing exercises to try, including 5 finger breathing, star breathing, box and belly breathing. Below are some examples: Three-Part Breath - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrTW5MhWuvI Original, Full Belly Breathing - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaB_6LOlOLw Alternate Nostril Breathing - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me4MC0zusiQ&t=14s Extended exhalation - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7jxstPKQXw&t=97s
Grounding exercises	Grounding exercises can be helpful during anxiety or a panic attack by helping to ground the person in the present. Try the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise with the CYP. They name 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell and one thing they can taste.
Mindfulness exercises	Research has shown that mindfulness can help to reduce anxiety. Techniques include the Body scan: Sit or Lie down somewhere comfortable, close your eyes, tightly squeeze every muscle in your body, squish your toes and feet, fingers and hands, after a few minutes release all your muscles and relax. Suggested websites: https://www.smilingmind.com.au/mindfulness The Mindfulness Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUgSqi3itBTJMjC6SvgjByA https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids http://www.mindfulgnats.com/ (also available as an app)
	Visualisation is another powerful technique that can help people unwind and relieve stress. Visualisation uses mental imagery to reach a more relaxed state of mind.

Visualisation exercises	Support the child to imagine: A funny image A happy place A calming place Throwing their worries away
Do what you enjoy!	Doing the activities that we enjoy can help us relax so it may be useful to support the child to identify these and help them to find ways to incorporate them into their day.

	Other useful Anxiety Management tools
Worry Time	Worry time is a set time in the day where a CYP can focus on their worries either by themselves through drawing or writing, or with another person through talking. Having a fixed and limited time to concentrate on your worries can help reduce the amount of time you spend thinking about them. In this time, the CYP should identify what is worrying them and what they can do to address the worry.
 Worry Monster	Some children find a worry monster helpful. They can write/draw their worries, or tell an adult who writes them down and then the child can feed their worries to the worry monster's mouth. Worry monsters can be bought or easily made out of a cardboard box and some craft materials.
Journaling	Journaling or keeping an anxiety diary can support the CYP in working through anxious feelings.
 Talking	Talking to other people can help to manage anxiety as it provides an opportunity to express feelings, challenge thinking and problem solve. It can be helpful for the CYP to identify who they can talk to about their worries.
Books about anxiety	Books can be a useful tool in helping the CYP and adults to understand more about their anxiety.
Social Scripts	Working with the CYP to plan what they are going to say to their peers if they are asked about their absence can be helpful for some CYP and alleviate some worries.
5 point scale 	The 5 point scale can be used as a way of supporting CYP to understand and manage overwhelming feelings. It can be used with CYP of all ages and begins with an exploration of emotions. CYP can then use the scale to describe how they are feeling, and what these feelings may look or sound like. With the mentor, they can explore situations that may make them feel a certain way and move to describing how to reduce overwhelming or difficult emotions. The scales that the CYP makes can be used as a communication tool for example, making into a keyring or

	using different coloured cards or bracelets to let adults know that they feel a certain way. There are free downloadable resources available on the website below. https://www.5pointscale.com/

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What is a solution focused approach?	Solution focused interventions are strength based, and person-centred approaches. They replace the focus from problems and the past to building positive solutions and making progress. The CYP is supported to focus on and define a preferred future, share best hopes and consider strengths and what is going well. During a situation that can feel overwhelming for a CYP, a solution focused approach can help bring about a shift in the CYP's thinking, in which they are able to see a more positive future and recognise how they can use their own resources to move in the right direction.
Key Concepts	View the CYP as the expert in their life Progress and future focused CYP are supported to draw upon their own skills, strategies and ideas Recognise that there are always exceptions to the problem, for example when the problem is not happening, it occurs less or has less of an impact on the CYP
Examples of interventions using a solution focused approach	The Miracle Question is an example of a creative solution focused intervention that uses a goal setting question to help focus on the possibilities. The adult/mentor asks the CYP to imagine an ideal future and then asks questions to connect it to the present. See the following page for suggested script and guidance for The Miracle Question. A range of solution focused tools including Time Machine and Changing the Channel can be found in this booklet: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2015/solution-focused-practice-toolkit

The Miracle Question

I want you to imagine that after our session, you go home, have dinner, do all of your usual tasks and go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning, the problem that bought you here today has disappeared. You won't know that it has disappeared because you were asleep while the miracle happened.

When you wake up the next morning, how are you going to start discovering that the miracle happened? ... What else are you going to notice? What will you see/hear? How will you feel? How will you act? What will be different?

What will you be doing that is different? How will you respond when x happens?
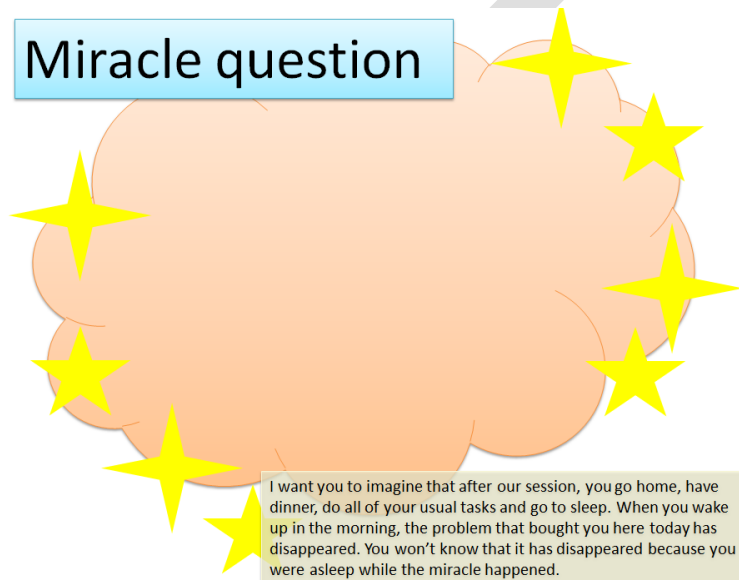
Scaling
Once the miracle day has been explored, the mentor can then begin to ask scaling questions.

_____

0   **10**

On a scale where 0 is the worst things have ever been, and 10 is this miracle day, where are you now?

Where would it need to be for you to know that the problem has gone away?

What will be the first things that will let you know you are 1 point higher.

The mentor can then ask: what would be stopping you from moving one point down the scale? What would make you move one point up the scale? Where would be good enough? What would this day look like?