

# EBSA

EMOTION  
BASED  
SCHOOL AVOIDANCE



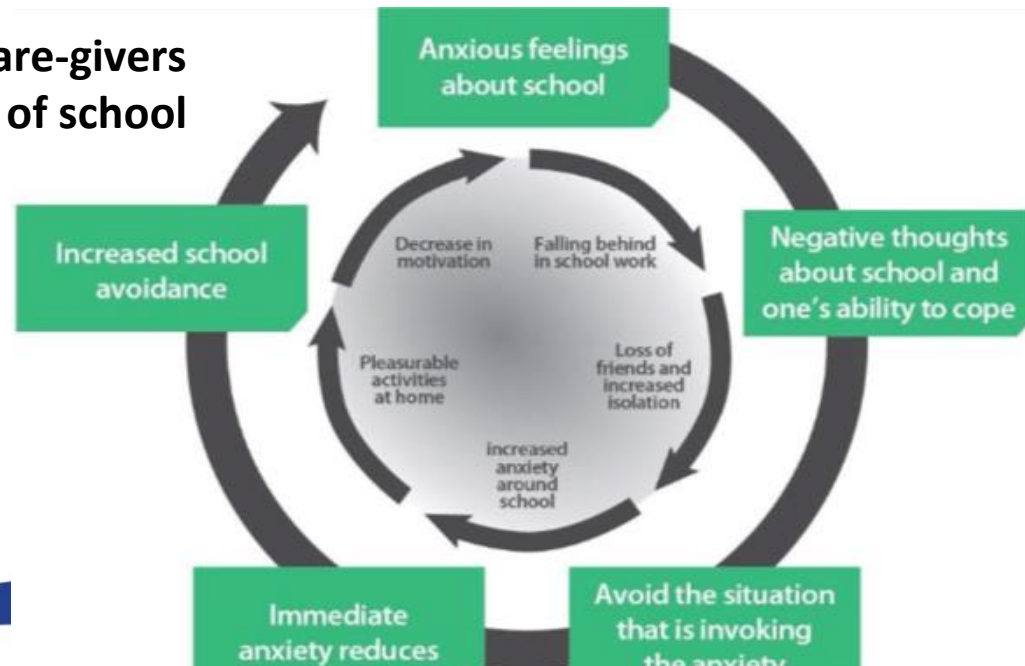
# What is EBSA?

- **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 experience difficulties attending school due to emotional distress.
- 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. Often, the young person's anxiety will reduce during weekends or school holidays



# REASONS FOR EBSA

- **Avoiding things at School that make them feel anxious/sad – academic or personal**
  - Bullying
  - Literacy/Numeracy/School work
  - Teams – choosing teams and responsibility to others
  - Testing
- **Avoid social situations or being evaluated/analysed**
  - Break/lunch times
  - Making and maintaining friendships
  - Understanding social conventions
  - Group tasks
  - Peer pressure and social expectations
  - Teacher/School expectations
  - Presentations
  - Sporting events
- **Gaining attention from parent/family/care-givers**
- **Aiming to gain tangible rewards outside of school**
  - Staying at home with a parent,
  - Home activities rather than being at school
  - 1:1 with parent/care-giver



## ROUTINES IN SCHOOL

Bespoke timetables, changes to start/end of day, change of entry to school (to reduce anxiety), Breakfast club to build positive routines, allocated key member of staff, Clear and consistent rules & routines, Calming/mindfulness activities to start the day, 'Meet & greet' at the start of the day,

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY

Regular meetings with home, celebrating successes – no matter how small, arrangements for pupil to contact home for reassurance, working with parent, Ongoing dialogue with family, encourage the parent/family to manage their own anxiety, Encourage/support the parent/family to set boundaries and limits to C/YP behaviour, Practical support for parents

## INTERVENTIONS

Time out cards, light touch daily mentoring, interventions focusing on resilience/anxiety, use of nurture space with planned reintegration back into mainstream, ELSA training for TA/HTLA, Pastoral team to support, Emotion regulation strategies, Confidence and self-esteem building activities/interventions – leadership/outward bound/The Arts etc.

## AUDITING NEED

Strength/need questionnaires, Stronger schools website, auditing the worried/needs of the child/young person – bullying, sensory needs, Auditing the PUSH & PULL factors, [Audit C/YP strengths and talents and motivations at/about school, Action plan based on needs,

## OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Healthy mind teams, Emotional resilience team, Early Help, - family support worker, Lifecycles service/CYPS, Educational Psychology service, Services for young people, Attendance team, Connexions, KOOTH, School nurse, Contact HMT or other agencies – regarding missed appointments and contact family



# EARLY INTERVENTION

- Clear systems for early identification for pastoral issues and attendance difficulties
- Staff training/awareness of red flags of those C/YP at risk of EBSA
- Act early to address patterns of absence – mentoring, attendance rewards, liaising with parents/families
- Early plans and planning for transitions
- Working in a flexible manner paying attention to the individual case and function served by non-attendance.

## RISKS:

- **SCHOOL FACTORS** – bullying, academic difficulties, transition, difficulties assimilating into new school or year group, structure of the school day, academic demand, journey/travelling to school, exams/tests, size of school, relationship difficulties – peer pressure, social expectations etc.
- **FAMILY FACTORS** – Change in family circumstances, parental health problems (clinically vulnerable), overprotective parenting styles, complex family situations, loss/bereavement, family stress, family history of EBSA, being a young carer
- **C/YP FACTORS** – fear of failure, social difficulties, personality style – emotional, lack of self-confidence, illness, undiagnosed learning needs, separation anxiety, traumatic events/ACEs, feeling overwhelmed, medical difficulties



# PARENTAL SUPPORT

## YOUNG MINDS & PARENTKIND

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-school-anxiety-and-refusal/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3901/supporting-your-child-at-school.pdf>
- <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Parents/School-refusal---a-problem-for-the-whole-family->

