Guidance for Schools

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

This document was developed by the Educational Psychology Learning Set on Emotionally Based School Avoidance, with input from the Attendance Team, ESMA, the Advisory Teacher Service and DSPL8.

Contents

Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide schools with information regarding Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). The intended audience for this document includes, but is not restricted to, Headteachers, Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCos) and key members of the pastoral staff team, including Heads of Year. It is hoped that some of the key information from this document will be shared across school settings so that all staff are aware of the signs and know who to speak to when a child or young person's (CYP) attendance starts to decline.

This document aims to empower schools to intervene early while waiting for additional support from partnership agencies. It aims to do this by:
- Developing staff understanding of EBSA
- Helping staff implement adjustments to support CYPs who experience EBSA as part of the Assess – Plan – Do – Review (APDR) process to help them to manage in school
- Sharing information about other services that can support schools when CYPs experience EBSA.

This document is split into different sections as follows:
- Frameworks for understanding EBSA
- General principles for supporting CYPs with EBSA
- Whole school preventative and proactive approaches
- How to identify students who may be at risk of developing EBSA, including noticing the early signs
- Assessing CYPs experiencing EBSA
- Strategies and action planning to support CYPs who are experiencing EBSA
- A toolkit of practical resources you can use to assess and work with CYPs with EBSA
- A list of further resources that can be used at both the 'Assess' and 'Do' stages of the APDR cycle.

This document explores different levels of intervention and support. It is key that adults around the CYP work together in a holistic approach to support the individual CYP's needs.

This document should be read alongside the APDR guidance created by the Educational Psychology Service, as this process should be used when implementing any changes in school for an individual CYP.

Introduction

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) describes CYPs who experience difficulties attending school due to emotional distress (West Sussex County Council, 2018). The degree of school avoidance can vary from minor to more prolonged absences. It excludes situations where school attendance difficulties are due to physical illnesses, the parent withdrawing the CYP from the school roll, societal/family circumstances (e.g. homelessness, running away) or the CYP finding other more preferable ways to spend the school day.

The flowchart[1] below gives a simplified way of identifying whether non-attendance at school is due to EBSA or other reasons.

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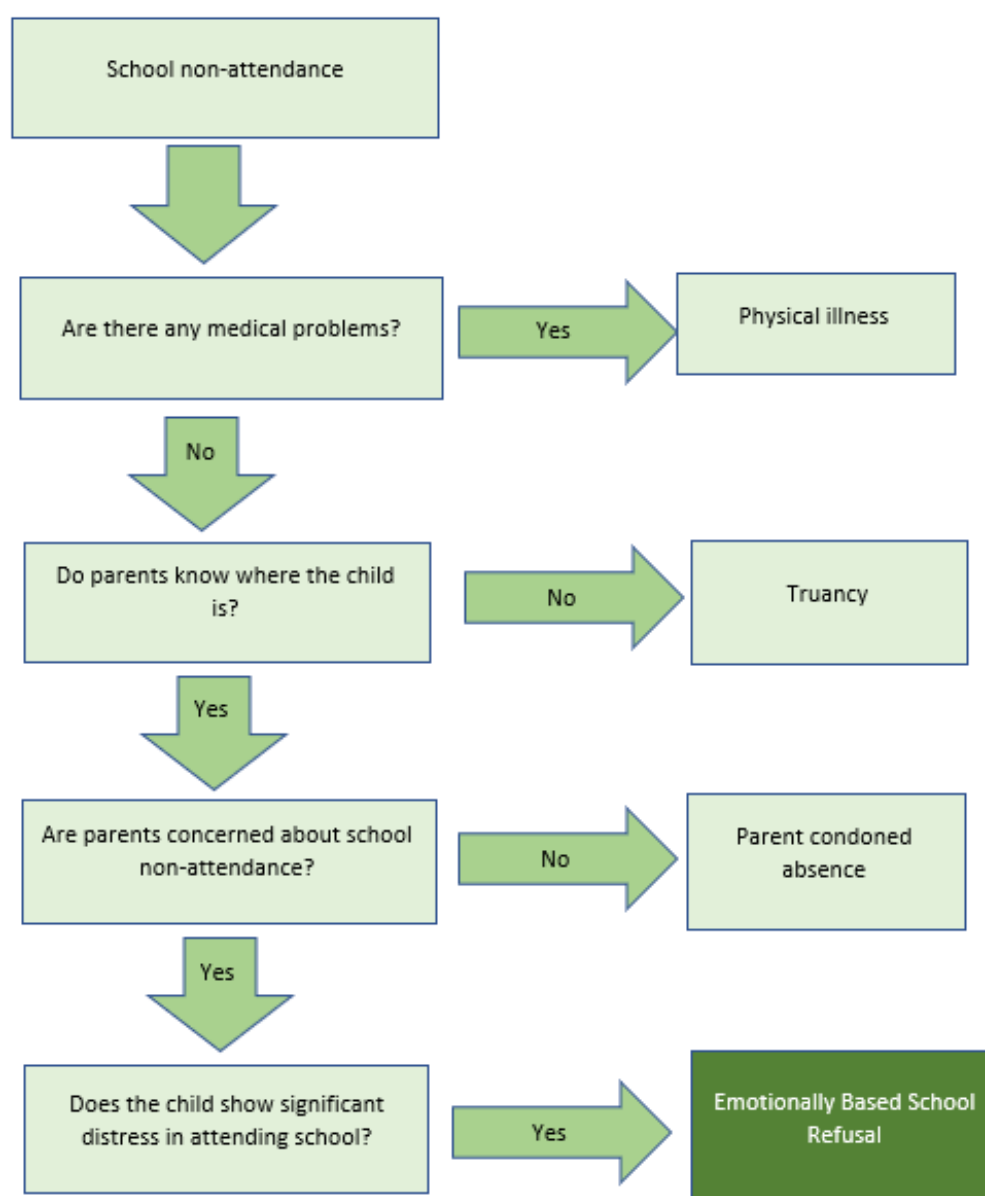
[1] Flowchart taken from Thambirajah, M.S., Grandison, K. and De-Hayes, L. (2008) *Understanding School Refusal: A handbook for professionals in Education, Health and Social Care*. London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

In the literature, there are different ways of referring to difficulties in attending school due to emotional distress, including 'school phobia', 'emotionally based school refusal', 'chronic non-attendance' and 'extended school non-attendance'[2]. However, for the purpose of this guidance, it will be referred to as EBSA.

Research suggests that 1-2% of CYPs experience difficulty in regularly attending school[3]. The long-term consequences of non-attendance can include CYPs being:
- Not in employment, education or training (NEET) after leaving secondary education
- At risk of mental health problems, poor social relationships and engaging in risk-taking behaviours.

Research suggests that early intervention is six times more likely to produce successful outcomes for CYPs (Reid, 2002). However, it can be hard to identify the onset of EBSA as it is likely to be gradual. Possible indicators include[4]:
- Changes in behaviour in lessons (e.g. behaviours indicating anxiety)
- CYPs complaining of illness to avoid attending school
- CYPs telling their parents that they don't want to go to school
- Difficulties attending some or all lessons
- Reduced attendance, which may show a pattern (e.g. certain days or difficulties after weekends or school holidays)
- Regular absences or sporadic attendance
- Weeks of non-attendance
- CYP rarely leaving their house/bedroom, even if not school-related.

EBSA is a heterogeneous concept[5]; it cannot be treated as a single condition and what works for one CYP may not help another. It is rarely just a single factor that acts as a barrier to a CYP attending school. Support usually needs to address multiple issues and the interaction between these.

[2] Nuttal, C. and Woods, K. (2013). Effective intervention for school refusal behaviour. Educational Psychology in Practice 29 (4), 347-366

[3] Maynard, B.R., Heyne, D., Esposito Brendel, K, Bulanda, J.J., Thompson, A.M, and Pigott, D.T. (2015). Treatment for School Refusal Among Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice,* 28 (1), 56-67

[4] Thambirajah, M.S., Grandison, K. and De-Hayes, L. (2008) *Understanding School Refusal: A handbook for professionals in Education, Health and Social Care*. London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

[5] Maynard, B. R., Brendel, K. E., Bulanda, J. J., Heyne, D., Thompson, A. & Pigott, T. D. (2015) Psychosocial interventions for school refusal with primary and secondary students: A systematic review. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2015

Frameworks for Understanding EBSA

Everyone experiences anxiety and often anxiety is a healthy and helpful response. People feel anxious when they believe they are under threat. When someone thinks something bad is going to happen, their bodies release adrenaline which helps them prepare to physically deal with the threat by running away or fighting. This is the fight or flight response. These chemicals cause physical sensations in their body, such as sweating, a dry mouth, a fluttering tummy and a fast heartbeat.

However, sometimes we think things are dangerous, even when they are not. Because we think we are in danger, our body produces adrenaline just as if the danger was real. This is a false alarm as there is no real danger and we don't need to run away or fight. The physical sensation is uncomfortable, but it is temporary and harmless.

When we feel anxious sensations in our bodies, we naturally want to avoid the situation that is triggering the anxiety. But every time we avoid the thing that we are worried about, it reinforces the belief that we need to avoid the scary thing to make ourselves feel safe. We do not get the chance to learn that we are able to cope or that the situation is rarely as bad as we think it will be.

The diagram below shows how our thoughts, physical sensations and behaviours interact in an anxious situation.
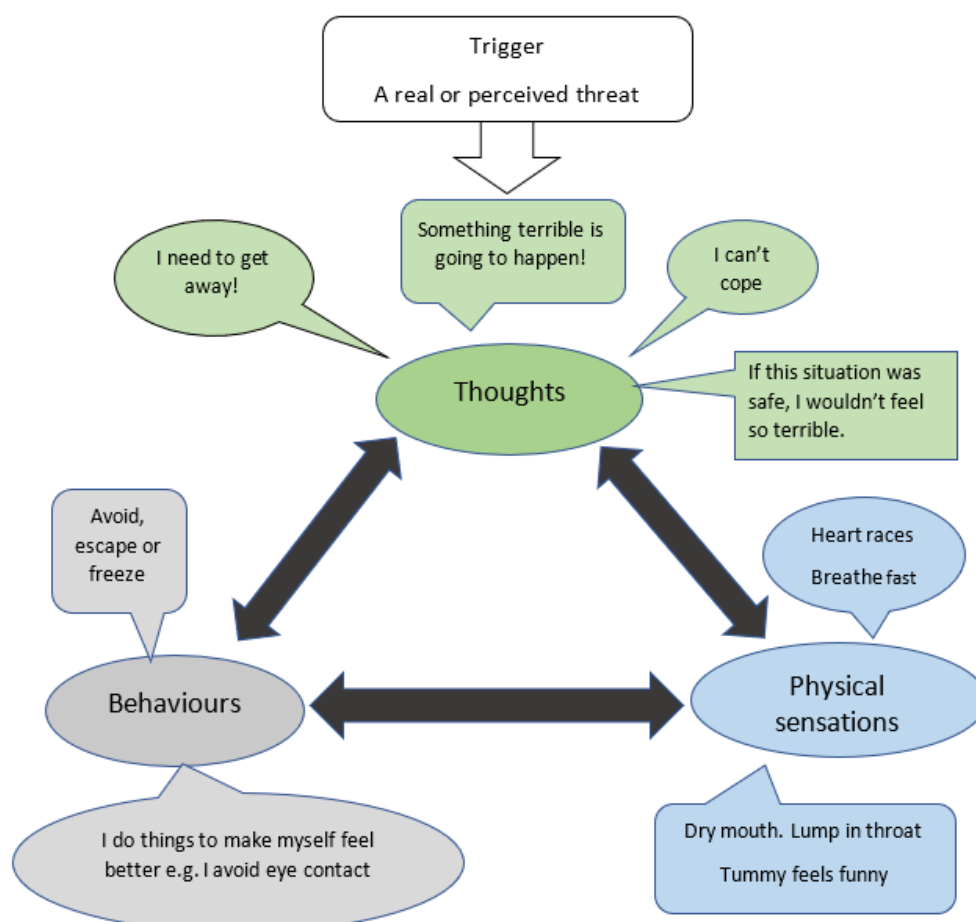
A certain level of anxiety is a good thing, such as when taking an exam or attending an interview. However, too much anxiety can act as a barrier to a CYP engaging in developmentally appropriate tasks. The start of school avoidance is thought to occur when[1]:
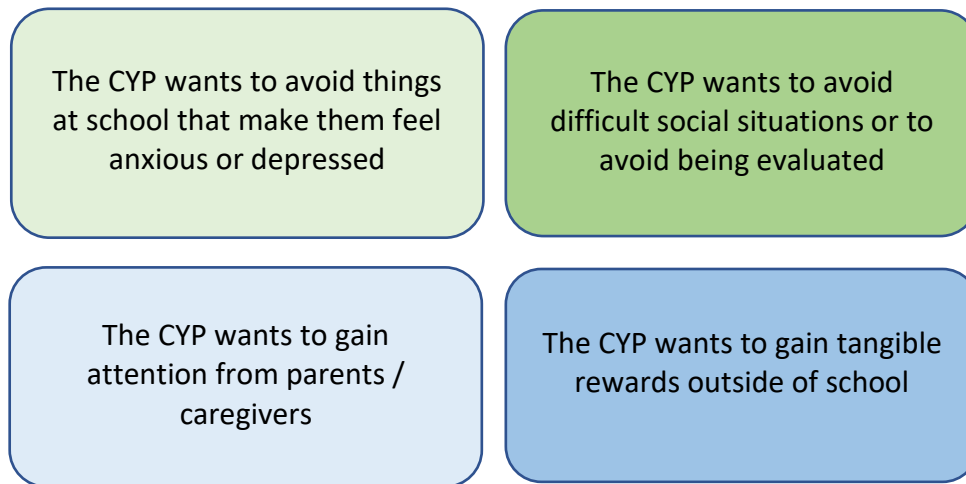
- A CYP's feelings of stress exceed those of support
- The risks of a CYP developing EBSA are greater than the resilience factors
- The 'pull' factors that promote a CYP's non-attendance overcome the 'push' factors that encourage their attendance.

If not addressed, anxious feelings about school can become entrenched in a cycle of avoidance. The diagram below focuses on school attendance[6]. It shows how anxious thoughts and feelings cause the CYP to avoid school. The immediate reduction in anxiety that results from the CYP not attending school can end up reinforcing their desire to avoid school. This then increases the anxious feelings about school and in turn, the school avoidance. The circle in the middle shows the maintenance factors.

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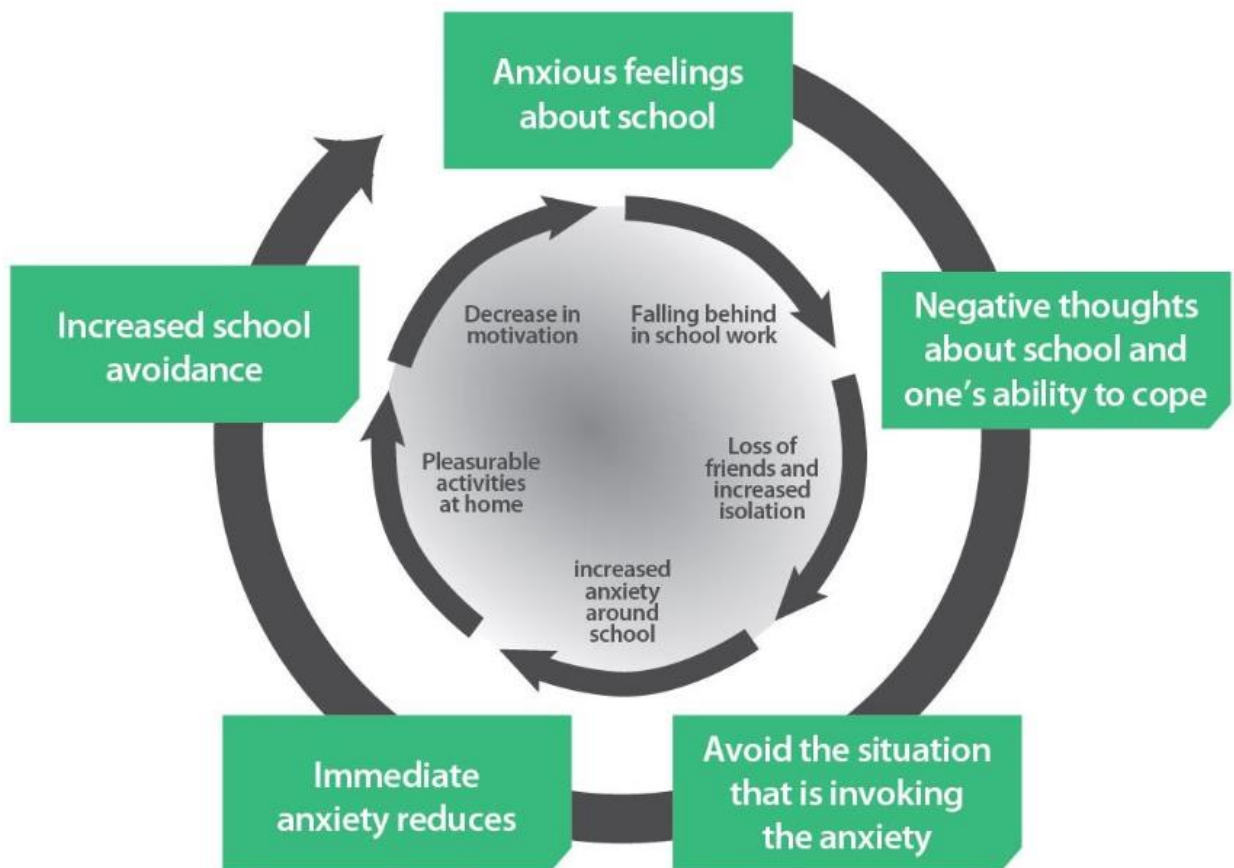
[6] West Sussex EBSA guidance

Kearney and Silverman (1990)[7] developed a model which suggests that the possible reasons CYPs may be reluctant to attend school can generally be categorised into four main areas:

The CYP wants to avoid things at school that make them feel anxious or depressed	The CYP wants to avoid difficult social situations or to avoid being evaluated
The CYP wants to gain attention from parents / caregivers	The CYP wants to gain tangible rewards outside of school

A CYP may experience just one or a combination of these factors, and their influence may also change over time. For example, a CYP may initially avoid attending school because of social anxiety. However, once at home, they may also discover that they prefer playing computer games to being at school.

A systemic approach to intervention

Risk factors (for example, bullying, family bereavement) increase the likelihood of a CYP avoiding attending school. Resilience factors (for example, high self-esteem, close friendships, a supportive family) offer support to the CYP and increase their ability to cope with their anxiety about attending school. There are risk and resilience factors at different systemic levels (i.e. individual, family, school and community). This means that intervention can potentially happen at these different levels too. There is more information on this later.

There is no "one size fits all" approach to intervention because the risk and resilience factors will be different in every individual, family, school and community context.

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[7] "A Preliminary Analysis of a Functional Model of Assessment and Treatment for School Refusal Behavior", Kearney and Silverman (1990)
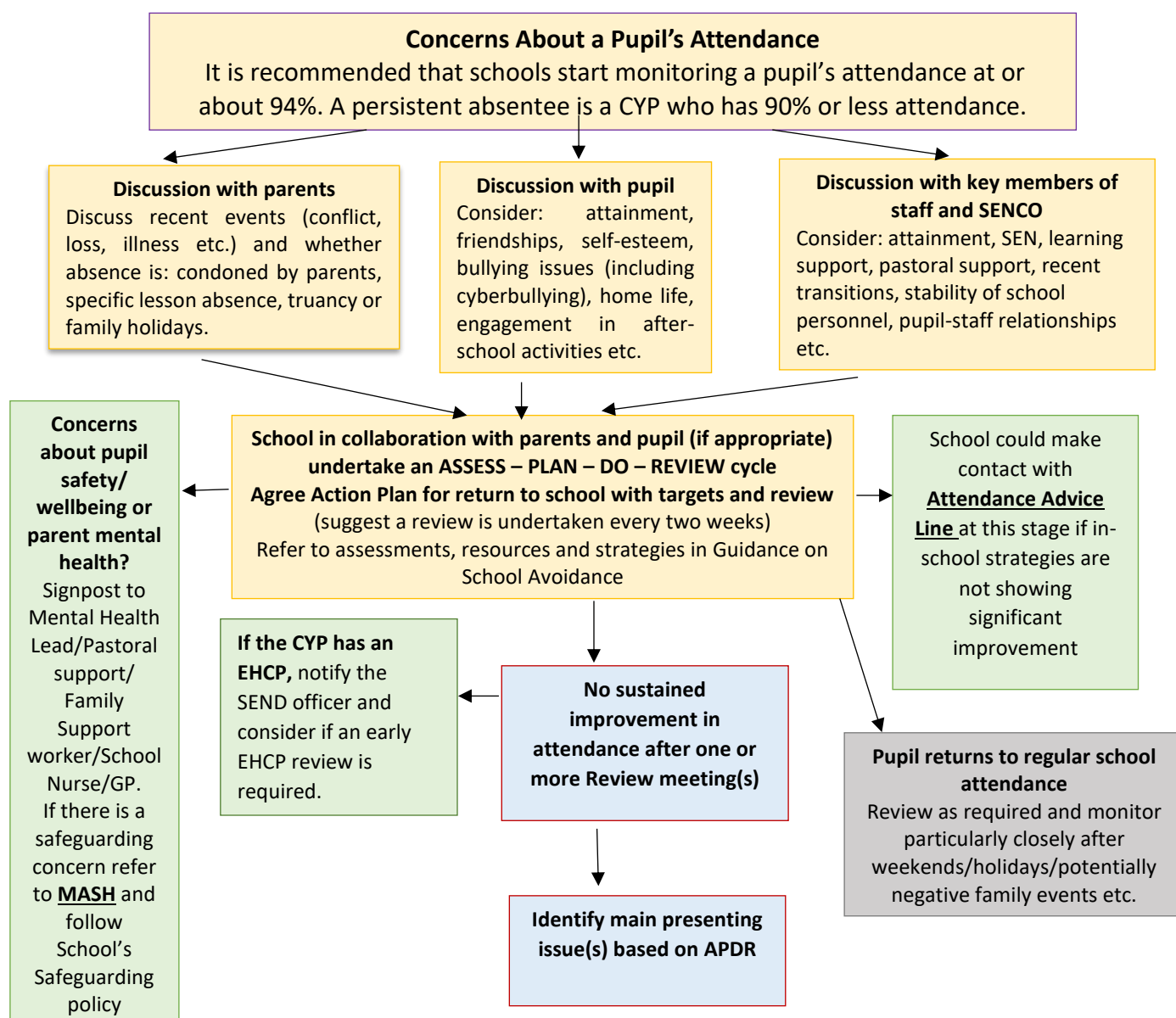
General Principles for Supporting CYPs with EBSA

1. Intervene early

Parents, teachers, support staff and other front-line staff should be aware of the early signs for EBSA. Identifying CYPs at risk and exploring why they do not want to attend school is key to supporting them before issues become ingrained and school avoidance becomes entrenched. From a practical point of view, it is much easier to provide support to a CYP who is attending school, albeit sporadically, than to one who is consistently not attending. Schools who have proactive whole-school policies for supporting CYPs' attendance, well-being and transitions may find it easier to identify CYPs at risk of EBSA at an early stage.

The flowchart below suggests what early intervention should look like:

Concerns About a Pupil's Attendance
It is recommended that schools start monitoring a pupil's attendance at or about 94%. A persistent absentee is a CYP who has 90% or less attendance.

Discussion with parents
Discuss recent events (conflict, loss, illness etc.) and whether absence is: condoned by parents, specific lesson absence, truancy or family holidays.

Discussion with pupil
Consider: attainment, friendships, self-esteem, bullying issues (including cyberbullying), home life, engagement in after-school activities etc.

Discussion with key members of staff and SENCO
Consider: attainment, SEN, learning support, pastoral support, recent transitions, stability of school personnel, pupil-staff relationships etc.

School in collaboration with parents and pupil (if appropriate) undertake an ASSESS – PLAN – DO – REVIEW cycle
Agree Action Plan for return to school with targets and review
(suggest a review is undertaken every two weeks)
Refer to assessments, resources and strategies in Guidance on School Avoidance

Concerns about pupil safety/ wellbeing or parent mental health?
Signpost to Mental Health Lead/Pastoral support/ Family Support worker/School Nurse/GP.
If there is a safeguarding concern refer to **MASH** and follow School's Safeguarding policy

School could make contact with **Attendance Advice Line** at this stage if in-school strategies are not showing significant improvement

If the CYP has an EHCP, notify the SEND officer and consider if an early EHCP review is required.

No sustained improvement in attendance after one or more Review meeting(s)

Pupil returns to regular school attendance
Review as required and monitor particularly closely after weekends/holidays/potentially negative family events etc.

Identify main presenting issue(s) based on APDR

8

2. Work with the family throughout

As soon as there are concerns about absenteeism or lateness (i.e. once EBSA behaviours emerge), a designated member of school staff (e.g. the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Head of Year, Head of Pastoral Support etc.) should reach out and establish contact with the parents / carers to enable them to work together to understand the CYP's needs, help the CYP feel more secure and address issues.

Staff should be mindful that parents / carers may feel that they will be judged or be in trouble if their child is experiencing EBSA, so staff should be sensitive to their feelings. If relevant, staff should reassure families by letting them know that the school has been through this previously, along with explicitly recognising how important it is for everyone to work together; position it as Team [CYP's name]. It is really important that all adults (i.e. parents / carers, school staff, and other professionals involved) work together to agree a firm and consistent approach to use with the CYP. Any concerns about the plan should not be shared with the CYP and a positive 'united front' is recommended.

Appendix 14 gives some hints for organising meetings with families and Appendix 15 includes a framework for schools to use to facilitate discussions with parents.

There should be on-going two-way dialogue with a member of staff at school, in order to share any concerns/developments on both sides. Ensure there is a focus on the positives as well as the issues/barriers. It may be appropriate to have an agreed expectation for format and frequency of contact (e.g. daily short emails and weekly telephone calls), as well as realistic response times.

3. Actively involve the CYP in discussions about their needs and what support they require

It is very important that CYPs are asked to share their thoughts and feelings about what makes school so worrying. This guidance contains a number of resources that can be used to gain the views of CYPs (see section on gathering information from the CYP).
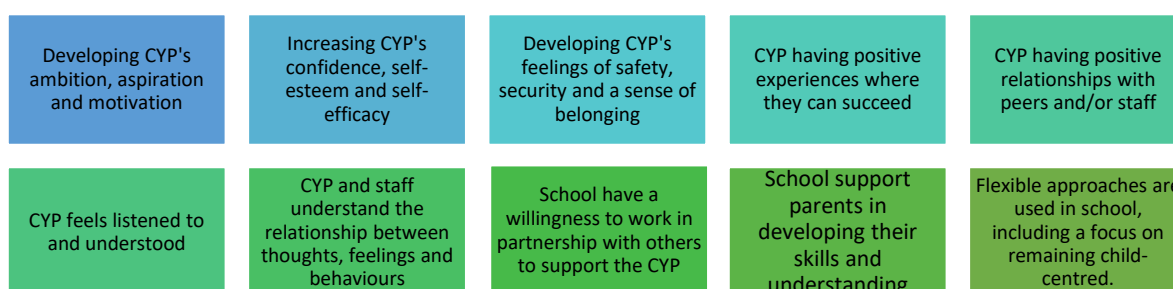
The CYP should also be involved in the process to identify strategies to support them. They may well have ideas that the adults would not have thought of, and they are more likely to engage in an action plan if they feel they play an active and important part in the process.

Interactions with the CYP should be carefully planned. For example, they may not feel comfortable expressing their feelings in a meeting surrounded by other adults, so they may need to be prepared for meetings beforehand or given a way to share their opinions prior to the meeting. If the CYP does not attend key meetings, important points should be fed back to them afterwards. If the CYP is involved in meetings, go at their pace to ensure that they can process what is happening. They should be given time and space to express their views. They could also be given some control through adult-directed fixed choices. This could help them to feel like they have an impact on what is happening and understand that their decisions have consequences (which may be positive or negative).

4. Develop an action plan based on a personalised and holistic approach

When supporting CYPs to attend school more regularly, it is very important to develop a plan that addresses the specific issues identified during the assessment process. The support needs to take into account the context of the school, CYP and family, as well as the causes for the anxiety.

Intervention often works better if the plan recognises and builds on a CYP's strengths. Therefore, when thinking about what should be included in the plan, consider focusing on developing resilience factors for the CYP, such as the following, drawn from the West Sussex EBSA guidance (this is talked about in more detail later):

Developing CYP's ambition, aspiration and motivation	Increasing CYP's confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy	Developing CYP's feelings of safety, security and a sense of belonging	CYP having positive experiences where they can succeed	CYP having positive relationships with peers and/or staff
CYP feels listened to and understood	CYP and staff understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours	School have a willingness to work in partnership with others to support the CYP	School support parents in developing their skills and understanding	Flexible approaches are used in school, including a focus on remaining child-centred.

The plan should:
- be realistic and achievable with the eventual aim of reintegrating the CYP back into school life
- focus on small steps of progress and what is needed to achieve those small steps
- explicitly outline what steps parents, staff and CYP will take.

If appropriate, a separate version of the support plan should be created for the CYP.

Once actions on a support plan are agreed with a CYP, stick to what has been agreed for that week, even if things seem to be going really well. Pushing things further than agreed can heighten anxiety, reduce trust and backfire overall.

You may wish to look at the strategies sections of this guidance for ideas about what to include in the plan.

5. Review the plan regularly

Progress is likely to change daily. At the beginning, plans may need to be reviewed on a weekly or fortnightly basis. This time period may increase as the CYP becomes more settled in school (e.g. to every 4-6 weeks).

The review is crucial as it helps to inform clear next steps. These next steps can include:
- Consolidating and maintaining the current support plan
- Setting new outcomes and/or actions for the CYP, school and parents
- Identifying the need for further consultation with other agencies for additional advice.

It is worth considering a range of measures (i.e. not just data around attendance in school) to see if what you are doing is making a difference. For example, you could identify progress if:

- The CYP can identify when they are feeling worried because they have an improved understanding of what anxiety "feels" like in their body
- The CYP communicates in words or through pictures if they are feeling worried
- The CYP can successfully rate their anxiety on an anxiety thermometer
- The CYP can use some self-calming strategies they have been taught independently or alongside an adult
- The CYP can problem-solve instead of panicking
- The CYP successfully used planned coping strategies in situations that made them anxious.

6. Accept that the journey will not be smooth

At the start of the plan, the CYP is likely to show more distress and everyone should be aware and prepared for this. It can be hard when progress is slow or when things seem to be backwards. This can be particularly apparent after a school holiday, period of illness or even just a weekend. It is important to remain optimistic and focus on starting afresh the following day – punishment should not be used when it hasn't gone how it was planned. Think about why things went wrong and if anything needs to be changed instead (i.e. review regularly) – take action rather than dwelling on problems.

7. Involve external professionals if initial attempts to get the CYP back into school have not been successful.

The diagram on the following page outlines where additional support can be gained if the strategies initially implemented by school are not successful.

Flowchart showing where schools can get additional support due to emotional well-being and mental health concerns

Absence due to non-mental health concerns

Absence due to mental health concerns.

Consider Involvement of other relevant services:

See Hertfordshire Local Offer for information on partnership agencies.

Low to moderate pupil mental health concerns

Consider involvement of PALMS (for pupils with a learning disability and/or ASD with severe or moderate needs

Severe pupil mental health concerns

Consider involvement of CAMHS SPA: Tier 2 or Tier 3 as appropriate

Consider signposting to mental health charities/ support lines

Consider Involvement of:

- Local Authority Attendance Officer
- ISL Specialist Advisory Teachers
- Educational Psychologist
- School Nurse

Schools may also wish to consider what the DSPLs can offer

Consider Involvement of:

Referral to ESMA if young person is confirmed to be unable to attend schools due to medical reasons. Confirmation required by CAMHS or STEP2. ESMA no longer accept GP confirmation.

Ongoing collaboration between school, professionals, parents and pupil (if appropriate) to identify a plan to support improved attendance (APDR)

Whole-School Preventative and Proactive Approaches

It is important that all CYPs feel welcome in school, regardless of who they are and their needs. They should feel that the school is a 'place made for them' and that staff are glad that they are there, and feel part of the whole school community. This can be helped by giving CYP a "voice" within the school, and by having representatives of the diverse community and positive role models within the school.

Whole-school focus on EBSA

It is important that schools take a proactive approach to understanding and managing EBSA, as part of a whole-school initiative to monitoring attendance and promote emotional wellbeing.

Best practise around ESBA include schools having:
- Clear systems for the early identification of attendance difficulties
- Written materials available for parents on the issue of school avoidance
- Staff trained in the issue of school avoidance
- An identified member of SMT to lead on and coordinate the response (including collating relevant information, gaining the CYP's views and facilitating meetings)
- A focus on early intervention.

Transitions

Transitions to new schools are particularly difficult for CYPs at risk of EBSA, as it tends to peak at periods of transition[8].

For some children starting in Reception, this may be the first time that they have been away from their parents for extended periods of time, and they may struggle to follow the routine of the school day. These children may find the transition into school difficult and you may see behaviours related to separation anxiety (e.g. crying, clinging to parents).

With secondary school transition, the following changes can have an impact:
- Increase in school size
- Increase in the number of students
- Increase in workload and academic expectations
- Changes in timetabling (including having lessons with different peers each time)
- Having to adapt to different teaching styles and the ways subjects are taught

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[8] Toplis, R. (2004). *Parents' views on emotionally based school refusal*. Work at a policy level. In West Sussex County Council EPS (Eds.). *Emotionally based school refusal, guidance for schools and support agencies* (pp.54-73). West Sussex, UK: West Sussex County Council EPS.

- Increased expectations in independence
- Transitioning from being the oldest in the school to the youngest
- Changes in pastoral support arrangements.

Robust transition plans are needed for all CYPs, with additional support put in place for vulnerable CYPs (e.g. those who already have identified anxiety, those with autism etc.). Staff will need to ensure that they monitor students for attendance issues and anxiety. More information about transition plans (for primary and secondary school transitions) can be found in the Appendix 1.

Schools' statutory responsibilities with regard to attendance

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Section 12 requires schools to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive days' absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences. Schools must complete a 10 Day Absence Form which has been designed to assist them comply with their responsibilities: https://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml.

Further information about the responsibilities of schools towards recording absences for pupils from the travelling community can be found here.

Schools' non-statutory responsibilities with regard to attendance

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – CYPs need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves CYPs vulnerable to falling behind. CYPs with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Identifying which CYPs are at Risk of EBSA

Key points to consider

School avoidance may start gradually. This can make it hard to spot when things are beginning to go wrong. It is easier to make change if you intervene early, at the first sign of difficulties. The chart below shows the different stages EBSA can move through, although it is important to note that not all CYPs will start from the far left.

Being late to school → Missing a small number of lessons → Occasional absences from school → Increased sporadic absences / notable patten of absences → Prolonged non-attendance → CYP rarely leaves bedroom
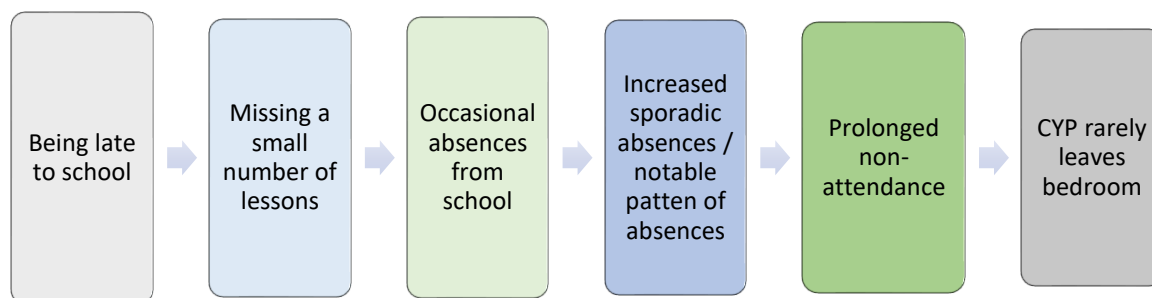
Peaks in non-attendance are particularly associated with key transitions, so it is important to pay attention to attendance at these points in particular. For example:
- At the start or end of a new school year
- Prior to or following school holidays
- At the start of each new week.

Schools need to be proactive in monitoring attendance and noticing any patterns that arise. It would also be helpful to look out for signs of anxiety in CYPs where there are some concerns regarding their attendance.

One way of identifying students at risk of EBSA is to consider any risk and protective factors. A protective factor can be defined as "a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, or community (including peers and culture) level that is associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduces the negative impact of a risk factor on problem outcomes." This can also be thought of as a resilience factor. Conversely, a risk factor can be defined as "a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precedes and is associated with a higher likelihood of problem outcomes."[9]

Appendix 3 is a checklist that highlights potential indicators of EBSA.

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[9] O'Connell, M.E., Boat, T. and Warner, K.E. (2009). *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities*

Risk factors[10]

The school should consider factors which may make a student more vulnerable to EBSA. These factors can be considered within the domains of school, family and home.
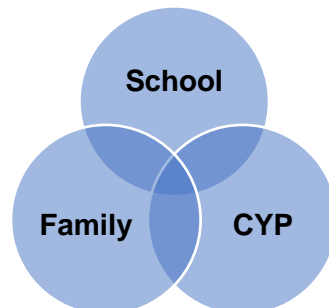
Kearney (2008) and Maynard et al. (2015) also identified **community factors** that can influence school attendance, including:
- The safety of the neighbourhood
- The availability and adequacy of health and other important services
- The availability of jobs
- Increased pressure to achieve academically
- Inconsistent professional advice.

Examples of risk factors in these different areas are presented below. It is important to consider which are relevant for each CYP and, if necessary, which are likely to be impacting on the CYP the most. It may also be helpful to consider which are most likely to be changed.

School factors

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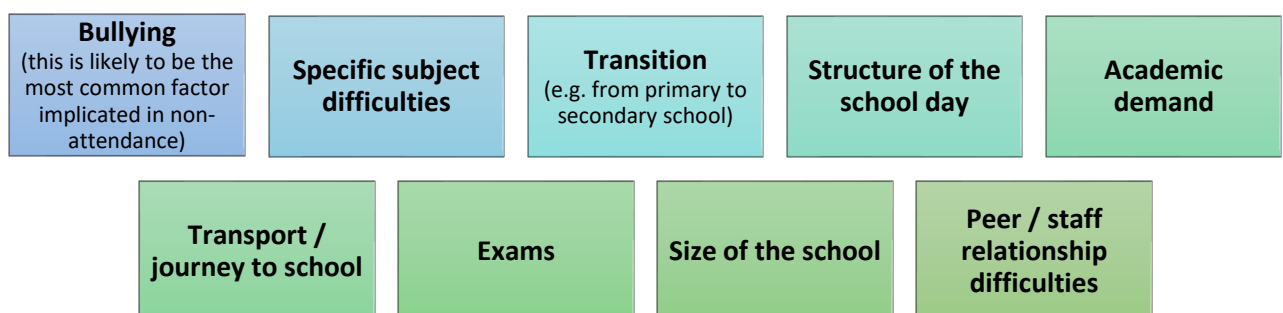
[10] West Sussex EBSA Guidance

Family factors

Separation, divorce or change in family dynamic	Parent physical/mental health problems	Overprotective parenting style	Complex family interactions
Loss / bereavement	Family stress	Family history of school refusal	CYP being a young carer

CYP factors

Temperamental style (e.g. being a more introverted character)	Fear of failure	Lack of self-confidence	Physical illness	Age (key ages are thought to be 5-6, 11-12 and 13-14)
Undiagnosed learning needs	Separation anxiety from parent	Traumatic events / Adverse Childhood Experiences	Feeling overwhelmed (e.g. by academic or social demands of school)	Medical difficulties

Resilience factors[11]

Schools need to consider areas of strength for the CYP and aspects of the school environment that could be developed to promote school attendance amongst all CYPs, as well as those who may be 'at risk'. For example:

Developing CYP's ambition, aspiration and motivation	Increasing CYP's confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy	Developing CYP's feelings of safety, security and a sense of belonging	CYP having positive experiences where they can succeed	CYP having positive relationships with peers and/or staff
CYP feels listened to and understood	CYP and staff understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours	School have a willingness to work in partnership with others to support the CYP	School support parents in developing their skills and understanding	Flexible approaches are used in school, including a focus on remaining child-centred.

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[11] West Sussex EBSA Guidance

Combining risk and resilience factors

Risk and resilience factors can also be understood in terms of factors which either 'push' the CYP towards or 'pull' them away from attending school or staying at home. Below is an example of a completed push-pull matrix. A blank example matrix is included in Appendix 4.

School　　　　　　**Home**

<table>
<tr>
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Push
(towards attending school)

Good imagination
Academically able
Learns quickly
Enjoys Drama lessons

</td>
<td>

Pull
(away from attending school, home factors)

Recent family bereavement
Familiar environment
No other children there apart from siblings
Can play games

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>

Pull
(away from attending school, school factors)

Unfamiliar environment
Noisy and crowded
Big school
Disliked lessons
Below ARE

</td>
<td>

Push
(towards staying at home)

Family members are at home (siblings school refusing)
Predictable routine

</td>
</tr>
</table>

While it can be tempting to reduce the factors down to identify a simple causation, this is often not helpful as it can encourage blaming individuals, which can make it difficult to work together and exacerbate the problem.

Only focusing on the cause also means that the strengths within the individual CYP and the system around them are not identified. It is helpful to identify both risk and resilience factors so that:

- Risk factors can be managed or remediated wherever possible
- Resilience factors can be utilised and built upon.

This means that every situation will be unique, so the approach to each will be different. Therefore, this document intends to give a framework to follow and examples of supports, rather than a set intervention plan to pick off the shelf.

Anxiety and Autism

CYPs on the Autism Spectrum are more vulnerable to anxiety than typically developing children, with up to 40% of CYPs with Autism meeting criteria for a co-morbid anxiety disorder (van Steensel et al., 2011[12]). CYPs may experience anxiety for a range of reasons, including:
- Sensory processing for example, being over or under-sensitive to environmental stimulus such as noises, lights and smells
- Difficulties with social communication interactions
- Difficulties in understanding and responding to their own and others' emotions
- Worrying about uncertainty, change or transitions
- Masking or trying to 'fit in' by changing their behaviour and internalising any stress/anxiety they feel in certain situations
- Demand and performance anxiety for example, with schoolwork or exams.

CYPs with Autism are more likely to be experiencing higher levels of general anxiety daily as they must navigate a complicated and often confusing sensory and social world. In the school setting, even the smallest changes can trigger anxiety, for example, moving desk or a change in teacher.

Most of the approaches for dealing with anxiety are the same for CYP with and without Autism.

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[12] Van Steensel, F. J., Bogels, S. M., & Perrin, S. (2011). Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents with autistic spectrum disorders: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 14*, 302–317

Assessing CYPs Experiencing EBSA

When a CYP is identified as being at risk of school avoidance, schools should:
- Identify a key member of staff to lead on following this up
- Gather further information about the specific issues and what could be helpful to support the CYP to attend school. This information should come from a variety of sources, including the CYP, their parents / carers and relevant staff members (as outlined below). It is important that information is triangulated to look at the similarities and differences.

Gathering information from the CYP

A key, trusted adult should work with the CYP to gather further information about their current situation. This should include the CYP's view of what is going well in school, as well as what makes them feel worried or sad about coming to school. Some, particularly older, CYPs may be able to name specific triggers, for example:
- Sensory overload – the classroom is too busy, bright and noisy
- They find the work difficult
- They have fallen out with a friend
- They are worried about the journey to school
- They dislike using the toilets
- They feel disliked by the teachers
- They get worried by unexpected change
- They do not feel like they belong.

The CYP will need to feel safe to talk with the person, so it important that the key person is someone that they know well. Consideration should be given to the time of day and location of the discussion, along with how the CYP would prefer to share their views (e.g. talking, writing, drawing). Sometimes using humour may be a way to break down barriers to anxiety/communication (e.g. wearing interesting clothing, like a funny hat).

It is important to ask open questions (e.g. 'how do you feel about X?') rather than leading questions (e.g. 'are you worried about X?') and avoid 'why' questions, as often CYPs can find it difficult to articulate why they feel a certain way. Instead, ask 'how' questions to support problem-solving. You can try to support them to identify what they do like about school and what is already working to support them (i.e. what do they find helpful).

Below are some suggested activities you could do with the CYP to gain their views. You don't need to do all the activities. Just choose one or two that you think will give you the most information.
- Use scaling to get the CYP to describe the problem and also ask what they think will help (Appendix 5)
- Use a card sorting exercise to identify a CYP's risk and resilience factors and to explore what aspects of school they find most worrying (Appendix 6)
- Use a "How I feel in school" questionnaire to help identify how the CYP feels about different aspects of school (Appendix 7)

- Create the CYP's 'Landscape of Fear' to understand which physical areas of the school the CYP finds most worrying (Appendix 8)
- Use a card sorting exercise to understand which classroom activities causes the CYP anxiety (Appendix 9)
- Work with the CYP to try and externalise the anxiety (Appendix 10)
- Use Blob worksheets, such as the playground, with some questions (Appendix 11)
- Ask the CYP to complete a self-monitoring diary or index cards (Appendix 12)
- Complete the School Refusal Behaviour Checklist with the CYP (Appendix 13).

Gathering information from parents / carers

It is important to involve parents / carers in the decisions being made and in gathering information about the current situation. Information can be gathered by asking questions to explore areas of the CYP's life such as:
- Their developmental and educational history
- Their strengths, aspirations and interests
- If there have been any changes or significant losses within the CYP's life
- Their relationships and reported friendship groups
- Their academic progress
- Their behaviour (including any presenting symptoms of anxiety)
- What the CYP's typical day might be like, including comparing days when they go to school to those when they do not
- What the CYP's typical morning and evening routines are
- What the impact of the CYP's non-attendance is on various family members
- What the parents' / carers' views are on the reasons for the CYP's school avoidance
- If there are any exceptions (times when school avoidance occurs less frequently)
- If there have been any previous attempts to address the issue.

It could also be helpful to find out how the CYP best communicates with their family, either by asking them or observing them.

Appendix 14 gives some helpful hints for holding a meeting with parents. Appendix 15 provides a framework for gathering information from parents during the meeting.

Gathering information from staff

It is important to include relevant staff members who know the CYP to gather information about the current situation. Information can be gathered by asking questions such as[13]:
- What are the CYP's strengths?
- What is going well?
- Have you noticed any difficulties? If so, what?
- What are the CYP's peer and adult relationships like?
- What is the CYP's response to academic tasks?
- Have you witnessed the CYP showing any emotional distress? If so, what did this look like and what caused it?

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[13] West Sussex and Derbyshire EBSA guidance documents

- What support is in place for this CYP and how do they respond to it?

A 'Round Robin' form can also be used to gather information from several different members of staff. An example can be found in Appendix 16.

Staff can also carry out observations, such as anxiety mapping (from Hertfordshire Steps) and structured observations like event sampling, frequency data, time sampling and interval sampling for anxiety-related behaviours to attempt to identify patterns or specific triggers. For more information on these, please see the Assess – Plan – Do – Review guidance developed by the Educational Psychology Service. It is important to remember that some CYPs show their anxiety in overt ways, while others try to hide and not be noticed. Both of these are cause for concern and should be supported.

A sensory checklist or audit may also be appropriate, particularly if the CYP has autism/ADHD. An environmental audit can be found on the AET website:
http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/37.1-Sensory-audit-tool-for-environments.pdf.
For individuals, staff can use the AET sensory checklist, here:
https://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/37.2-Sensory-assessment-checklist.pdf.

Bringing it all together

After all the information has been gathered, it is important to triangulate the information to make sense of it in one picture through interpretation. This should either be jointly created with the relevant people (including school staff, parents / carers and the CYP), or devised and then shared with the relevant people to ensure that everyone has the same information. It is important to acknowledge any differences in views and discuss these, as having a shared understanding about what is happening will aid collaboration. This is vital, as it informs the subsequent action plan.

Strategies

When thinking about interventions, it is not helpful to use a generic "one size fits all" approach. The response you develop should lead on from what you discovered during the assessment process.

Some strategies are likely to be relevant to all CYPs who are avoiding school due to EBSA:

> ### Strategies relevant for all CYPs with EBSA

In addition, schools will need to introduce strategies that address the specific reasons why the CYP is avoiding school. There may be more than one reason and these reasons may change over time. Suggestions of how to support CYP with each of the four areas highlighted below can be found by clicking on the relevant sections:

Strategies to support CYPs who avoid school because things at school make them feel anxious or sad	Strategies to support CYPs who school refuse because they want to avoid difficult social situations or worry about being evaluated
Strategies to support CYPs who avoid school to gain attention from parents / caregivers	Strategies to support CYPs who avoid school to gain tangible rewards outside of school

This document has attempted to capture some key strategies to aid planning. However, every situation is unique, and schools may wish to adopt other strategies not outlined in this guidance where they feel them to be appropriate.

If you are able to intervene early, fewer adaptations may need to be made to enable to CYP to feel comfortable and able to attend school.

Strategies that are likely to apply to all CYPs with EBSA[14]

1. Allocate the CYP key adults at school

It is important that the CYP feels connected to school and this connection is best done through developing strong relationships and having time for this. The CYP needs to know who they can go to when they have a problem and who will help them. Allocate the CYP two or three adults as their "key adults". It is best to allocate more than one person in case one of the adults is unavailable for some reason (e.g. due to illness or training).

Ask the CYP who they would like their key adults to be. They will probably already have a good idea which of the grown-ups they feel best able to talk to. It may be anyone in the school and not necessarily people you expect!

It may be helpful for the CYP and adult to spend some time getting to know each other to build their relationship, so the CYP feels wanted and 'seen' by at least one adult in school (i.e. that they matter to that person). They could do this by engaging in enjoyable activities together for a period of time. If the CYP isn't currently attending school, this may involve home visits, letters, emails or phone/video calls to build that trusting relationship. The adult should focus on listening to the CYP so that they can understand them, rather than focusing on their responses, using their language and preferred way of communicating if needed.

2. Have clear consistent routines for warmly welcoming the CYP to school

It is important to provide a 'soft landing' for the transition from home to school. When the CYP arrives at school, it is important that adults make the CYP feel positively welcomed and show they are glad that the CYP is at school, and this can be shown through verbal and non-verbal communication. The environment that the CYP initially enters should also be welcoming, e.g. wall displays, lighting, seating and audio input (e.g. music). They could even have a drink and/or snack when they arrive.

Ensure the CYP knows in advance what drop off will be like, such as who will meet them, what activity they will do when they arrive and where they need to go. If possible, involve the CYP in making these decisions.

Initially, it may be necessary to adapt drop offs to reduce the CYP's anxiety. For example:
- Consider a later start (e.g. 9.15am instead of 9am) or using a different entrance for CYPs who dislike sensory overload or bumping into peers they may wish to avoid
- Alternatively, the CYP could arrive earlier, so they are settled before the rest of the class arrives.

When the CYP has been away from school for a few days, either because of a weekend or school holiday, it may be necessary to make some changes to the normal morning routine.

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[14] Some ideas taken from: https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/courses/spot-and-support-return-to-school-wellbeing-challenges/lessons/emotionally-based-school-avoidance-school-refusal/

3. Ensure that the CYP knows what will happen during the day and what will happen in unstructured times.

The CYP should be told the routine for the day after they have been warmly welcomed. Use a visual timetable (which can incorporate a mixture of photos, pictures and words, depending on the CYP's level of understanding) to explain the day's events so the CYP can refer to this independently during the day for reassurance if they cannot remember what is happening.

Think about how to manage break and lunchtimes. Sometimes the most challenging times of the day for a CYP might be the unstructured times, particularly if there are sensory or social issues. It may be necessary to establish more structure and routine for the CYP during these times. Identify in advance where they can go and what they can do.

All relevant staff should be aware of the action plan to ensure that they are consistent with the CYP (e.g. in the form of a pupil profile/passport).

Schools should ensure that if a key person supporting the CYP is absent for any reason, someone else will be able to provide appropriate support.

4. Enable readiness for learning

Ensure activities are in place to help engage the CYP once they have made the big step into getting into school. This may involve them doing an activity that helps them feel calm (Appendix 17 includes numerous self-calming strategies), or doing a purposeful job like taking the registers to the classrooms.

It may be helpful for their key adult to do an emotional check-in at the start of the day to see how the CYP is feeling. This should involve the adult asking open questions (e.g. 'How do you feel?'), rather than leading questions (e.g. 'Are you worried?'). If the CYP indicates that something is bothering them, the key adult could ask them which out of the following approaches[15] may help to address their emotional concerns to enable them to be ready to learn. This may be different each time:

➢ SHARE IT: talk about what is on the CYP's mind with a trusted adult/write in a journal or draw. This will enable the CYP to capture and name how they are feeling
➢ SHELVE IT: if the CYP has lots of worries they want to address, the adult could offer to make a time to talk them through with undivided attention (this must be followed through with)
➢ SHOUT IT: involves the CYP getting physical and engaging in grounding activities to help them deal with how they are feeling at the time (e.g. squeezing objects; push ups; star jumps; stamping; breathing etc.).

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[15] From Pooky Knightsmith: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mN84PB8Ays&feature=emb_logo

5. Teach the CYP how to manage their feelings

Any action plan should develop a CYP's understanding of emotions, especially anxiety, and build their capacity to manage their emotions.

Staff should introduce one-to-one or small group sessions on emotional literacy to explicitly teach the CYP how to understand and manage their feelings. This could be done weekly or more frequently if needed.

The key skills are outlined below and detailed descriptions of how to teach each skill are included in the appendices. Teach the CYP about:
- The physical sensations that happen in their body when they feel anxious (see Appendix 18)
- The fight / flight response (see Appendix 19)
- How avoidance makes fear stronger but facing fears makes them go away (see Appendix 20)
- How to identify triggers, and how thoughts, feelings and behaviours link together to make CYP feel anxious (see Appendix 21)
- How to rate levels of emotions (e.g. calm, worried, total panic) and to describe emotions using words (i.e. using different words to show different levels of anxiety, such as 'nervous, worried, anxious, frightened, terrified') (see Appendix 22)
- Strategies to calm themselves down when they become anxious:
  - See Appendix 17 for self-calming strategies
  - See Appendix 23 for how to problem solve
  - See Appendix 24 for introducing the ideas of thinking errors, Appendix 25 for ideas about testing out worries in conversation and Appendix 26 for how to test out worries using a thoughts-challenge diary
  - See Appendix 27 for practising mindful acceptance
  - See Appendix 28 for reducing reliance on safety behaviours
  - See Appendix 29 for how to plan in advance which coping strategies the CYP will use when faced with specific triggers
  - See Appendix 30 for how to introduce a worry time.

While the focus should be on anxiety, it is also helpful to think about other emotions as well (for example, anger, happiness, sadness).

See the Resources section for a range of resources to help schools teach about anxiety and other emotions.

6. Proactively adapt the environment to reduce triggers for anxiety

Minimise the feelings of anxiety where appropriate by adapting the environment to limit the impact/effect of the triggers (see the section on addressing specific worries or difficulties identified during assessment).

Allow the CYP to gradually reduce their anxiety level throughout the day, by building in sensory breaks throughout the day, before the CYP shows signs of anxiety. These breaks could be 'down time' in the classroom (e.g. the book corner), or allowing the CYP to move around the school (e.g. by asking them to take a message to the office/another classroom).

For some CYPs, it may be helpful for an adult to check in on them at regular points in the school day, as well as at the end of the day, in order to provide opportunities for connection and show that the adult is still here for the CYP. This can enable adults to deal with any issues promptly.

The CYP's perception of a situation may be very different from reality but will affect how they feel about school. Changing the environment may be one way to help the CYP change their perceptions. For example, a child who feels unwelcome at school may begin to feel more welcome if staff establish a set routine for warmly greeting them when they enter the school building.

7. Make a plan in advance with the CYP about what will happen if they begin to become anxious

There should then be a plan for when the CYP is experiencing heightened anxiety, whatever their signs, as part of the school's pastoral arrangements. This plan should include the signs that the CYP is becoming anxious and strategies that can be used to support them to calm down (both things that the adults can do to support the CYP when they are experiencing anxiety, and things that have been agreed that the CYP can do, such as ask to take a break). All relevant staff should be aware of this plan and use it consistently. Where possible, the CYP should be involved in devising it. The plan should be informed by the emotional literacy work that has been done with the CYP, and it is likely to develop over time.

Adults should carefully monitor the CYP for increasing levels of anxiety and offer support at the earliest stages of dysregulation possible. Initially, the adults working with the CYP will need to support them during the school day to communicate how they are feeling and/or use the strategies they have learned in the emotional literacy programme as and when they need to calm (i.e. co-regulation). This may involve the adults:
- Coming alongside the CYP to do the calming activity together
- Modelling one of the strategies the CYP has been taught before they use it
- Verbally reminding the CYP how to do the activity
- Verbally reminding/prompting them to do it without the explanation. They could offer them a choice of activities (e.g. "You could breathe deeply or go outside and walk around the playground for 2 minutes. Which one?").

After a while, the CYP may begin to let the adult know when they need to access calming activities and do so independently (i.e. self-regulation).

The CYP should have consistent access to visual prompts (e.g. a 5-point scale, Zones of Regulation chart, anxiety thermometer or emotion wheel/fan) to help them communicate their level of anxiety to others quickly and easily at various points throughout the day. Use whatever the CYP is familiar with from the emotional literacy programme. This visual prompt may also include strategies that the CYP can use to help them calm down, to act as a reminder (or there may be an alternative way of highlighting these, such as a 'calm box' (see below)). It is likely to be helpful for CYPs to have a safe place (e.g. 'calm corner' or 'mindful area') that they can go to when they need a break to calm down and use the strategies that they have identified (i.e. as part of their emotional literacy programme). They may also prefer to have a visual way to communicate that they need to have a break, such as a 'time out' card.

You may consider introducing a calm box[16] for the CYP. This is a small box with an assortment of cards and/or calming objects to choose from. Each card should describe an activity that can be used to soothe heightened anxiety (see Appendix 17 for self-calming suggestions). It could be placed in the classroom or in the identified safe place, or the CYP could have one in each area. The CYP should be involved in personalising the box and decorating it.

If a CYP is engaging in difficult behaviour, it is important to have a plan to manage this. The adults should:
- Remember that all behaviour is a form of communication
- Avoid taking the behaviour personally
- Try and remain calm, taking a few deep breaths if needed
- Tentatively acknowledge how the pupil is feeling without assuming you know what they are feeling or why (as there will be a range of emotions and reasons for these), e.g. using the Hertfordshire Steps strategies or principles of emotion coaching (see Appendix 31) to empathise with the CYP while still imposing limits on their behaviour
- Use positive language, e.g. telling them what to do rather than what not to do
- Do not ask 'why' something happened, instead focus on 'what' happened. It may be that they are unable to tell you in the moment, and this needs to happen once the CYP is calm.

8. Build the CYP's resilience and confidence in their ability to manage their anxiety

Get the CYP to identify their strengths and successes. This can be done by asking them to think about a situation they have dealt with well in the past, such as a time when they didn't want to do something, but it turned out OK. Get them to think about how it felt afterwards to have done it. Also, what personal qualities did they show in these situations – Bravery? Persistence? Calmness? Being a good friend? Full of energy? Curiosity? Creativity? Etc. The "How many positives" activity on the Young Minds website encourages CYPs to think about their strengths. This would also help them identify that these feelings do not last forever.

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[16] Taken from "Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in School", by Louise Bomber.

Get CYPs to identify the resources they have around them that will help them resolve problems (e.g. teachers, parents, friends, books, police, the internet, apps etc.). The "Find your feet" activity on the Young Minds website helps CYPs to identify who can help and support them (see also previous section). It is important that the CYP knows they are supported and recognises who they can get support from. A number of schools use a Protective Behaviours approach for this.

Often CYPs experiencing EBSA have a rigid narrative of themselves that they can't do things. It would be helpful to find out what they are good at and use this as much as possible. It is also important to not have low expectations of them, but build up expectations in tiny steps that feel possible to achieve and allow the CYP to be successful. It can be helpful to explicitly teach them about Carole Dweck's work on growth mindsets which explains that people's abilities are not fixed but can grow and develop over time. They may find it difficult to come into school now because they get anxious, but it won't always be like that. They can learn how to deal with their anxiety.

Praise can increase a CYP's motivation to do something again. This should focus on effort and process, making sure you are honest and specific. For example, instead of saying "Well done, you stayed in school for 30 minutes today", say "You looked really wobbly when you came through the door, but I could see you taking three deep breaths and you put on your headphones to block out the noise. You used the coping strategies we discussed. Great stuff!" This focuses on their qualities (e.g. bravery, persistence). It would also be appropriate to identify when the CYP is making progress (e.g. staying at school for an extra 5 minutes more than yesterday). The praise should not be 'over the top' but should sound genuine. It may not be helpful for the CYP to be overwhelmed by praise (e.g. from every class teacher and from peers). It may be more appropriate to ask the CYP how they would like to be praised and rewarded.

9. Develop their motivation to be in school

Motivation theory suggests you can develop an individual's intrinsic motivation by increasing their feelings of control, competency, relatedness and purpose.

- Encourage the CYP to focus their attention on positive aspects of school (e.g. their friends, their favourite lesson/teacher, activities they enjoy doing) instead of the negatives (i.e. why they are finding it difficult to attend). When they start to attend school, get them to complete a simple gratitude journal or encourage them to identify one thing that has gone well at school each day, recording this visually in a book or chart to be referred to later (e.g. see this page for information on how to start one).

- Find out what reasons for going to school motivate the CYP, and encourage them to consider how attending school will help them achieve their own personal goals and ambitions (what would they like life to look like in the future?), for example, having friends, getting qualifications, pursuing interests, moving towards a career they want. It may be helpful to remind the CYP that it is important to attend school, although this should be carefully considered as it could add pressure. Talking about taking things

gradually and being there to support them would hopefully aid in reducing that feeling.

- If the CYP is not in school, share school experiences with the CYP that they may enjoy. For example, staff could record a particularly exciting science lesson and share this with the CYP. Share newsletters with the CYP that describe exciting trips and activities undertaken by the peers.

- Provide opportunities for the CYP to develop and maintain relationships with others – teachers, other staff and peers. While this may seem as if it is rewarding the CYP for not attending school (or have limited attendance), strengthening the link to the school and promoting a feeling of belonging will be important motivators for them to go back to school and show they are still welcome. Peers could also act as a support network for the CYP.
  - If the CYP is not currently in school, key staff could maintain links with the CYP via email, recorded video messages or letters (in line with school policy)
  - Provide opportunities for the key adult to get to know the CYP well. This could be doing a shared activity together (e.g. cleaning up the classroom before lunch time, watering plants in the playground, organising an activity)
  - The CYP should be encouraged to maintain or develop relationships with their peers. This is likely to be the best motivation if the CYP feels that they are missing out on time spent with their friends (e.g. at breaktimes and lunch times) and if they do not feel that they can full participate in all conversations (e.g. if they are talking about the teachers/other peers/their lessons).

10. Keep in contact with students who are not attending school at all

It is important to try to keep the CYP feeling connected to the school even if they are not currently attending. This can be done through: video calls; sending emails, postcards and letters; phone calls; zoom calls; sending photographs of classwork; sending work home; staff visiting the CYP at home etc.

11. Share the document "Emotionally Based School Avoidance: A Guide for Parents / Carers" with parents / carers when this becomes available.

This document gives details of how parents can support their child at home with managing their anxious feelings. This will be important to enable the adults to work together and to ensure there is a holistic approach to the intervention.

Strategies to try when EBSA is around avoiding things at school that make the CYP feel anxious or sad

Details of how to help the CYP to manage their anxious feelings are included in the following areas of this guidance:

> ### Strategies for all CYPs with EBSA
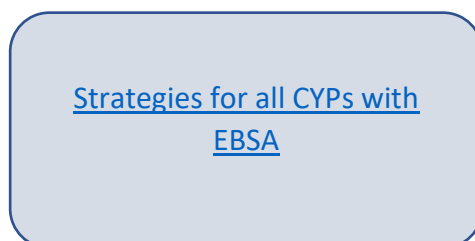
In addition, you should also:

Address specific worries or difficulties identified during assessment

During assessment, it is likely that you will have identified specific aspects of school life that make the CYP feel worried or sad. For example, the CYP could be worried about eating in front of others, falling behind with their work, the classroom being too noisy or having no-one to play with during break. For each issue identified, try to find a focused solution. For example:

- Provide a safe space for the CYP to go to if they feel overwhelmed
- Provide safe and supported activities for times of the day that provide challenges such as Lego or Minecraft club during lunch or break times
- If they feel everyone is staring at them, consider how the CYP will enter the classroom – would they prefer to come in before everyone else arrives, or slip in when everyone is busy?
- It may be appropriate to avoid asking the CYP to answer questions or read in front of the class unless they identify that they feel comfortable doing so
- When you know there are trigger points (e.g. trips, school show, supply teachers), proactively plan how to support the CYP and involve them in the process as much as possible (for example, through problem solving or talking to the CYP about their difficulties using scaling).

If the CYP has identified sensory sensitivities, some strategies may include:

- Allow the CYP to use headphones or ear defenders if the environment is too noisy (e.g. classroom, dining room)
- Allow the CYP to use different toilets if they dislike the smell of their normal class toilets
- Allow the CYP to complete work in a separate or quiet place, such as the library
- Adapt uniform expectations to allow for sensory sensitivities
- Allow the CYP to leave the classroom a few minutes early to avoid the busy corridors
- Placement in the classroom may also be related to sensory needs (see above)
- Give warnings about fire alarm drills.

If the CYP has identified learning needs or anxiety around completing the work or other aspects of the lessons/learning, staff could consider the following adaptations:

- Provide pre-teaching and opportunities to catch up with work, including interventions specifically aimed at supporting the CYP's learning. Where there are no identified learning needs except gaps in learning, there should be a structured approach to catching up on necessary work, supported by staff
- Provide concrete and visual resources to access learning
- Break tasks down into small steps and have clear, realistic expectations of what should be achieved
- Access to small-group/individual support during lessons
- Could sit next to a peer who could offer support
- Activities should be clearly structured, e.g. through task lists or writing frames
- When delivering instructions, adults could: use the CYP's name to cue them in; use explicit, concise language; keep instructions short; allow additional processing time (at least 10 seconds); and check their understanding and repeat the instructions back if necessary, using the same initial wording
- Ensure they have access to alternative ways of recording the learning
- Not being asked questions in front of the whole class/not having to read aloud.

It is important to note that some of these adaptations may only be required in the short-term (i.e. until the CYP's anxieties have reduced following time in school), whereas others may be longer-term adjustments. Therefore, it is important to review the plan even when the CYP is in school full-time as part of the Assess – Plan – Do – Review cycle (e.g. every half-term once the CYP is settled).

A part-time timetable may be necessary initially, but it should only ever be a short-term adaptation and be increased incrementally as soon as possible. All CYPs are entitled to a full-time education and so this should never be seen as a long-term option. (Think in particular about transition planning).

Strategies to try when EBSA is driven by wanting to avoid difficult social situations or situations where the CYP feels evaluated

Some CYPs who avoid coming to school do so because they want to avoid difficult social situations. This can be due to many different issues:

- For some CYPs, under-developed social skills or poor self-esteem make social interaction difficult. For example, they may not know how to initiate interaction, sustain conversation, see things from other people's perspective, or resolve conflict.

- Some CYPs are very shy, and this can tip into social phobia (sometimes known as social anxiety). Anxiety UK say "Social phobia is defined as a fear of negative evaluation from others – the fear of being judged and criticised. It is a fear of social situations that involve interactions with other people"[17]. People with *general social phobia* worry about being in any social situation. People with *specific social phobia* worry about one particular situation (e.g. fear of using public toilets, fear of making presentations, fear of eating in front of others).

- For others, anxiety may arise from external issues such as from conflict amongst friendship groups, bullying, sexual harassment or sexual violence from peers. If bullying continues or if the CYP believes it is likely to continue, it is probable that the CYP will continue to want to avoid school. Dealing with bullying is outside the remit of this document, but schools can ask for EP advice in this matter if they would like additional support.

Another common reason for CYPs to become anxious about attending school is the fear of being evaluated. This not only relates to tests but can include situations such as answering questions in class, giving presentations, feeling judged socially by peers and taking part in sporting activities.

1. Strategies to help CYPs who have under-developed social skills

- Provide opportunities for the CYP to develop relationships with others by working collaboratively with two or three peers on a joint project, possibly based on a favourite activity, such as creating a world in Minecraft, cookery club, producing a collaborative art project etc. Initially, it may be necessary for an adult to oversee the activity to ensure the target CYP is fully included, provide support with specific social skills, resolve issues if they arise and help problem solve any difficulties.

- Teach the CYP the specific social skill(s) they are missing, e.g. how to initiate conversation, assertiveness and social problem-solving, through a structured programme. This could be done through a variety of means for example, roleplay, story-telling, discussion, watching videos and looking at photos. Resources to help teach specific skill can be found here.

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[17] So*cial phobia / social anxiety disorder Factsheet, Anxiety UK*

- [Social stories](#), [comic strip conversations](#) and [social behaviour mapping](#) can be used to help CYPs understand social expectations / rules and understand different perspectives. The Educational Psychology Service can provide training in social stories and comic strip conversations.

- A [Circle of Friends](#) can be set up to help the CYP be accepted by their peers. The Educational Psychology Service can provide support with this.

2. Strategies to help CYPs who have low self-esteem

- Provide regular structured time each week to focus on developing the CYP's self-esteem. Resources to help with this can be found [here](#).

- Encourage the CYP to identify something they have done well every day. Record this information in a book / poster / drawing so that they can go back over their successes.

- Give the CYP a role of responsibility within the school and try to develop admiration/ positive views from peers. This could be based on an area of interest/strength (e.g. 'art monitor', 'P.E. monitor' or librarian).

- Build upon the CYP's strengths and interests within school (e.g. through extra-curricular activities and topic-based work).

- Celebrate mistakes and failure:
  o Adults should regularly talk about times where they made mistakes and the opportunity this gave to learn something important
  o Ask "What mistakes did you make today?". Express dismay if the CYP says they did not make any. Tell them that if they are not making mistakes, they are not learning new things, they are just going over things they already know.

- Strategies identified in the section "[Build the CYPs resilience and confidence in their ability to manage](#)" are also relevant.

3. Strategies for CYPs who are shy or have social anxiety / social phobia

- CYPs with general social phobia may have under-developed social skills because their anxiety about being judged or criticised leads to them avoiding social contact with peers. These CYPs may need [support to develop their social skills](#).

- CYPs with social anxiety often have low self-esteem. They believe that they will be judged and found to be failing. They may need [support to develop their self-esteem](#).

- CYPs with social anxiety often make thinking errors (for example, *I must be perfect, everyone must like me, my friend ignored me at break and now they don't like me* etc.).

You may need to help [understand the idea of thinking errors](#) and test their worries, either [through conversation](#) or through completing a [Thoughts-Challenge diary](#).

- Some CYPs with social anxiety may have difficult with social problem solving. They may avoid situations because they cannot see any alternative. These CYPs may benefit from support in problem solving (see [Appendix 23](#)).

4. Strategies to support CYPs who worry about being evaluated

- CYP who are worried about being evaluated, often make thinking errors (for example, *if I make a mistake, everyone will laugh at me,* or *to be successful, I must never make a mistake*). They may need help to [understand the idea of thinking errors](#) and to test their worries, either [through conversation](#) or through completing a [Thoughts-Challenge diary](#).

- CYPs could be encouraged to [practise mindful acceptance](#).

Strategies to try when EBSA is around the need for attention and contact with parents / carers.

Separation anxiety is a normal stage of development for babies and toddlers, but most children outgrow it by around 3 years old. However, some older children continue to be anxious about leaving their parents / carers. CYPs may worry that they, or their parents / carers, will not be safe or be able to cope if they are separated from each other.

1. A meet and greet

The CYP would benefit from an organised "meet and greet" that follows a regular routine from a key person at the start of the day. This helps to provide a 'soft landing' and allows the adult to check in with the CYP. Having a key person can help the CYP cope because they serve as a substitute attachment figure in school. This strategy is relevant to all CYPs experiencing EBSA, but particularly important for those who struggle to separate from their parents.

2. A set routine and a transitional object

You may want to talk to the parent about having:
- A set routine for saying goodbye to their child
- A transitional object for the CYP to keep throughout the day.

Further details of a both are included in the document "Emotionally Based School Avoidance: A Guide for Parents".

3. A soft start at school

A "soft start" to the day involves the CYP doing a fun activity prior to going into class. It can either be done with the key person, or alternatively, consider a "busy bag" for the CYP to do when they first come into the classroom to distract them from their worries. This strategy is particularly important for those CYPs where the first part of the morning is the most difficult due to separating from a parent / carer. This is similar to the strategy on enabling readiness for learning.

4. A visual timetable

For CYPs who experience separation anxiety, a personalised visual timetable would be particularly important, and could be adapted to include information about what will happen and when they will see the parent again.

5. When the CYP is worried about their parents

Some CYPs do not want to be separated from their parents because they are worried for their parents. Sometimes they have good reason to be worried, for example, where their parent is seriously ill or the victim of domestic violence. The CYP may have taken on a caring role that makes their attendance at school difficult.

In these circumstances, schools may need to refer young people and families on to other services so that the family can receive appropriate support. Examples of such services can be found [here](#).

6. When the parent is anxious

Sometimes the separation anxiety comes from the parent, not the CYP. In this case, try to get the parent to share what they are worried about. Try to approach this from a position of genuine curiosity instead of judgement.

- If the parent shows anxiety about separating from their child or behaves in a way that suggests that the CYP cannot cope, this may reinforce the CYP's belief that there are indeed things to be frightened of
- If the worries are realistic, jointly [problem solve](#) to come up with a workable solution
- If their worries are unrealistic, help to [test their worries](#)
- It may help to give the parent alternative strategies to deal with the problem behaviour that leads them to not want to separate from their child (e.g. tantrums when separating). Some families may benefit from ongoing support to provide and implement alternative parenting strategies. See [here](#) for a list of support services within Hertfordshire.

7. Separation anxiety when the CYP has a history of trauma or abuse

If the CYP has a history of trauma or abuse and has difficulties separating from a parent / carer, the school may need to introduce a "key adult" (more in-depth than the [previous section](#)). The role of the "key adult" for CYPs who have experienced trauma or abuse is wider than just helping the CYP to separate from their parents / carer. The key adult should take the lead in supporting the CYP in school across all the areas they struggle with (see [Appendix 32](#) for a detailed description of the role of the key adult).

Strategies to try when EBSA is driven by tangible rewards

Some CYPs engage in lot of pleasurable and rewarding activities while they are at home during the school day due to EBSA. This can inadvertently reinforce a CYP's desires to avoid school. This can happen when:

- Parents and children spend more quality time together during school hours than outside school hours
- The CYP spends a lot of time during school hours engaging in highly motivating, unthreatening and possibly addictive activities such as gaming.

Details about how parents can set limits on their child engaging in certain activities at home during school hours is included in the document "Emotional Based School Avoidance: A Guide for Parents / Carers". If you haven't already done so, it would be good to share this document with parents when it becomes available.

If the parents are finding it difficult to impose limits on their child's behaviour, it may be appropriate to signpost them towards additional support.

The Toolkit: Tools to Support Whole-School Approaches to Managing EBSA

Contents

Appendix 1: Transitions

ESBA behaviour tends to peak at times of transition[18]. It is therefore helpful to proactively plan for transitions when supporting CYPs at risk of ESBA.

Early Years Transition – Good Practices

Staff should engage with parents and the previous childcare setting (if appropriate). This is often done through visits to the setting and the home. Then, staff can find out about the strengths, likes, needs of the child, as well as any parental concerns. Related to EBSA, it may be particularly important to find out how the child normally manages with separation and how the parents would like this to be managed, as well as how the child usually shows anxiety/distress and what helps to calm them down.

Some things that could be helpful to do with children in Reception (or encourage their parents to do with them) include:
- Reading story books about going to school
- Parents doing walks to school and putting their school uniform on
- Pictures and video tour of the school building (e.g. entrance, toilets, cloakroom, playground, classroom, corridors) and key members of staff
- Use of transitional objects to ease the CYP's anxiety.

If staff know about a child who is anxious, then it may be helpful to ensure, where possible, that they have a familiar peer in their group.

Secondary Transition – Good Practices

Each school has its own community, with its own culture and students will have been used to a different school, with a different culture. Therefore, they will need the opportunity to understand the ethos of the school and how it works, as well as feel welcomed to the school. Well-managed transitions will support students to be able to cope with these changes. There should be a clear transition policy/process, including additional work to be done with vulnerable students (whether that is for reasons related to EBSA or other reasons). This could include:

- A clear procedure for sharing information between the feeder and receiving schools, including: CYP's strengths; CYP's needs, including information about historical difficulties that could arise (e.g. history of previous EBSA); and strategies that have been helpful/unhelpful in supporting the CYP. This will enable appropriate support to

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[18] Toplis, R. (2004). *Parents' views on emotionally based school refusal*. Work at a policy level. In West Sussex County Council EPS (Eds.). *Emotionally based school refusal, guidance for schools and support agencies* (pp.54-73). West Sussex, UK: West Sussex County Council EPS.

be in place immediately and identify additional transition support that would be necessary prior to September.

- Introduce students to their new teachers/form tutors so they know who people are and can recognise them. Staff should also take the time to find out a bit about the students. Staff should offer affirming messages (e.g. 'we look forward to you coming to the school' and 'we will support you').
- Opportunities for tours around the school, so they can start to familiarise themselves with the layout.
- Have question and answer sessions for students to identify their concerns. This could also involve parents.
- School staff should consider the organisational changes that will occur for the CYP and how best to manage these to make the process as positive and smooth as possible (e.g. a 'How To Guide' that the CYP can refer to during the holidays and when they start school). This may include:
  - School layout – Provide maps of the school building prior to transition. Older pupils should be used as buddies to more vulnerable CYPs who can act as guides or give additional support they may require. The time this is required will vary from pupil to pupil
  - Academic demands – Give information about how lessons are structured and homework expectations. It may be necessary to teach CYPs how to use their timetables and homework planners
  - Lunch-time routine – Give guidance on dining room routine and systems and for the more vulnerable, provide older table monitors or lunchtime buddies. Identify areas of the school that CYPs can access after they have eaten where they may feel more secure, e.g. pastoral areas, the library or going to lunchtime clubs. The time access to lunchtime buddies is required will vary from pupil to pupil.
  - Personal belongings and organisation – Information about where personal belongings can be stored should be explained during transition visits and reiterated to them upon arrival. They could also be provided with a checklist for each day regarding what equipment will be needed and taught how to use their planner.
  - Key adult support – Identify a key person that pupils can go to if they are anxious and need support, HOY, Form Tutor, LSA, SENCo, buddies
  - Social time – Identify how students will be supported to make new friends and access supported social activities (e.g. lunch clubs)
  - A one-page guide (or similar) of the setting should be provided identifying support systems pupils can access and should include the names and location of key staff.
- Parents / carers could be encouraged to practise the school run with their child, particularly if they are expected to travel to school independently. If this is the case, parents / carers could start doing the journey together initially, followed by the parent being a short distance away and then later them doing the journey on their own.
- It may be more important when planning for CYPs who have experienced EBSA, to keep existing peer networks intact as much as possible when considering groupings. Provide opportunities for them to re-establish and get to know new peers.

CYPs who have been out of school or class for extended periods of time.

CYPs who have been out of school or class for extended periods of time, will need a robust transition plan to reintegrate them back into a more normal routine. This could include many of the features described above in the "secondary transition" section.

See the Resources section for additional resources on transitions.

Appendix 2: Recording absences for pupils from the travelling community

Introduction

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

The Education Act 1996 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make statutory provision for all of these groups.

Children of Traveller groups, whose families do not travel, are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

However, many Traveller families will travel for work purposes. Hertfordshire County Council has issued this guidance to support schools with clarity around attendance and registration of Traveller pupils.

School attendance regulations

Section 444(6) Education Act 1996, gives parents a defence in which they cannot be found guilty of a school attendance offence, provided that the child is of no *fixed abode (see below)* and:
(a) parents are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, and;
(b) the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and;
(c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he or she has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

The law makes no reference to a physical dwelling. A Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family that lives in a house, but travels in the course of their trade or business can be classed as of no fixed abode.

Registration Codes

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 provide the following registration guidance:

The T code: Traveller absence

This code should be used in the school register when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes. The school should be proactive and supportive about communicating with families about their travelling patterns, encouraging maximum attendance. Parents should be asked to inform the school, in advance, of their travelling plans and to inform the school when they are likely to return. The school may use the T code if it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision elsewhere. It should not be used for any other types of absence by Traveller children.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school, whilst remaining on the register of the base school.

Code D: Dual Registered

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The D code can be used in the school register of the base school/school of normal attendance for a Gypsy or Traveller child when the pupil is away travelling and is known to have registered at another school. This code is not counted in the School Census figures. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question (at the base school) because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Clarifying Guidance

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force in September 2013 relate to holiday and extended leave. Therefore, these amendments do not affect occupational Travellers' right to travel for occupational purposes and remain on the register of the base school as there are no changes to the provisions regarding dual registration and the use of the T code.

Schools must not remove Traveller children from the school register when they are travelling for occupational purposes and have stated their intention to return.

It is good practice for schools with registered Traveller pupils to ensure that the guidance in this document is written into the school's attendance policy (should they have one) and that the guidance is explained to parents. Schools may differentiate Traveller absence statistics for school attendance evaluation purposes in the schools self-evaluation form.

For further advice please contact:

- **East Area Attendance Team** – covering East Herts & Broxbourne, North Herts & Stevenage, Welwyn & Hatfield.
    - Duty Desk Tel: 01992 555261
    - Email: **attendancedutyeast@hertfordshire.gov.uk**
- **West Area Attendance Team** – covering Watford & Three Rivers, St Albans & Dacorum, Hertsmere.
    - Duty Desk Tel: 01442 454778
    - Email: **attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

Access to Education for Travellers & Refugees Team (AET) - Tel: 01438 844904

Please see link below to the DfE National Strategies for further attendance advice for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children. Close liaison with the Access to Education Team is advised when considering any action to improve attendance.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101021024540/http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/152024

The Toolkit: Tools to Help Schools Identifying and Assess CYPs with EBSA

Contents

Appendix 3: Checklist of potential indicators of school avoidance

This checklist is designed for use as a tool for schools to think about and start to identify CYPs who may be at risk of school avoidance. It is not an exhaustive list and items should be interpreted with caution; the occurrence of any one item is not necessarily indicative of future difficulties in attending school and could also be due to other factors or challenges the CYP may be experiencing in their life at the present time. However, as previously highlighted, repeated patterns of behaviour would suggest the need for further investigation, drawing on and triangulating information from multiple sources.

Does the CYP[19]:
- [ ] Show difficulty in attending school with periods of prolonged absence
- [ ] Have regular absences from school (without indication of antisocial behaviours)
- [ ] Have frequent absence for minor illnesses
- [ ] Show patterns in absences (e.g. particular days, subjects, after weekends/holidays)
- [ ] Persistent lateness (to school or to individual lessons)
- [ ] Show or report reluctance to leave home
- [ ] Stay away from school without the knowledge of parent / carer
- [ ] Present with inappropriate dependence on family members (e.g. worrying about them becoming injured whilst they are not with them)
- [ ] Show reluctance in leaving parents (this is more of a factor if the behaviour is seen in older students)
- [ ] Show reluctance in going on school trips
- [ ] Want to attend class but states that s/he is not able to
- [ ] Appear to be underachieving academically
- [ ] Present as socially isolated or avoidant of peers
- [ ] Report experiences of being bullied or feeling victimised (by staff or peers)
- [ ] Present with challenging behaviours, especially in relation to specific situations at school (e.g. talking in front of a group)
- [ ] Show periods of increased emotionality ("meltdowns") with anxiety/fear
- [ ] Report psychosomatic complaints (headaches, stomach aches, muscle pains etc.)
- [ ] Present with low mood and a sense of isolation leading to low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- [ ] Often have difficulty focusing, appear less engaged in lessons, become confused in class, reports his/her mind going blank or present as absent-minded
- [ ] Appear fatigued, restless and/or on edge
- [ ] Appear irritable
- [ ] Ask staff to ring parents frequently, or saying that they want to go home (e.g. saying they feel sick)

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[19] Taken from West Sussex, Derbyshire and Barnet EBSA guidance documents

Potential indicators that parents might see include (especially on Sunday nights/Monday mornings and less so during holidays and at weekends):

- Frequent tearfulness/distress
- Complaining of pains (e.g. tummy aches and headaches) or saying that they feel sick
- Bedwetting (more for younger children)
- CYP being challenging/having tantrums at the mention of going to school, or before school in the mornings (beyond the first few weeks of Reception or starting at a new school)
- Prolonged difficulties (e.g. anxiety) when mixing with others, friendship difficulties
- Pre-occupation of being organised for school – overly perfectionistic
- Sleeping difficulties of fatigue
- Change of mood and negativity towards school (e.g. teachers, lessons, peers)
- Lack of engagement with school activities (e.g. plays, sports day), outings, trips

- Family stressors can also trigger some anxious behaviours or feelings about leaving home, such as:
  - Parental illness
  - Parents separating or having frequent arguments
  - Traumatic events, such as family illness, grief or domestic abuse
  - Other bereavements (e.g. family friend)
  - Jealousy of a new infant sibling
  - Moving to a new school
  - Returning to school after a prolonged absence
  - Entering/exiting primary school

Appendix 4: Risk and resilience factors (push-pull) matrix

School   **Home**

Push
(towards attending school)

Pull
(away from attending school, home factors)

Pull
(away from attending school, school factors)

Push
(towards staying at home)
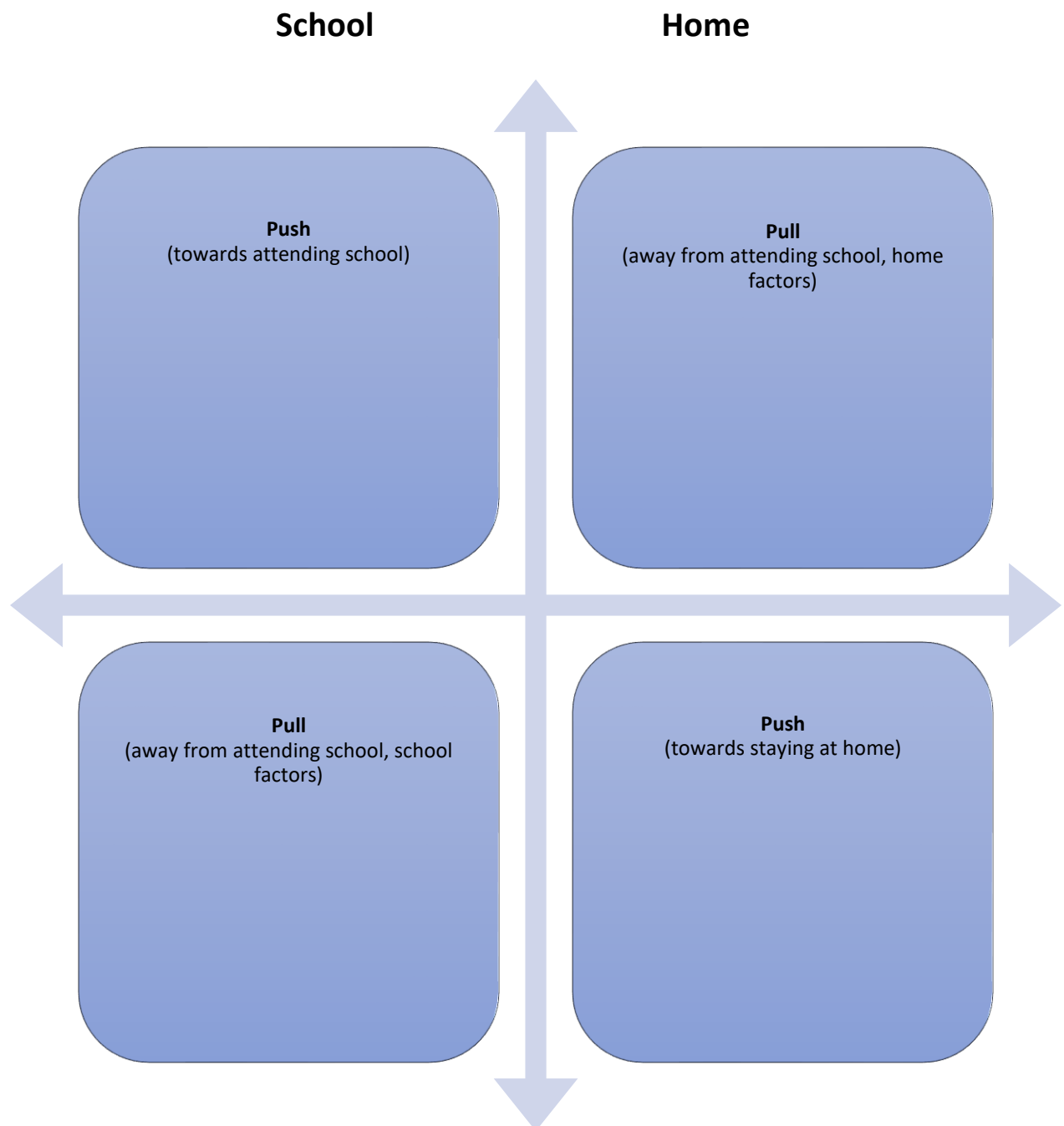
Appendix 5: Using scaling to describe the problem and to ask the CYP what they think will help

Using scaling to get an overall anxiety rating.

- Ask the CYP to rate themselves on a scale of 0 to 10 for how good things are at the moment, where 0 means they are the worst they could be and 10 means they are the best they could be.

- Ask them why they have put themselves at that number? Why are they at that number and not lower? (e.g. why have you put yourself at 3 and not 1 or 2?) This will give you some ideas about what is going well). Ask why they are not higher (e.g. why have you put yourself at 3 and not 4 or 5?). This will give you some ideas of what is not going well.

- Ask what would need to happen for them to move one point up the scale? Ask what else would need to happen? What else? What else?

0 _____10

Aliyah rated herself at 4. She said she was at 4 because she was didn't think she was any good at writing and maths and she also worried a lot about being asked questions in class. She said wasn't at 1, 2 or 3 because she wasn't worried about break time or lunch time because she liked playing with her friends.

Aliyah said the thing that would make her move up to 5 was if she could ask a friend for help with her work without having to worry about the teacher telling her off for talking. She said it would also make her feel better if she knew the teacher would only ask her questions she could definitely answer.

Finding out specifics

Using scaling to get information about specific aspects of school that makes the CYP anxious.

- Ask the CYP to think about particular aspects of the school day and identify how anxious each one makes them feel on the scale. Areas to consider include:
    - The physical environment. For example, "How anxious do you feel on the scale when you are in the corridors / playground / your classroom / school toilets"
    - Times of the day or social interactions. For example, "How anxious do you feel on the scale when you are in the car coming to school / when you arrive at school / in break times / during lunch / talking with your friends"
    - Particular lessons or activities within lessons. For example, "How anxious do you feel when you are reading / doing maths / answering a question in class / working as part of a group / doing writing?".

Once the CYP has given an initial indication of how anxious each aspect makes them feel, you can find out more by asking the CYP further questions such as:

- How often do they feel anxious about this aspect of school?
- When do you first start to feel worried (e.g. when you wake up in the morning / when packing school bag for the day / on the journey to school / when they arrive at school).
- What makes the anxiety worse/better? Who helps you? Where can you go to feel better?
- When/where/with whom are you most comfortable in school?
- What do you want to happen? What is your goal?
- What would help you move just one step down the scale to feel less anxious? What else would help? What else? What else?

Different kinds of rating scales

Below are some examples of different kinds of rating scales. Before using a rating scale with a child, make sure you explain how it works. Very young children with a limited understanding of numbers may need very simple rating scales showing facial expressions.

Calm and relaxed	A little bit worried	Very worried

Full Panic — 10
High Anxiety — 7
Anxious / Aggitated — 5
Minor fears / Worry — 3
Calm — 2
Total Relaxation — 0

5
Total panic.

4
Very scared.

3
Worried but it's not too bad.

2
A little bit worried.

1
Calm
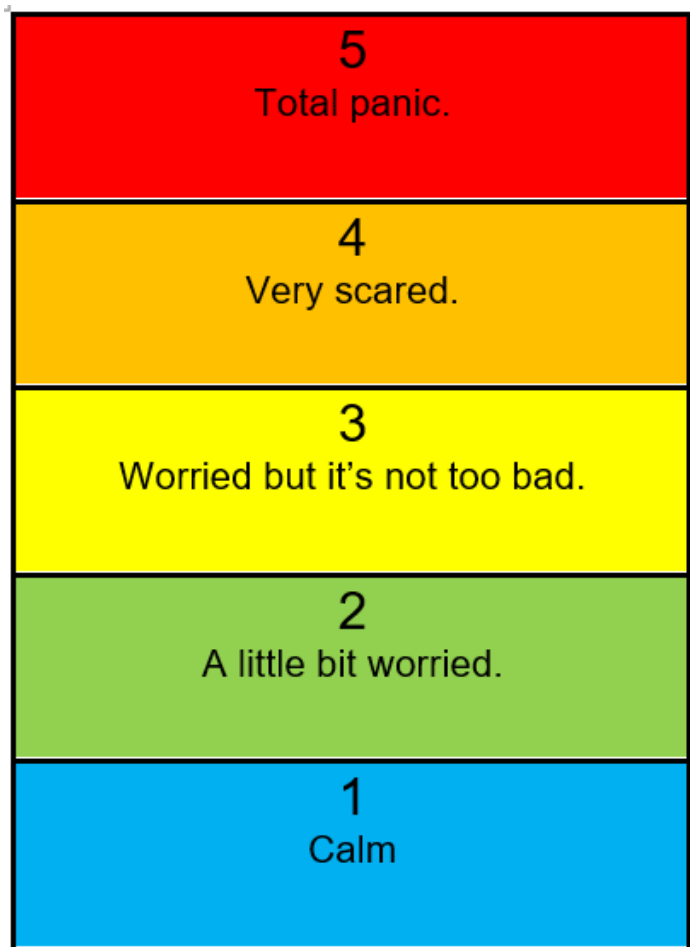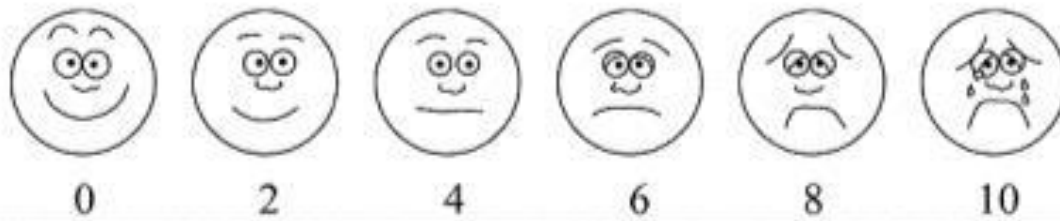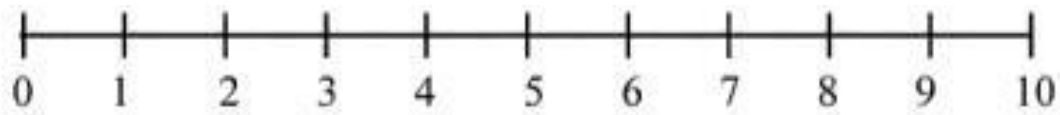
Appendix 6: Risk and resilience card sorting exercise[20]

You can use the following card sorting exercise to understand a CYP's risk and resilience factors around attending school.

- Print off and cut out the "risk and resilience" cards below.

- Show each card to the CYP and ask them to indicate if they are:
  - A lot like me
  - A bit like me
  - Not at all like me.

- Some CYPs may be so anxious that they find it tricky to talk to adults about their worries. These CYPs may choose to respond non-verbally simply by putting the cards in different piles. This is fine. Other CYPs may be happy to chat. If so, as you go through the cards, you can explore each factor by asking open questions such as:
  - Can you me a bit more about that?
  - Which bit of being in the playground is making you worried?
  - What sorts of things make you feel embarrassed?
  - Are there particular subjects that you think you need help with?

- At the end of this exercise you will have a pile of card that give you some indication about what the CYP worries about and what support they have in school.

- Take a photo or make a record of what the CYP has said for you to refer back to.

You can also use the cards to get an understanding of how big the CYP's worries are about different aspects of school life.

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[20] Risk and Resilience card exercise based on material provided by the West Sussex Educational Psychology Service

- The numbered cards describe different levels of anxiety. Cut them out and spread them in order on a table.

- Show the CYP each of the risk and resilience cards in turn and ask them to indicate on the numbered scale the extent to which each factor described makes them feel anxious. For example, you could say:
  - "You said you don't like it when it's noisy. How worried does noise at school make you feel?". The CYP puts card on the "Total panic" pile
  - "You said that feeling embarrassed is a lot like you. How worried does it make you when you feel embarrassed?" The CYP puts card on "A little bit worried" pile.

- You don't need to use all the cards if the CYP has already identified that a particular issue does not make them feel anxious. You can discard these cards as you go through the exercise. For example, "You said you weren't someone who needed a lot of help with your learning, so I'm guessing learning doesn't make you feel anxious. Am I right? OK, let's not bother putting this one on a pile".

- Not all of the cards fit neatly into this exercise (e.g. the card saying "I wish I didn't have to go to school"). Just discard these cards as you go through the pack.

- Take a photo or make a record of what they CYP has said for you to refer back to later.

Risk and resilience cards

I feel worried at school	I wish I had more friends	I don't like it when it's noisy
I feel worried at home	I feel embarrassed	I am a good learner
I worry about the school work	I worry about my parents	I find the busy corridors stressful
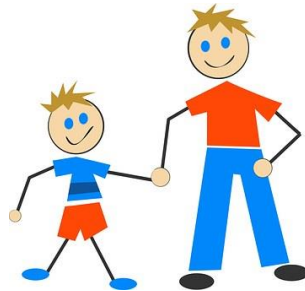
I would rather be at home than at school	I have lots of friends	I wish I didn't have to go to school
		I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL! I HATE SCHOOL! I'D RATHER DO *ANYTHING* THAN GO TO SCHOOL!
I enjoy learning	I worry that something bad will happen	I have at least one special friend
I don't like changes in routine	I want people to like me	I need lots of help with my learning
	Wanna be my friend?	
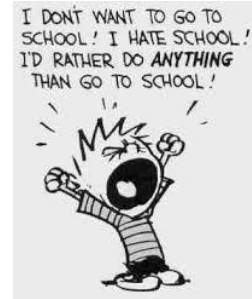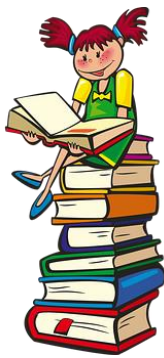
I worry about tests	I can do things if I really try	I don't understand what the teacher is saying
I worry about coming to school in the morning	I dislike changes in staff	I want to attend school
I worry about lunch time	I worry about break time	
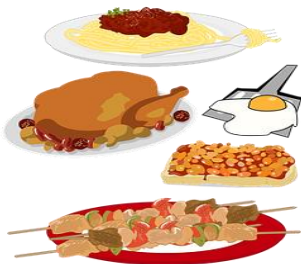
A lot like me	A little like me	Not at all like me
0 Totally relaxed	1 Calm	2 A little bit worried
3 Worried	4 Very scared	5 Total panic

Appendix 7: How I feel in school questionnaire[21]

Specialist Teaching and Preschool Service   Essex County Council

How I feel in school
(What's working / Not working in the environment /behaviours)

Everyone is sensitive to their environment to varying degrees. When we become self aware we recognise how we feel about our ability . This rating scale can help adults to learn about how children with communication difficulties feel about their learning and the school environment.

This information can be used as part of the One Planning process.

Consider :
- when you choose to ask the child about these statements - time of day, emotional state etc.
- explaining feelings in terms of any sensations they may have when they feel any of the feelings in the scale.
- where you are sitting to ensure the child's full attention - or move around the school and ask each statement in the place you are referring to.
- using only statements that match the understanding of the child
- cutting the statements out and doing one or two at a time depending on the attention of the child.
- the language you use, point to the part you are reading, talking about; repeat if helpful - do not add too much language (this may distract or overload the child)
- exploring reasons for the feeling, we could ask ' if .... happened what could you feel then ? Why questions can be difficult for many children to answer.
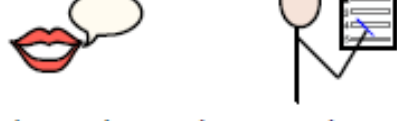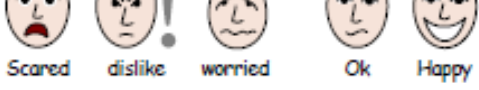
Specialist Teacher Team - SLCN - Essex CC
made using *Communicate in Print 2* software by **Widgit**
www.widgit.com

21
http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/What%27s%20working%20and%20not%20working%20-%20feelings%20scale.pdf

How I Feel (what's working for me ? not working ?)

Going to school	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
In the classroom	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Talking to my teacher.	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Talking to .... LSA	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Talking to other teachers in school	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Putting my hand up	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Answering the register	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Asking to go to the toilet	Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy

	Scared	dislike	worried	Ok	Happy
Asking for help .					
Going up to other children .					
Playing in the playground					
Children in my class					
Sitting on the carpet					
Telling a grown up I feel ill					
Learning with -----------------------					
Learning using -----------------------					
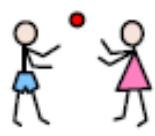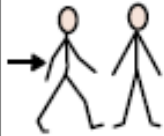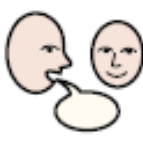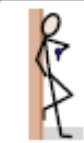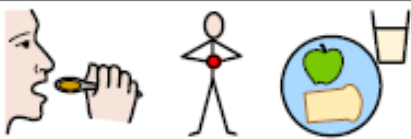
Helping	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
Lining up	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
waiting	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
My friend _____	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
having my lunch	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
going in the sensory room	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
assembly	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
going in the hall for lunch.	Scared dislike worried Ok Happy
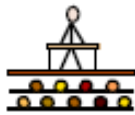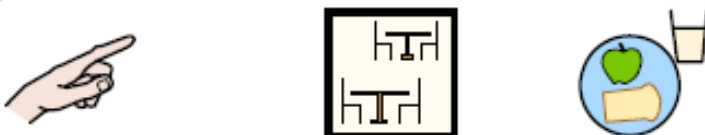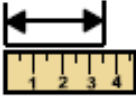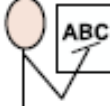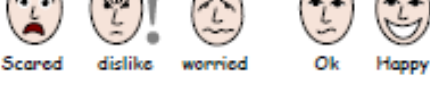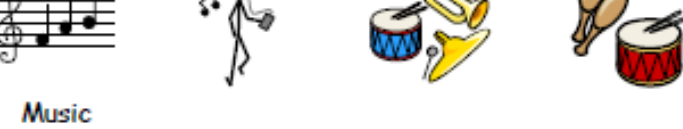
How I feel about what I am learning...

Subject		Rating
Numeracy (Maths)		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Literacy (English)		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
PE		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
PE/Games		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
History		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
Geography		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
R.E.		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy
French		Scared · dislike · worried · Ok · Happy

Subject	Scared	dislike	worried	Ok	Happy
Art					
Drama					
Cooking					
Science					
ITC technology					
Design & technology					
Music					
Homework					

Appendix 8: Landscape of fear

The Landscape of Fear is a tool designed by Kate Ripley[22], which explores the CYP's sources of anxiety in the physical, social and learning environments of school. The CYP is presented with a black and white map of the school grounds and is asked to colour the areas where they feel: relaxed (green), that they are functioning reasonably well (yellow) or most worried / anxious (red).

Example school map:

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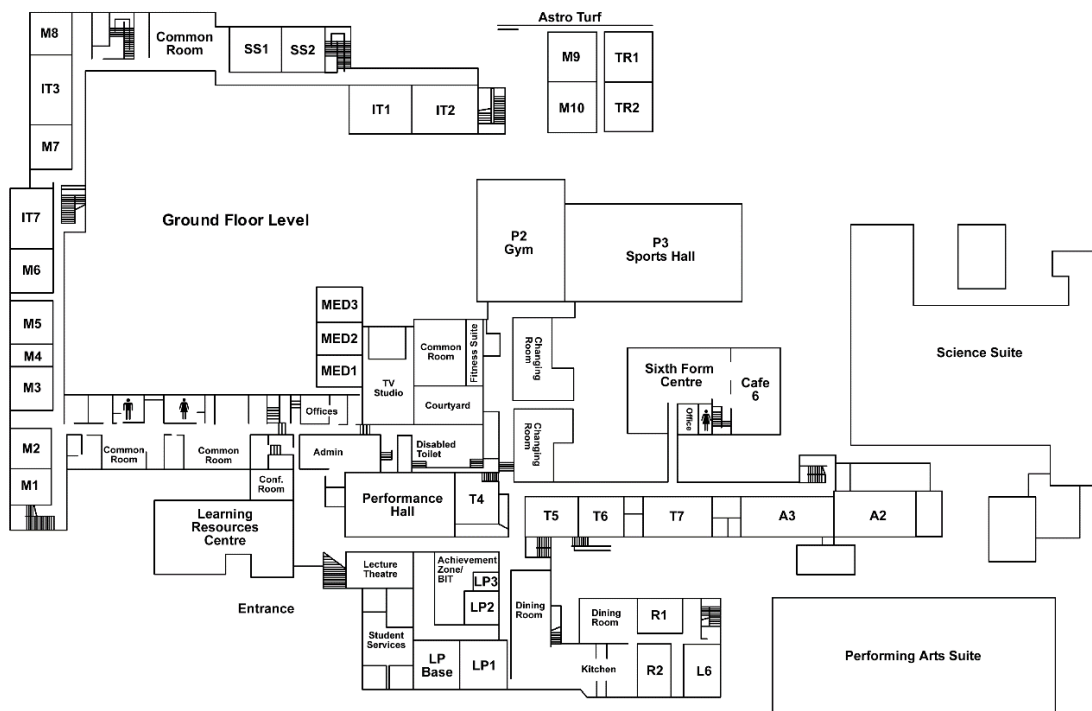
[22] Described in the West Sussex Educational Psychology Guidance

Appendix 9: Card sorting exercise – worries about classroom activities[23]

The following card sorting exercise can be used to find out which aspects of classwork the CYP finds worrying.

- Print off and cut out the "Classroom Activities" cards below.

- Show each card to the CYP and ask them to indicate if each activity makes them feel:
    - Green – relaxed, happy
    - Yellow – okay
    - Red – worried, anxious.

- Some CYPs may be so anxious that they find it tricky to talk to adults about their worries. These CYPs may choose to respond non-verbally simply by putting the cards in different piles. This is fine. Other CYPs may be happy to chat. If so, as you go through the cards, you can explore each factor by asking open questions such as:
    - Can you me a bit more about that?
    - What is it about answering questions makes you feel worried?
    - What makes you worried about working in a group?

- At the end of this exercise you will have a pile of card that give you some indication about what the CYP worries about during lessons.

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[23] Developed by the West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and based on Kate Ripley's Landscape of Fear.

1. Answering questions in class

2. Listening when the teacher explains what we are going to do

3. Following instructions

4. Knowing what to do to start a task

5. Working on my own.

6. Working with a learning partner

7. Working in a group

8. Asking a teacher for help when I have not understood something

9. Working in a quiet class

10. Working when other children are messing about

Appendix 10: Externalising the anxiety[24]

Think about your thoughts and feelings about school. What would these thoughts/feelings look like if they could be drawn?

This process helps to externalise the anxiety. Further questions which can be asked may include:

- What name would you give the feeling that you experience when you think about going to school?
- If this was a thing, what would it look like? What would it say?
- How does the _____ get in the way of you attending school? When is _____ in charge and when are you in charge?

For example, the black dog:

Appendix 11: Blob playground worksheet

Blob worksheets allow CYPs to identify themselves and others in different scenarios. For CYPs who experience feelings of anxiety and are starting to find it challenging to attend school, it might be helpful to identify their own feelings on school belonging. Using a Blob playground or classroom worksheet, you can ask the CYP to either point or colour to a figure who:

- Belongs to the school
- Does not belong in the school
- Is most similar/dissimilar to them.

These worksheets can act as a discussion point to help CYPs explain how they feel when they are at school.

Please have a variety of colouring pens/pencils available to allow the CYP to colour in. It's worth noting why the CYP chooses a certain colour.

Further resources can be found at: https://www.blobtree.com/collections/blob-schools-collection.

Appendix 12: Self-monitoring tools[25]

Self-Monitoring Example Using a Diary

Say: "Every time you feel scared, nervous or tense, fill in a diary sheet"

Date: _____	Morning Afternoon Evening				
Where were you?	Class (which one) Home Dining Hall Outside With friends Other (where)				
What happened?		I had a test			
		I had to read out loud			
		I had to give an oral report			
		I had to write on the board			
		The teacher handed me back a test			
		I had to perform in front of other people			
		Other (what)			
What did you do?		Cried			
		Got a stomach or headache			
		Refused to do what I was asked			
		Hid my eyes so I did not get called on			
		Got someone else to do it for me			
		Didn't go to the place so I wouldn't have to do it			
		Did what I was supposed to do			
		Told myself not to be nervous, it would be OK			
		Pretended I was ill so I didn't have to go			
		Practiced extra hard ahead of time so I would not be afraid			
		Other (what)			
How anxious were you?					
	Extremely	Very	Quite	A bit	Not at all

Self-Monitoring Examples Using Index Cards

Tick one of these	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
I feel happy and good about going to school					
I'm a little bit nervous and upset today, but I can still go to school					
I'm nervous and upset and I'm not sure if I can go to school					
I'm very nervous and upset and I don't think I can go to school today					
I'm so nervous and upset that I know I can't go to school today					

And on the back of the index card:

Tick one of these	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
I don't feel ill today					
I feel a little bit unwell but not enough to bother me					
I feel unwell and it bothers me					
I feel very unwell and it bothers me a lot					
I feel like being sick and I won't be able to go to school today					

At the end of the day, another index card:

	Yes	No
I went to school		
I stayed in school all day		
What the day in school was like:		

Appendix 13: School refusal behaviour checklist[26]

Do you get very scared or nervous about having to go to school?   Y/N
Do you stay home from school because you are nervous or scared?   Y/N
     If yes, how many times this year?   ____

Can you give me an example of a typical day when you wake up and don't go to school? What happens? What do you do? What do your parents do?

Do you get very nervous or scared when you are in school?   Y/N
     If yes, have you ever left school because of this?   Y/N
     If yes, how many times has this happened this year?   ____

Do you miss or leave school because you like it better at home?   Y/N

Has anyone ever given you any medicine to help you go to school?   Y/N
     If yes, tell me more.
_____
_____

What exactly is it that makes school scary for you? If I had a magic wand, is there anything I could do to make school less scary for you?

I'm going to give you a list of things. I'd like you to tell me if any of them are what make you nervous about school.

	Yes	No	Severity	Interference
Teachers				
Other students				
Speaking to other people				
Having to talk in class or in front of the class				
Taking tests				
Being away from your parents				
The bell going for change of lessons				
PE class				
Going on the school bus				
Anything else?				

[26] Bath and North Somerset EBSA guidance

A fear thermometer (in Appendix 5) can be used and the scores can be included under 'severity'.

The interference scale (below) can be used and the scores from this can be included under 'interference'.

I now want to know how much these things upset or bother you. That is, how much they stop you doing things in school that you would like to do.

Interference Scale:
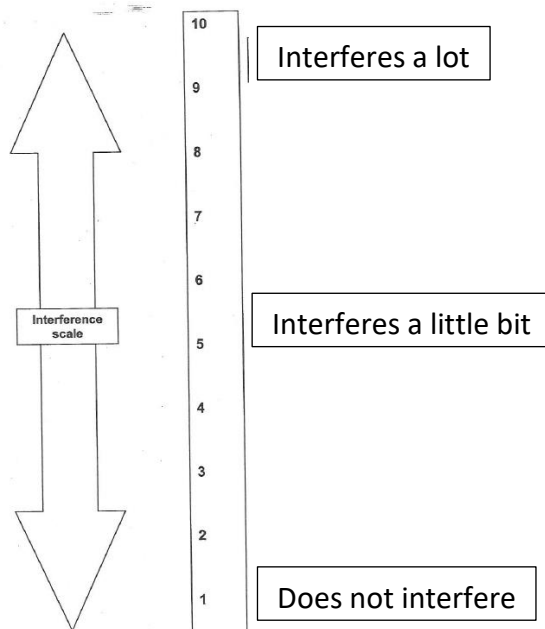
Appendix 14: Helpful hints for meeting with parents

Some helpful hints for organising meetings with families (especially parents / carers) are[27]:

- At the earliest convenience, invite parents / carers to have a meeting, and be clear about the purpose from the start to give the family reassurance and time to prepare. Check with the family about arrangements that best work for them and try to accommodate them where possible. If some aspects are more difficult to manage as a school, be honest about the issues (e.g. if someone cannot attend the meeting or can only attend for part of it).

- Think carefully about the venue, including how confidential/private and comfortable it is (e.g. lighting, seats, consideration of equality regarding chairs and location of tables etc.) and where families will have to wait. Let the family choose where they would like to sit. Also consider timings (e.g. before/after school, consideration for childcare if needed and how it will work if the CYP is not currently attending school).

- Consider who will facilitate/chair the meeting and who will take notes (that will be shared with everyone). If any discussions need to happen without the family present, ensure that they are aware of this and let them know if and what you will feed back to them about any additional discussions.

- Ensure you greet the family warmly and allow everyone to introduce themselves if they don't know who everyone is, starting with the family members. Call the parents / carers by their name, rather than [CYP's parent / carer]. The meeting could also start with a friendly chat and briefly offering everyone refreshments. Outline the purpose and structure of the meeting at the start, ensuring that it has a positive focus. Depending on how long the agenda is, it may be helpful to have a visual representation of it for all attendees to refer to.

- Keep to timings as much as possible, including start and end times. If it is a long meeting, consider including a break part-way through.

- Ensure everyone (especially the family) participates in the discussions, and if possible always get the family's views first. Ensure you involve them directly in discussions by referring to them by name and asking open-ended questions. It may be necessary to give them warnings about wanting their opinion about something, so they can have an opportunity to think about what they want to say. Listen carefully to the parents' / carers' concerns and show this in your body language (e.g. nod, smile) and responses (e.g. acknowledge some of the difficult issues that may emerge, thank them for their contributions). It could be helpful to have a box of tissues nearby in case parents / carers become upset, and/or offer them some breathing space during the meeting and a chance to step out of the room if they need to.

- To support schools to gain valuable information, the West Sussex County Council EBSA Guidance have produced a helpful framework for schools to use to facilitate discussions with parents (see next section).

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[27] Some of which are adapted from the Herts for Learning SEND Toolkit's Tips for Running Effective Meetings: http://publications.hertsforlearning.co.uk/160122/160407/236064/HfLSENDtoolkit2019/index.html?r=70#

- Summarise the key points and next steps (including who is going to do what and by when) at the end of the meeting (including circulation of any notes), and agree a date for the next meeting. Ensure there is time to end the meeting properly, rather than rush it, and end on a positive note.

Appendix 15: Framework for gathering information from parents[28]

Name of child:	Date:
Present at meeting:	
Developmental and educational history	
What was s/he like as a young child? Can you tell me about their early experiences at school? The primary school, at the start of secondary school?	
Strengths, interests and aspirations	
What is s/he 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?	
Any potential changes or losses within the family or child's life	
Can you tell me about your family? Who is in it, who is like whom? Who is s/he closest to? Have there been any changes within the family recently? *(You could ask the family to draw a family tree/ genogram)*	
Relationships	
Does s/he talk about any other children? What does s/he say? Does s/he talk about any adults within school? What does s/he say? Who does s/he get on with? Who doesn't s/he get on with?	
Academic progress	
Please note: the school should be aware if the young person has identified SEN needs and should <u>ask about these needs and the support in place</u>. *If there is no identified SEN school should <u>ask if they have any concerns, or if the child has spoken about difficulties</u>.*	
The child's view what are their specific fears/worries	
Has s/he spoken to you about what s/he finds difficult about school? What do they say?	

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[28] West Sussex EBSA guidance

The child's views, what is going well in school	
Has s/he mentioned anything that is going well in school? (e.g. teachers, lessons, friends)	
Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety	
When s/he is worried what does it look like? What do they say they are feeling?	
Typical day – when they go to school and when they don't go to school	
Please describe a typical day when s/he goes to school from the moment s/he gets up until s/he goes to bed. What about when s/he doesn't go to school? What does s/he do when they do not go to school? What do other family members do?	
Impact on various members of the family	
How does their non-attendance impact on you? And on other family members? Who is better at dealing with the situation? Why?	
Parental views on the reasons for the EBSA	
Why do you think s/he has difficulty attending school? *(Ask each parent separately)* If (the other parent/carer/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 to the problem	
Have there been times when s/he managed to get into school? What was different about those times?	
Previous attempts to address the problem	
What has been the most helpful thing that someone else has done in dealing with the problem so far? What has helped in the past when things have been difficult? What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their anxiety?	

Appendix 16: Round Robin – example questions when working with school staff[29]

_____ is currently experiencing difficulties attending school, which we feel may be due to emotional distress. We would like to gain a picture of how _____ is doing in school. As an adult who works with _____, please complete the questions below.

Your name _____	Lesson/activity taught _____
Please describe _____	

What are _____'s strengths?

What is going well for _____?

What does _____ find difficult?

How does _____ get on with their peers?

[29] West Sussex EBSA guidance

How does _____ get on with you and other adults?

Is _____ engaged and motivated with their learning? Is s/he making progress? If not, why not?

Have you observed any emotional difficulties at school? What have these been? When did/do they occur?

What support do you provide for _____? How do they respond to this?

What is your understanding of _____'s attendance problems?

What do you think would help _____ in school?

The Toolkit: Tools to Help Schools Support CYPs to Manage their Anxiety

Contents

Appendix 17: Teaching calming strategies

Calming strategies help CYPs to become more emotionally regulated when their feelings threaten to overwhelm them. CYPs need to be taught how to use self-calming strategies.

Calming strategies do not have to be specific to the situation but focus on managing the feelings of anxiety/overwhelm.

It is important to note that different self-calming strategies work for different people, and different strategies are likely to work at different levels of emotional overwhelm, i.e. their effectiveness can depend on the person, the situation and the level of overwhelm the CYP is experiencing. Therefore, it is important to be guided by ideas that the CYP has for calming strategies. Trying out a range of strategies will also be important to discover what works for each individual. The strategies will need to be practised at times when the CYP is feeling calm, to enable them to use them in the moments when they are anxious.

A range of self-calming strategies are described below for you to try with CYPs. These are separated into the following categories:
- Sensory strategies for calming
- Breathing techniques
- Grounding
- Mindfulness and imagery

Some websites that give further ideas for calming strategies are included in the Resources section.

Sensory strategies for calming

Often calming strategies engage one or more of our senses. There are many examples in the following pages related to these different senses.

Provide a box of sensory toys for when the CYP is struggling to sit still or needs to wait for attention. Toys should be carefully chosen so they are not overly distracting for others, but may include stress balls, tangles, soft toys, chew sticks etc. *NB. For hygiene reasons chew sticks should not be shared.* It may include something they can touch (e.g. a fidget spinner, some playdough or cuddly toy), something they can smell (e.g. a lavender bag or fruit tea-bag), something they can taste (e.g. a piece of fruit or crisps), something they can hear (e.g. a musical instrument or CD) and something they can look at (e.g. bubbles, a liquid timer etc.). More examples are including below.

Ensure that the CYP knows the ground rules for using calming strategies, e.g. when they are allowed to do the activity, that they are not to distract others with sensory toys etc. A signal could be arranged with the class teacher so that the CYP can alert the teacher that he/she is beginning to feel out of control. Learning to spot the early warning signs is important so that meltdowns can be prevented. Brief school staff, so that the CYP does not get in trouble e.g. for fiddling with a tangle in assembly.

Visual strategies/activities

Going outside can give different visual input (e.g. natural light, look at nature), which some CYPs may find calming. They could either sit outside or go for a walk.

Increase visual input:
- Videos (this could be something repetitive or soothing like a fireplace)
- Watching a lava lamp/liquid timer/glitter jars etc.
- Light up toys, bubble tube (or someone blowing bubbles/bubble machine)
- Mirror balls and disco lights
- Fibre optic lights
- Projectors with visuals.

Decrease visual input:
- Dim the lights or go somewhere dark (e.g. a pop-up tent)
- Wear sunglasses (even indoors)
- Go to a room that has less decoration.

Auditory strategies/activities

Going outside can give different auditory input (e.g. sound of the wind, animals), which some CYPs may find calming. They could either sit outside or go for a walk.

Increase auditory input:
- Singing, humming, whistling
- Listening to music

- Listening to sounds (e.g. forest, the sea).

Decrease auditory input:
- Go to a quiet place (e.g. calming room)
- Noise-cancelling headphones/ear defenders.

Olfactory (smell) strategies/activities

Increase olfactory input:
- Spray perfume
- Use essential oils
- Sniff boxes and bottles
- Scented pens.

Oral strategies/activities (for taste)

We quickly tell CYPs to keep things out of their mouth, but many need oral stimulation to help focus for learning. Some CYPs need this almost constantly, others just occasionally.

straw sucking	Straw sucking is like deep breathing but with more resistance. It combines deep pressure and heavy work. The resistance can vary depending on the length of the straw and the contents. It is very regulating and can offer a brief retreat event.	mouth chewies or gum	Chewing can be calming. Most schools would not welcome students chewing gum in lessons; however, children can be provided with chew sticks, or chewable jewellery. These items will need to be washed regularly.
deep breath, now relax! One more time	Taking deep breaths down to the belly can be very calming; whereas taking breaths high up in the chest can be more alerting. Make your choice.		Play a musical instrument that involves blowing, e.g. a whistle, recorder, trumpet etc.
	Blowing bubbles		

Tactile strategies (for touch)

- Fiddle toys (e.g. squeezy balls, pipe cleaners, blu tac)
- Playdough/clay
- Lego or interlocking shapes
- Textured walls/boards (e.g. with different fabric swatches)
- Pillow (could be different textures, like fluffy or sequins, or one that vibrates)
- Therapy balls
- Body sock or dyna bands (also helpful for proprioception, see below)
- Clapping
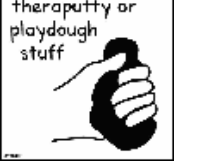
- Popping bubble wrap or tearing/folding paper
- Pegs to open and close/put on material
- Place hands in a bowl of water/slime/glass pebbles etc.
- Putting on hand cream.

Deep pressure strategies/activities (for touch and proprioception)

Generally firm deep pressure is calming as opposed to light tickly touch which some CYPs can find threatening. When suggesting deep pressure activities be aware of the following points:
- Ensure that the CYP and parents do not have concerns about the proposed activity
- Some CYPs may only be able to tolerate self-administered pressure, particularly if they are 'tactile defensive' or have experienced abuse
- Teaching CYPs to administer deep pressure helps them to learn to self-regulate their arousal levels.

Some example strategies related to deep pressure are:

self squeeze	Fold arms and hug yourself tightly. This can be used almost anywhere, and combined with a Monster Face Squish and a Deep Breath, to help the child regroup after or during an alerting sensory situation. A similar effect can be gained by firmly hugging a soft toy.	**massage**	Massage is very relaxing. In class child can massage their own hands or arms, when needing to refocus. At home they may enjoy head massage, back massage etc when needing to calm down. Ask the child what they prefer - light or heavy massage and for how long.
monster faces	Raise shoulders and make a monster face. The child can use their hands to squash their cheeks or scalp. This reduces sensory overload and promotes relaxation. Use it in stressful, tight or busy spaces to gain self-regulation.	**mini pushes desk, chair or wall**	Desk push up, chair push up, and wall push off, all help to energize, focus and calm. Use them frequently either as a "get ready strategy" or while waiting. Do them fast to alert and increase focus, or do them slow to calm and steady.
theraputty or playdough stuff	Provide the child with something that can be squeezed hard e.g. play dough or stress balls, which offer finger and hand resistance. This provides deep pressure and something for the child to fiddle with when required to sit for long periods.	**heavy weight** vest backpack lap pillow	Using a weighted item e.g. rucksack, lap pillow or a large bean bag toy can be effective in settling children. The weight increase should be no more than 10% of body weight. Use only when needed, as it may become less effective after approx. 20 mins. Don't impose its use if the child dislikes it.
squish box **book 'n pillow corner**		Provide a quiet corner that the child can go to and 'self squish'. This could be by snuggling into a box lined with a blanket, an armchair, corner seat or bean bags. Placing a beanbag, cushion or blanket on top of the child adds to the tactile pressure. Allow the child to do a peaceful activity such as looking at books or listening to calming music.	
At home: children may also enjoy bear hugs, head massage, back massage. Some children enjoy being wrapped up in a towel like a sausage after a bath and then cuddled.			

An alternative to the self-hug is the Butterfly technique.

Movement strategies/activities (for vestibular and proprioception)

Movement activities provide vestibular input and stimulate proprioception (awareness of the movement of muscles and joints). This can be calming, however, care needs to be taken not to overstimulate unsettled CYPs with too much proprioception and vestibular input.

General principles:

- Steady linear vestibular input is calming e.g. rocking, swinging, bouncing on a trampoline
- Avoid spinning activities or ones that involve lots of sudden changes of pace or direction (e.g. playing dodge ball)
- Some CYPs benefit from additional movement in order to be able to settle, make sure that the activity does not over excite them.

swing	**Gentle** swinging is calming. Avoid spinning the swing. May need to follow up with deep pressure squishes.	slow rocking	**Slow** rocking is very calming and organizing when done slowly especially when combined with deep pressure (hugs or a cosy blanket in a rocking chair).
finger 'n hand gadgets	Little motions from hand gadgets help a child stay still and focused. Prevent silliness by looking for hand gadgets with pressure and heavy work features. Build in guidelines e.g. no throwing for proper use; attach it to a wristband or waistband and it can go most anywhere.	mini tramp or tramp	Combines vestibular motion and muscle work. It also builds motor skills and postural balance. Use with supervision. If child becomes very alert supply deep pressure afterwards to settle children.
ball or air wedge at desk	For children who fidget or slump; the small motions and slight postural adjustments from being on an air ball or wobble cushion helps focus and maintain postural alertness. Structure and deep pressure help to prevent restlessness from being over alerting.	movement break	Build in frequently after sitting for a long time, or when fatigued or restless. It helps improve focus, posture and decreases fidgetiness. Do as a group (e.g. Simon Says), or as an individual event through a chore or routine (e.g. handing out the books).

Movement can also incorporate heavy work:

office duty	Build heavy chores and activities in frequently as they are calming and organizing. They also offer a little retreat time and helps to build muscles. E.g. carrying books, tidying away outdoor play equipment or PE apparatus.	classroom calmer silent scream 'n stomp	This is a great motion activity for a classroom or small space! Have the kids stomp their feet and wave their arms vigorously for 3-5 seconds, then scream silently ending it with a deep breath and blowing it out. They'll feel refreshed!

brief heavy chores 'n push, pull. lift	Helping lift, carry and pull is very calming and organizing. Build heavy chores in frequently, especially prior to transitions or when child is overwhelmed and close to a meltdown. It also offers a retreat from a busy event.	critter crawl	A tummy crawl of the child's preferred animal (snake, seal or snail) is great to help with transitions when children are restless or hyper. The deep pressure and heavy work help them regroup and builds some postural strength and coordination.

Reducing sensory input/overload – getting away from the bustle

Meltdowns can occur if things are too loud, bright, or busy. You can't always eliminate sensory input, but can minimize their impact by determining which ones are the triggers, then adjust the environment by reducing the sensory overload. These have mostly already been mentioned in the relevant sensory system section.

retreat...less noisy. bright. busy BOOKS	Building in legitimate sensory breaks, such as 'down time' in the book corner, can help a child get through the day. Teach the child to seek the space when self-regulation is needed. Pillows add a deep pressure squish.	it's all too loud. bright 'n busy Try hat? shades? ear set?	Try calming music and dim the lights. Some children may cope better if wearing a sunhat and shades in bright sunlight.
office duty go for a walk	Build in legitimate breaks that let the child get away from sensory busy environments. Ask the child to deliver a message to the office or go to the library to choose a book etc.	my own space	For a tactile defensive child, an unexpected poke or push at carpet time may be perceived as threatening. Have a consistent space on the edge of the group/against a wall, so the child can see what's coming.
quiet work place	Find a place that is both close by for support, but not in the path of business. Group with less boisterous children. Where possible, minimize sensory overload of bright lights and loud classroom noises.	quiet down time place	A snug dark place such as a small pop up tent full of cushions can provide a retreat for an overloaded child.
end or front of line no bumps pleaxx	A tactilely defensive child can feel that a poke or push is threatening. Try positioning the child at the front or end of the line; allow to get ready early or late; give them a job to do while waiting or teach self squishes.	quiet time together	Retreats are created by those special people in a child's life through hugs, calm support, and advocacy. All help to reduce the sensory overload and supply comforting structure. Calm adults can also name and contain a child's emotions. A trusted adult can become the stabilizer wherever the child goes.

Breathing techniques for calming

When we are anxious, our breathing changes. We tend to take short, quick, shallow breaths or even hyperventilate. This type of anxious breathing can actually make the feeling of anxiety worse! Doing calm breathing can help lower a CYP's anxiety, and give him or her a sense of control. Calm breathing is a great portable tool that a CYP can use when feeling anxious, especially in situations when an adult is not there to help him or her through it.

There are many different breathing techniques that adults and CYPs can use, and there are a number that have been developed to be particularly motivating for CYPs. Calm breathing is a technique that teaches them to slow down their breathing when feeling stressed or anxious.

This webinar may support adults to understand how different breathing techniques can regulate the nervous system: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJMkdU2gkPI

How to Do It

- Step 1: Explaining calm breathing to the CYP
  - This is a tool a CYP can use anywhere, anytime!
  - Other people will probably not even notice when the CYP is using this tool
  - For older CYPs and teens, explain that taking short quick breaths actually increases other feelings of anxiety (e.g. heart racing, dizziness, or headaches). Calm breathing will slow down his or her breathing.

- Step 2: Teaching the calm breathing technique
  - Take a slow breath in through the nose (for about 4 seconds)
  - Hold your breath for 1 or 2 seconds
  - Exhale slowly through the mouth (over about 4 seconds)
  - Wait 2-3 seconds before taking another breath (5-7 seconds for teenagers)
  - Repeat for at least 5 to 10 breaths.

- Step 3: Practice, practice, practice!
  - In order for the CYP to be able to use this new tool effectively, he or she first needs to be **an expert** at calm breathing. This practice should happen when the CYP is calm.

The following pages list different kinds of breathing exercises.

Calm Breathing for Younger Children: Bubble Blowing
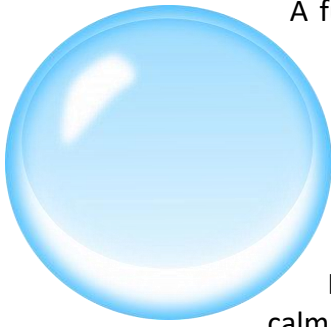
A fun way to teach a younger child how to do calm breathing is the "bubble blowing" technique. Using a toy soap bubble container and wand (available at any toy shop), have the child practise blowing bubbles. The breathing required for blowing soap bubbles is the same as what is used for calm breathing. Simply make sure the child waits a second or two before blowing another bubble. Then practice "blowing bubbles" without a bubble wand.

Important Hint: Although "bubble blowing" is a great way to practise calm breathing, it is important to remind the child that he or she is doing this to learn how to breathe calmly. In other words, do not simply ask the child to blow bubbles without explaining this tool is used to help to manage anxiety. Here's a script of how to introduce bubble blowing to a young child:

"Today we are going to practise a new skill called calm breathing. This will be a new tool that you can use when you feel anxious, such as when you are at school. When you use calm breathing, you take slow breaths. A good way to practise it is to do some bubble blowing, because you have to take a slow, deep breath to make a big bubble, and you have to blow the bubble really slowly or it will pop! So, let's practise. Take a slow, deep breath in, hold it for a second, and then slowly blow some bubbles. Good job! Now let's try that again."

For Older CYPs and Teens: Belly Breathing

Since calm breathing involves taking slow, controlled breaths from the diaphragm, another way to explain this technique is to present it as "belly breathing". The steps for this exercise are as follows:

- Inhale slowly for 4 seconds through the nose.
- Ask the CYP to pretend that he or she is blowing up a balloon in the belly, so their belly should inflate when inhaling.
- Wait 2 seconds, and then slowly exhale through the mouth. Ask the CYP to pretend that he or she is emptying the balloon of air, so the tummy should deflate.
- Wait 2 seconds, and then repeat.

Helpful Hint: When belly breathing, make sure the CYP's upper body (shoulders and chest area) is fairly relaxed and still. Only the belly should be moving!

Balloon Breathing

Another helpful breathing technique is to have CYPs visualize a balloon inside their bellies. As they breathe in, the balloon expands and as they breathe out, the balloon deflates.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

For this breathing exercise, CYPs bring attention to their breath by holding one nostril closed as they breathe in and then holding the other nostril closed as they breathe out.

4 Count Breathing

Have CYPs breathe in for a count of 4, then pause to hold onto the breath for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, and pause when the breath empties for a count of 4.

Counting Breaths For an even easier version of the technique above, simply have CYPs count their breaths until they get to 10 (counting 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale, and so on). Then, have them start over at 1.

Beach Breathing

This is one of our favorite breathing visualization techniques. Have CYPs imagine that they're standing on the beach. As they inhale, have them imagine that they're drawing a wave up onto the sand. As they exhale, have them imagine the water receding back into the ocean or lake. Repeat.

Take 5 Breathing

Have CYPs hold up one hand or place the hand on their desk or table. Have them place the index finger of their opposite hand on the outside of the bottom knuckle of their pinky finger. As they breathe in, have them use their index finger to trace up the outside of the pinky finger. As they exhale, they trace down the other side of the finger. Then inhale – up the ring finger, exhale – down the other side of the ring finger. And so on until they get to their thumb.

Draw a Square Breathing
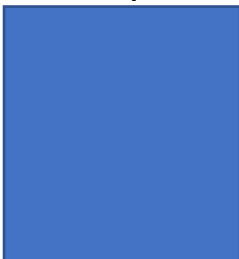
This one adds a visual component to the 4 Count Breathing described above. On their desk or table, have CYPs trace a horizontal line with their fingers for a count of 4 as they breathe in (the top of the square). Then, trace downward to form the side of the square as they hold the breath for a count of 4. Then they trace horizontally again to make the bottom of the square as they exhale. And finally, they trace upward to form the other side of the square as they hold their breath out. Repeat.

Alternatively, simply focus on a window or door or any square/rectangular object. Your breathe-in should be slightly shorter than your breathe-out. Start by looking at the short edge and inhale when you reach the longest length breathe-out as your eyes follow the line, etc. Do this along the other sides, remembering to inhale on the short sides and exhale on the longer ones. Repeat until you feel calm and relaxed.
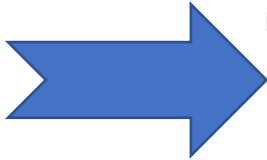
Making an Object Move With the Breath

This is a great one to try with younger children! Have the child lie on the floor with a toy or other small object resting on his/her tummy. Tell him/her to try to make the object rise and fall slowly by breathing deeply.

Hissing Breath:

1. Breathe in through the nose, taking a long, deep inhale.

2. Then exhale through the mouth on a small hiiiisssssssssssssssssing sound – like a balloon slowly losing air.

Go super slow and try to make the exhale last 10-15 seconds or more. Repeat several times so children can feel how they can use their breath to slow themselves down, mentally and physically.

Humming Breath

This is like giving yourself a big hug, and so wonderful for calming, centering, and soothing. Useful to use on a regular basis, before starting any new activity or if a child is feeling frustrated, overwhelmed or irritable.

1. Place one hand on your belly button.

2. Place the other hand on your sternum in the middle of your chest.

3. Take a deep breath and hummmmm while breathing out. Feel the vibration of the sound as you hum and let it ground your body and calm your mind.

Fish Breath

This is a fun, silly technique because you make a bloop sound on the exhale, like a fish. So, it's sure to start some laughter, which is an effective way to disperse tension or over-efforting, and help CYPs not take things too seriously. Physiologically, when you inhale deeply, you pull in lots of oxygen needed by our brain and body to stay relaxed and alert. When you exhale completely, you make room for more which helps us release stress and recharge ourselves.

Fish Breath:

1. Take a deep breath through your nose,

2. Expand up your cheeks and …

3. Push it all out through your mouth …

Bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop, blooooooop.

And again, deep breath in your nose…

Expand your cheeks

Exhale out your mouth …

Bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop, blooooooop.

Flower Breath

Imagine smelling a beautiful flower, breathe in through the nose and out the mouth, releasing any tension. Stop and smell the roses, daffodils, daisies or any other flower they like. This is a simple way to connect CYPs to their breath and how it helps them to feel.

Bear Breath

Inhale through the nose, pause; exhale out the nose, pause. Breathe in to a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2; breath out for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2. Repeat a few times. This will help ground and settle CYPs. Wonderful for restful, reflective time. Imagine a bear hibernating. Helpful before nap time, story time or any creative activity.

Bunny Breath
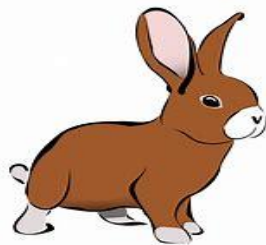
Just 3 quick sniffs in the nose and one long exhale out the nose. Invite CYPs to pretend to be bunnies, sniffing the air for other bunnies, carrots to eat, or safety. It can be a lovely cleansing breath when you use it in this way. You can also use it when kids are very upset and can't find their breath, because it will help them connect to their exhale, so that they breathe instead of spin out.

You can also use videos to explain breathing exercises (to adults or to CYPs), or even guide you through it. For example:

- Hand or star breathing - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIdSdx-jps
- Left right breathing - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHwigovPrXY&feature=youtu.be

Grounding exercises/activities

When your mind is racing, grounding brings you back to the moment, bringing your focus back to what is happening to you physically, either in your body or in your surroundings. Grounding is very helpful in managing overwhelming feelings or anxiety. Some of these strategies link closely to the ones in the section on mindfulness, below.

1. The grounding chair
Sit down in a comfortable chair, with your feet on the floor. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Breathe in slowly for the count, then out slowly. Bring your mind's focus to your body – How does your body feel sitting in that chair? Touch the material on the seat, how does it feel? Next push your feet into the ground, imagine the energy draining down from your mind, down through your body and out through your feet into the ground.

2. Hold something and focus on it
Hold an object in your hand and really bring your full focus to it. Feel how heavy or light it is in your hand and what the surface texture feels like under your fingers.

3. Draw around your foot in your mind
Place your feet on the ground and in your imagination pick your favourite colour to draw an outline around each foot. Start at the heel and using your imaginary pencil slowly go up the side of your foot to your pinkie toe and then make sure you draw around each toe and then go back towards the heel.

4. Get your energy out
For example, run up and down the stairs, dance around, do jumping jacks or do star jumps. You could then place your hand of your heart and notice your heartbeat and how your breathing feels.

5. Stop and listen
   Notice the sounds you hear nearby – more your awareness of sound outwards and notice sounds in the distance.

6. Room search
   Pick one broad category and search the room. For example, name everything in the room that's green.

7. Hold/squeeze a pillow, stuffed animal or ball

8. Name 5 things you can see in the room

9. Activities like drawing, colouring, reading, playing games (paper or on an iPad), word searches, jigsaws or origami

10. Sorting/tidying (e.g. putting coloured buttons into separate bowls)

11. Name animals alphabetically

12. Progressive muscle relaxation.
This video explains to adults how to do progressive muscle relaxation, which involves tensing and then relaxing muscles. This video from Go Zen for children walks you through it through your whole body. Alternatively, you can focus on one aspect (e.g. clenching and releasing your fists or holding your shoulders right up to your ears and then letting them drop), which you can repeat as many times as it takes to release tension.

13. Think of the things that you are looking forward to in the next week

14. Observe your thoughts

15. Walk barefoot

16. Walk slowly
Notice each step.

17. Do some yoga poses
Cosmic Kids Yoga has lots of videos on their YouTube channel.

18. Rhythmic movement
Rhythmic movement can also be very relaxing, for example see this video explaining it.

19. Look at things that bring them joy
Like photos of their family/favourite toy, souvenirs from holidays, comforter or special stones.

20. Listen to or read a story
This could include an adult reading the CYP a story, listening to an audio book or the CYP reading the story themselves. A familiar story is likely to be best, and one with repetition and/or rhythm may be particularly comforting, especially for younger children.

Mindfulness and Imagery

Guided imagery – it's easy to practice: just imagine a peaceful scene in your mind. It works best if you incorporate as many sensory details as possible; what you see, hear, feel, smell and taste. Some people prefer to listen to videos that guide you through the imagery in your head (see below). BedtimeFM has a playlist of stories that involve guiding CYPs through visualisation and breathing exercises. Alternatively, you can visualise/think about a positive memory, as explained in this video.

Go Zen has a YouTube playlist of mindfulness videos designed for CYPs. Smiling Mind also has a YouTube channel, including a mindfulness video on their YouTube channel for CYPs who like to move. Cosmic Kids Yoga has a mindfulness video designed for young children too. Audio exercises for adolescents can also be found here.

Mindfulness and meditation apps can be downloaded and trialled with the CYP, e.g. *Headspace*, *Smiling Mind*, *Calm*, *Think Ninja* and *Stop, Breathe and Think Kids*.

There are also mindfulness drawing exercises and colouring books, e.g. 'The Art of Mindfulness' range.

These links and ideas do not represent an exhaustive list and are merely a starting point. It is important to test them out and see which ones the CYP prefers to use and what works for them.

Appendix 18: Teach the CYP to identify what they feel like when they are anxious / body mapping

Start by saying something like:

"There are changes to our body that let us know we're scared or worried. What do you notice when you're feeling scared? How do you know when you're scared?"

Then draw around the CYP or show them an outline of a body. Get the CYP to draw spots on the body where they notice feelings or sensations when they are worried.

For CYPs who find it difficult to identify what happens to their body when they get scared, give them a list of common sensations and ask if they feel them too. Get them to drawn them on the body.

Fast / racing heart	Sweating
Shaking	Feeling dizzy
Trembling	Feeling sick
Tight muscles	Headache
Pain in chest	Tightness in throat
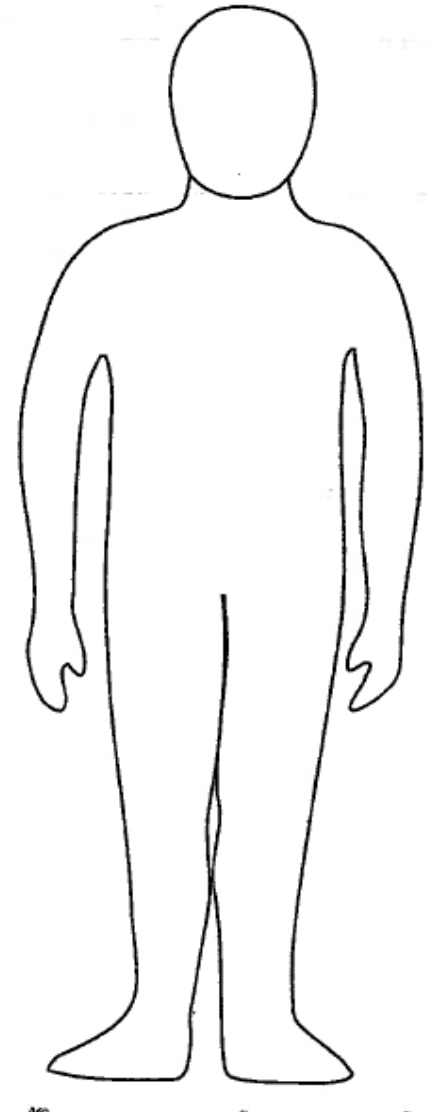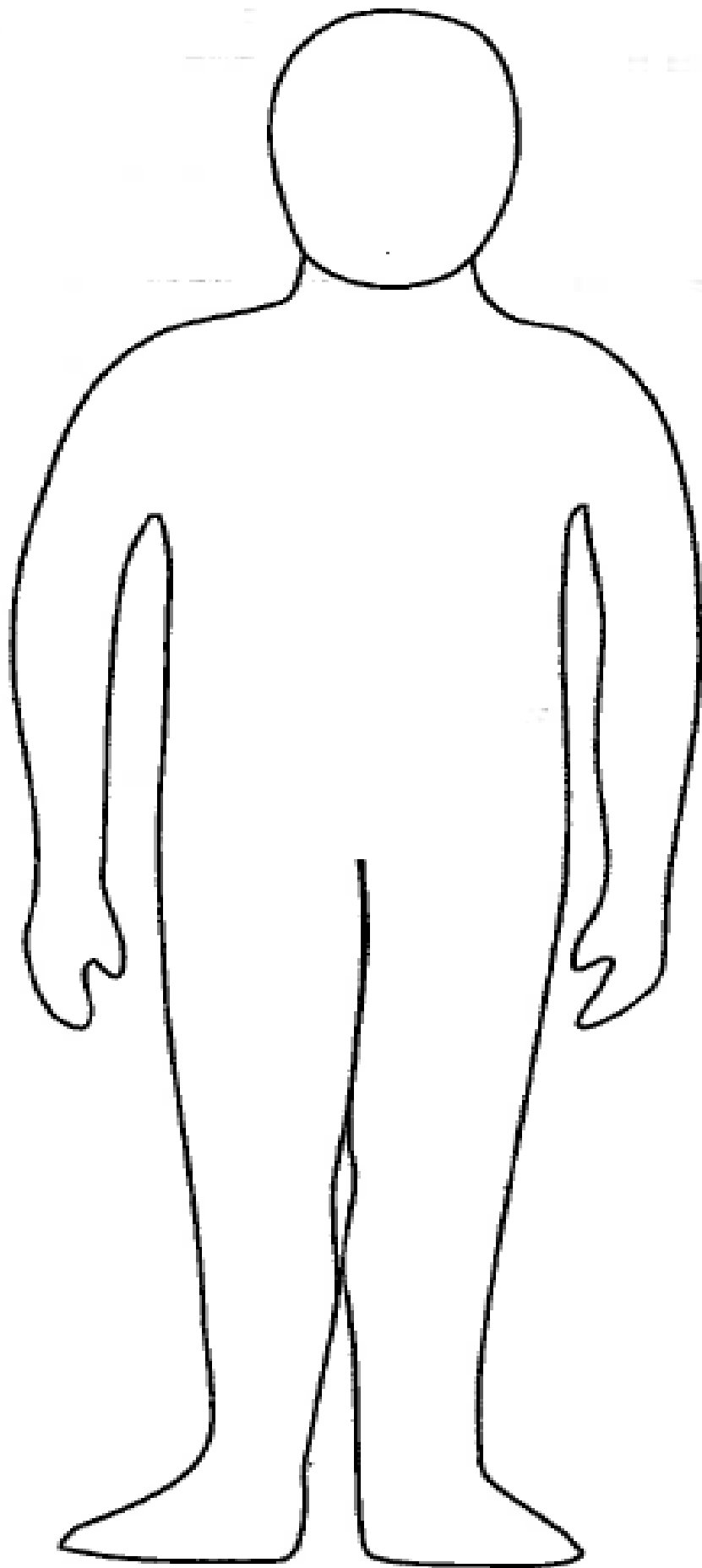
Appendix 19: Teach the CYP about the "fight or flight" response[30]
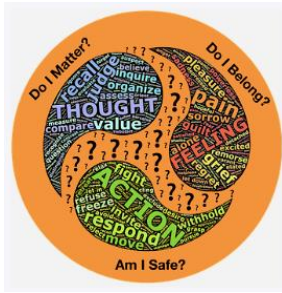
What is the Fight or Flight Response?

If your body thinks you are in danger, it releases adrenaline which helps you to become stronger and faster for a short period of time. This adrenaline produces the bodily sensations you experience when you are frightened. This adrenaline helps you to run away or fight the dangerous thing.

What Anxious CYPs Need to Know:

- Everyone experiences anxiety and often anxiety is a healthy and helpful response.
- Sometimes our body thinks things are dangerous, even when they are not
- Because our body **thinks** we're in danger, it produces adrenaline. This makes our heart race, our hands go sweaty, we feel sick etc.
- This is a false alarm. There is no real danger and we don't need to run away or fight
- The physical feelings we have are uncomfortable, but they are temporary and harmless
- As we learn that these sensations are a normal response to our body sending out a "false alarm", that the feelings will pass and they do no harm, we will begin to pay less attention to them.

How to present this idea to CYPs.

You can use the script on the following page to present the idea of fight or flight to CYPs.

The Anxiety Curve

The anxiety curve below shows how increasing levels of anxiety can affect a person's thinking and performance. Some anxiety can actually help improve productivity (e.g. it can motivate us to preparing for an exam). However, when anxiety reaches a critical point, it starts to affect a person's performance and their ability to process information and make rational, logical decisions.

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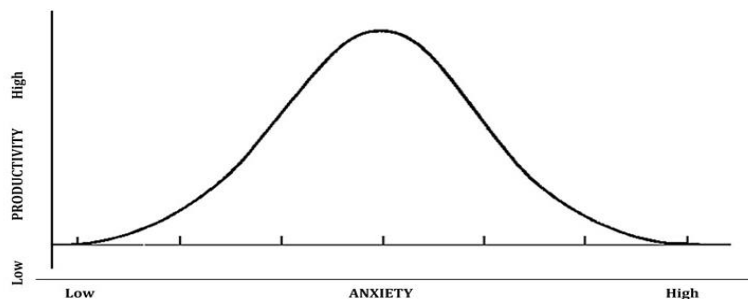
[30] From Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents by Raggi et al.

Fight or Flight[31]
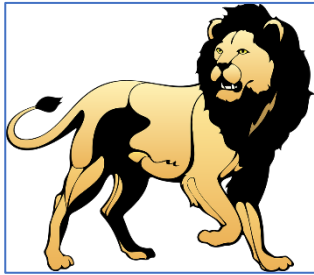
Imagine a hungry lion came into the room right now. What would happen to your body right now? What kind of sensations would you have?

This kind of fear is really helpful. It lets us know something dangerous is happening and It sends messages around our body that makes our heart pump faster and our muscles get stronger.
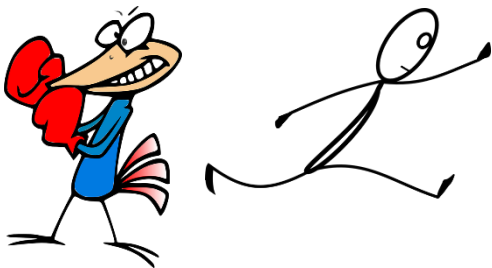
It gets our bodies ready to run away or fight. Feeling scared is normal and sometimes really helpful!
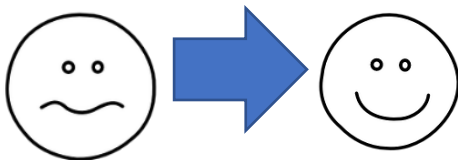
Those feelings cannot hurt us, even though they don't feel very nice. They don't last forever. They go as soon as the danger is passed.
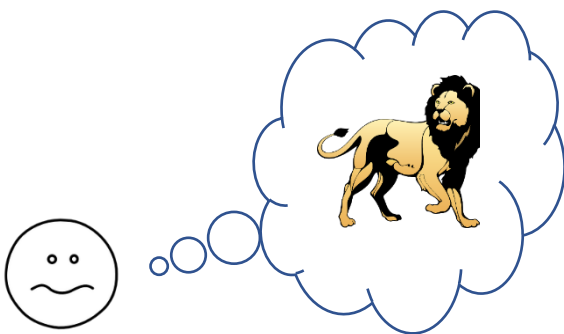
The same thing can happen to our bodies when we think about something scary or when we think something bad will happen, even if there is no real danger. You can have scary feelings without having a lion in the room. You just need to think about the lion.

[31] Script from ""Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.
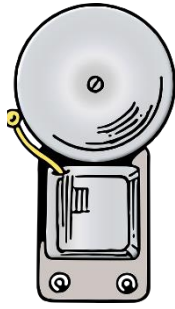
We call this a "false alarm". Our body's alarm sounds, and we get lots of scared feelings, but there is no actual danger. It's like a practice fire alarm going off.
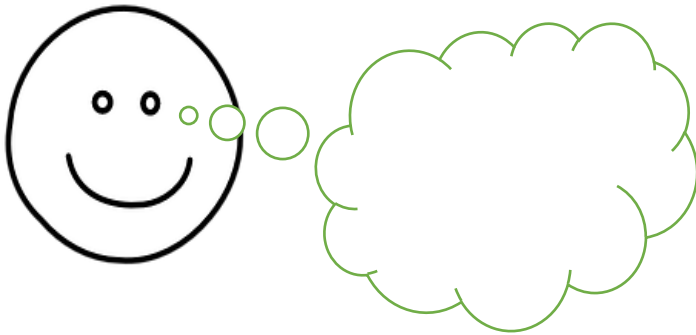
Our thoughts are really powerful! But thoughts can also help us calm down. For example, we can remind ourselves that we're safe and that the feelings in our body will go away and can't hurt us.

You can learn how to take control of your scary thoughts and use calm thinking to help your body relax.

Appendix 20: Teach the CYP how avoidance makes fear stronger but facing fears makes them go away

When you feel anxious sensations in your body, it's natural to want to avoid the situation or person that your worried about.

However, every time we avoid the thing we're worried about, it reinforces the belief that we must avoid the scary thing to make ourselves feel safe

Suggested script for explaining this idea to children[32]

When we get scared, we usually try to avoid the thing we're scared of. If you're scared of separating from your mum, you'll try really hard to not let her out of your sight. If you're scared of spiders, you'll try really hard to stay out of rooms with spiders. If you're scared of school, you'll try really hard to get your parents to let you stay at home.

When you avoid things you're scared of, in the short term you feel relieved. But over time, it can make those things seem more and more scary.

We never get a chance to learn that we can handle the scary thing.

We don't get a chance to learn that things are not as bad, as we worry they might be.

To beat our fears, we must slowly get used to what we are afraid of by gradually approaching it instead of avoiding it. We can do it in tiny steps that will help you feel more confident.

As you face your fears, the false alarms will get weaker and weaker. You will feel more relaxed and your thoughts will start to change too. You may start to think that the things you're worried about aren't so bad. You may realise that even though you feel bad, nothing terrible will happen. You may start to feel proud that you didn't run away but that you handled it.

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32 Script taken from "Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.

Appendix 21: Identifying triggers; teach how thoughts, feelings and action link together

It is important for anxious CYPs to learn how their thoughts, feelings and behaviours are all linked. This allows the CYP to understand the impact their worrying thoughts have on their mind, body and behaviours. As they become more aware, they can develop tools to manage or challenge unhelpful thoughts as they arise.

You can teach CYPs that while they may not be able to control the thoughts that pop into their heads, they do have control over how they decide to respond to those thoughts.

Identifying thoughts

Older CYPs may easily be able to tell you what they are thinking. Some CYPs say they cannot remember their worrying thoughts after the event. These CYPs can be encouraged to make a note of their thoughts in a notebook or on their phone as they happen.

Younger children may need concrete activities to identify their thought such as drawing themselves with cartoon thought bubbles surrounding their head. Initially fill it with all sorts of recent thoughts. Later, adjust it so the CYP focuses on worrying thoughts.

No-one plays with me at break time. I haven't got any friends.

When I'm away from Mummy, I feel terrible. Mummy is the only one who can look after me.

I love my puppy
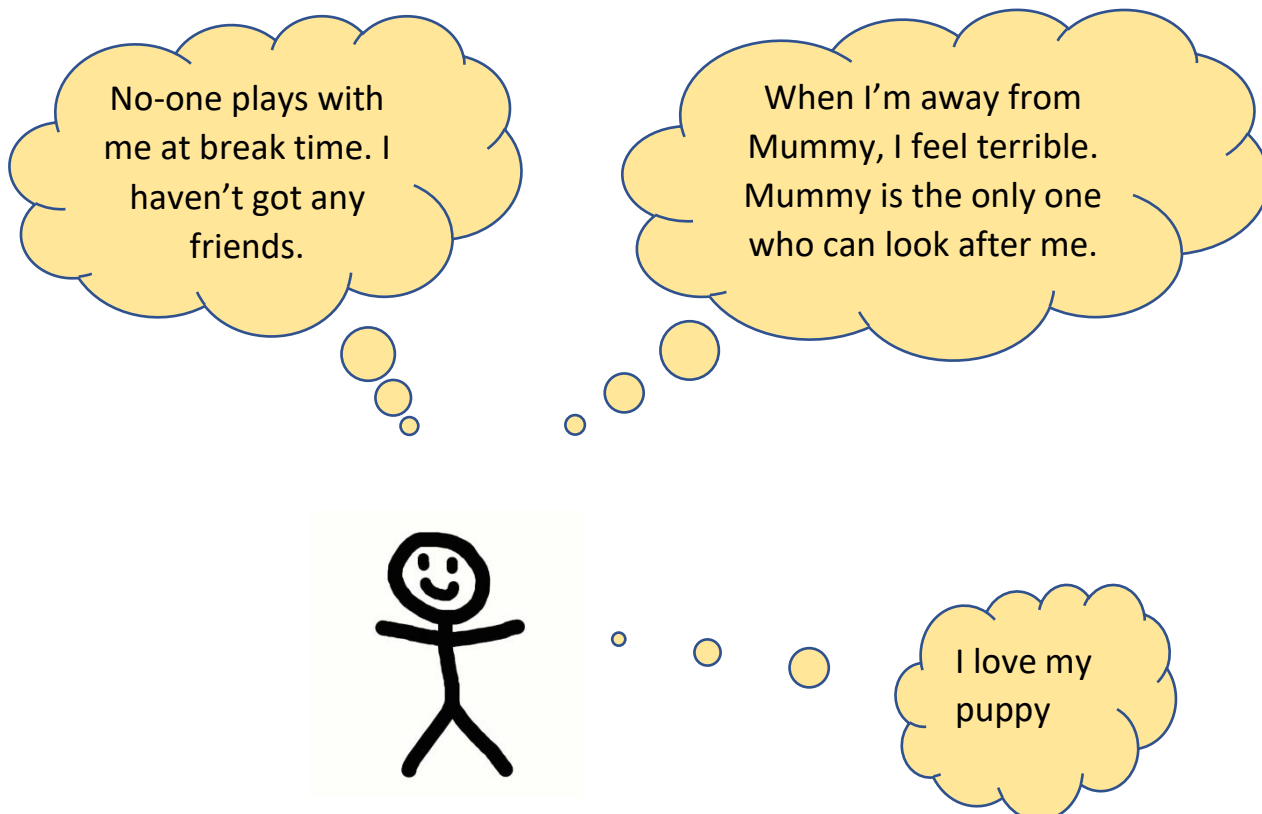
Once the CYP is able to identify their thoughts, help them to link their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

Ask the CYP to think about a previous time they were scared. In three overlapping bubbles, ask them to write down in one bubble what they thought, in one bubble what they did and in one bubble what they felt. Encourage them to make links between these thoughts, feelings and behaviours. For example, a CYP could be encouraged to see that when they begin to think things like "If I go into school something terrible will happen", they start to feel a little bit sick and panicky. When they notice these feelings, it leads to more thoughts about how terrifying school is, which makes the panicky feelings every worse. This ends up in the behaviour where they scream at their parents in the morning and refuse to enter the classroom.

THOUGHTS

I can't go to school.

If I go to school something terrible will happen.

I won't be able to cope

BEHAVIOURS

I scream at my mum every morning when she says I have to go to school.

When I'm in school, I won't go into any lessons

FEELINGS

I feel sick.

My heart races.

My face feels hot.

I feel panicky,

Practising linking thoughts, feelings and behaviours

Once the CYP understands how thoughts, feelings and actions are linked, they need to regularly practise identifying their thoughts. This can be done by asking them to write down at least one scary feeling each day of the week or as they notice them during the day.

They could be encouraged to fill out a Thought – Feeling – Action worksheet such as the one below. A younger child could be encouraged to fill out cartoon thought bubbles.

Example of a Thought – Feeling – Action worksheet[33]

Event	Feeling	Thought	Action
Where were you? What was happening?	How did you feel?	What were you thinking?	What did you do?
I was in bed and Mum was shouting at me to get dressed for school.	I felt really worried and sick.	I can't cope at school. All my friends have forgotten me. I'll have a panic attack if I go in.	Swore at mum and refused to get out of bed.
I was in English and my teacher asked me a question. I got it wrong.	I felt terrible. I was so embarrassed by face went bright red.	Everyone will think I'm stupid. It's a disaster. I always get things wrong.	I hid under my hoodie. I rang my mum and asked her to come and collect me.
At break time, Khalid invited me to his party.	My heart started pounding and I couldn't think straight.	If I go to the party, I'll have to talk to people I don't know. I'm so shy, I'm terrible at talking to people. I'll say the wrong thing and people will laugh at me.	I told Khalid I couldn't come to the party.

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[33] From "Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.

Event	Feeling	Thought	Action
Where were you? What was happening?	**How did you feel?**	**What were you thinking?**	**What did you do?**

Appendix 22: Tools to help CYPs rate their level of emotion and develop a vocabulary for emotions

It can be helpful for CYPs to be able to rate their levels of emotions. This helps them to understand that not all anxiety is the same and can be responded to differently.

Visuals can be used to help CYP rate their level of emotions.

See here for a link to a Fear Rating Scale.

See here for a link to how to use rating scales.

Two further rating scales are included below:

The ZONES of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad	Happy	Frustrated	Mad/Angry
Sick	Calm	Worried	Mean
Tired	Feeling Okay	Silly/Wiggly	Terrified
Bored	Focused	Excited	Yelling/Hitting
Moving Slowly	Ready to Learn	Loss of Some Control	Out of Control

Taken from the Australian Resiliency programme.

Below is an example of a tool that can be used to develop a vocabulary for talking about emotions. Your PSHE curriculum might include further information on this.
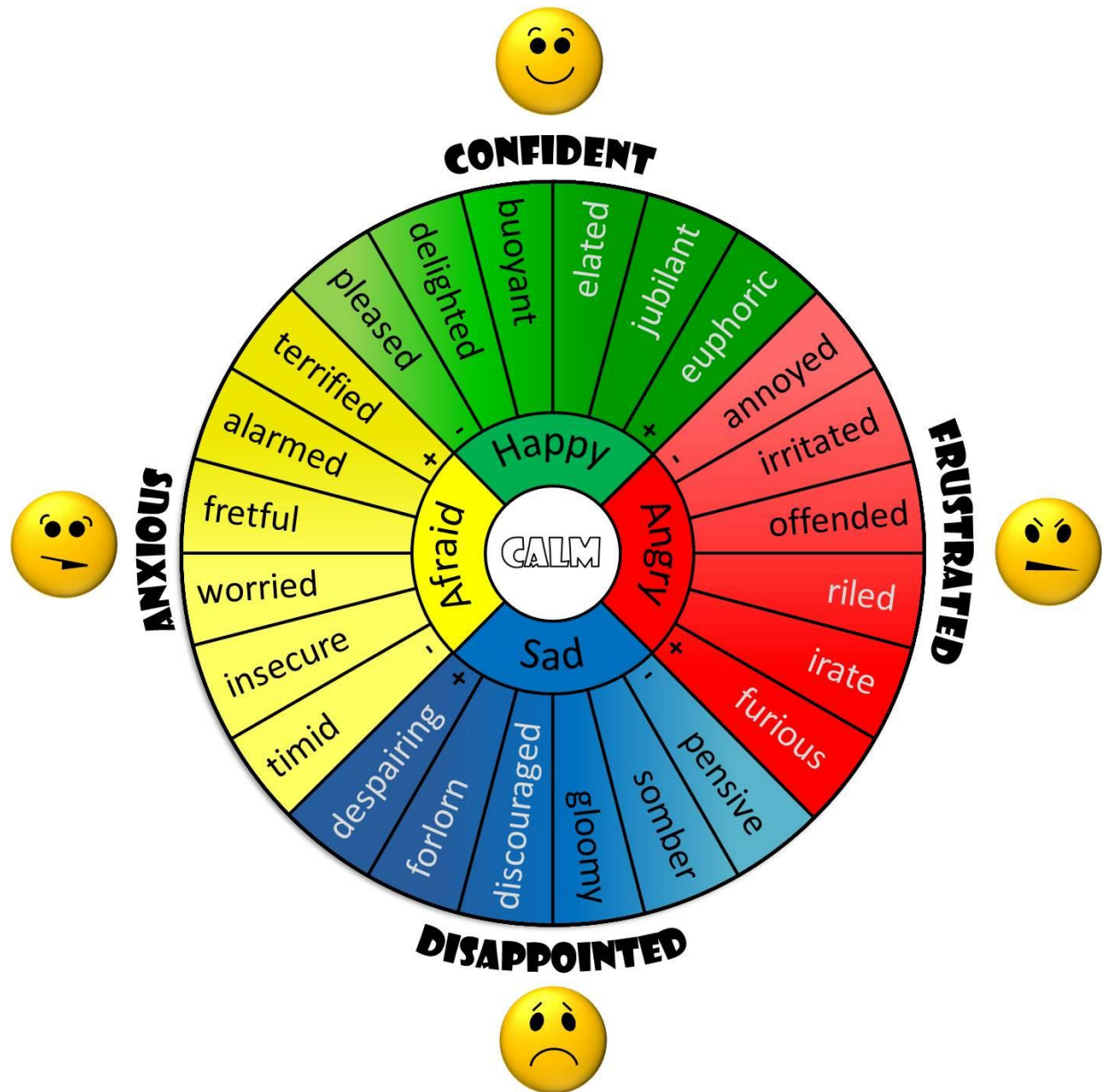
Appendix 23: Problem solving

Some worries are realistic, in which case, the best approach is to encourage the CYP to problem solve to see if they can resolve some of their own difficulties.

The stages in problem solving are:
- Identify what the problem is
- Generating a list of possible solutions (e.g. ask 'how could you handle that?')
- Evaluating the pros and cons of each solution
- Deciding on the best solution (i.e. which is manageable and most likely to work).

The CYP may need support to implement the chosen solution effectively. This could be done through role play or rehearsal with an adult.

Once they have implemented the solution, reflect with the CYP on what has gone well and what they could do next time that might make the solution even better (e.g. 'what do you think you could you do differently next time?').

Appendix 24: Introduce the idea of thinking errors[34]

CYPs who are anxious often make thinking errors. It is helpful for CYPs to identify the kinds of thinking errors they regularly make.

Anxious CYPs often overestimate the probability of something bad happening

Thinking error	Description	Example
Over-estimating	Over-estimating the likelihood that bad things will happen.	One person in my class is sick. I'm definitely going to get sick too.
Predicting the future	Predicting that something negative will happen in the future based on limited information.	I had one meeting with a counsellor and I still don't feel better. My anxiety will never improve.
Jumping to negative conclusions	Making negative assumptions before knowing all the facts.	Leo didn't return my call last night. He doesn't want to be my friend.
Self-blame	Taking things personally.	My best friend was cross today. I must have done something to make her angry.
Emotional reasoning	Assuming that because you feel a certain way, that what you think must be true.	I feel really scared every time I think about going into school. Feeling this way is proof that it's dangerous. If it was safe, I wouldn't feel that way.
Over-generalising	Using one specific piece of information to make a global judgement.	I didn't get invited to the party. Everyone hates me.
Mind reading	Assuming you know what someone else thinks.	Alice doesn't like me any-more.

Anxious CYPs can magnify the risk of a negative event

Thinking error	Description	Example
Catastrophising	Assuming the worst will happen.	What if mum gets sick when I'm at school and there's no-one to look after her?
Black or white thinking	Thinking things are either all good or all bad (e.g. terrible, disaster, perfect, always, never) with little shades of grey.	I messed up two questions. The test was a disaster!

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[34] Taken from "Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.

Anxious CYPs can have low expectations that they can cope

Thinking error	Description	Example
Minimising success and denying yourself credit	Discounting achievements and attributing them to others.	Ella and Jack only came to talk to me at break because the teacher asked them to. They probably just feel sorry for me.
Having unrealistic expectations	Thinking, "I should…", "I must…", and "I have to…". This can lead to feeling disappointed and upset when you cannot meet these standards.	I should never make a mistake. I must be liked by everyone. I have to be perfect.
Labelling	Labelling ourselves or others.	I'm stupid.

Appendix 25: Testing out worries by challenging thinking errors in conversation and setting up experiments.

When worries are based on thinking errors, they are often unrealistic. The best way to deal with unrealistic worries is to encourage the CYP to test them out.

- Try to find out exactly what the CYP is worried about and what they think is going to happen. (e.g. "I'm worried about the teacher asking me a question and getting it wrong").

- Try to find out exactly why that would be so bad for the CYP (e.g. "Then they'll all think I'm thick").

- Help the CYP to consider other points of view. For example, you could ask:
    - What makes you think this will happen?
    - What evidence is there that this belief is true?
    - What evidence is there that this belief is not true?
    - Can you imagine anything else could happen?
    - What would you think if this was happening to someone else?
    - What would [another CYP] think if this happened to them?
    - Do you think this sounds like any of the thinking errors we discussed?
    - What would you tell a friend who thought the same thing?
    - What is the worst-case scenario? What's the best-case scenario? What's the most likely scenario? Can you handle each of these?
    - Are you blaming yourself for something that's not completely under your control?
    - If you look back at this scenario in 6 months' time, do you think you'll find it so upsetting?

- Help the CYP conduct experiments to put their fear to the test, e.g. Keep a record of every time someone gives an incorrect answer in class during a day. Rate from 0 to 5 how stupid I think that person who gave the wrong answer is.

- Give lots of praise when you see the CYP "having a go" at facing their fears instead of avoiding them.

Below is an example of how to test out a worry with a CYP in a conversation.

Noah has been unusually quiet for the last few days and has been reluctant to go into school each morning, saying his tummy hurt and crying when dropped off.

Find out exactly what the CYP is worrying about.

> Mum: Noah, I've noticed that you seem much quieter than usual and you seem to be avoiding your friends. I saw you running away from Maya and Joshua at the end of school and you usually love playing with them. What's going on? *(Open question)*
>
> Noah: Nothing. They're not my friends.
>
> Mum: What do you mean they're not your friends?
>
> Noah: They're not my friends. They don't like me.
>
> Mum: What do you mean they're not your friends? What makes you think they don't like you? *(Open question)*
>
> Noah: They always want to play Harry Potter at break, and they know I don't like Harry Potter. They're doing it deliberately because they don't like me.
>
> Mum: Oh, OK. So they're playing Harry Potter. Is there any other reason why you think they don't like you? *(Getting more details)*
>
> Noah: No, but if they liked me, they wouldn't want to play Harry Potter. They know I hate the books and they play it every break time and then I don't have anyone to play with.
>
> Mum: OK, so let me see if I've got this right. Maya and Josh want to play Harry Potter every break time. You don't like Harry Potter and they know that, so you think they are doing it because they don't like you and don't want to play with you. And then you are lonely in break time. *(Summarising to check correct understanding)*
>
> Noah: Yes, that's right.

Test out the worry by considering other points of view.

> Mum: Do they do anything else that makes you think they don't like you? *(Gathering evidence that the worry is true)*
>
> Noah: (Thinks hard) Well yesterday Josh didn't want to be my partner in PE.
>
> Mum: Have they done anything else that makes you think they don't like you.
>
> Noah: Hmm. I can't think of anything.
>
> Mum: Have you got any evidence that they *do* like you? *(Gathering evidence the worry is not true)*
>
> Noah: Well they asked me to their parties. And Maya worked with me in English like always.
>
> Mum: Anything else?
>
> Noah: They always say hello to me in the mornings and smile at me. And they ask me to play Harry Potter with them.

Mum: Can you think of any other reason why they might want to play Harry Potter? *(Generating alternative explanations)*

Noah: No. Well, I guess maybe they like the books.

Mum: OK, so let's just think about this. You think they don't like you because they play Harry Potter at break time. Josh didn't want to work with you in PE, but they've both asked you to their parties, they both smile and say hello to you and they both ask you to join in their game in break time. It's possible that they just like playing Harry Potter because they love the books.

Noah: OK. Yes, but I still think they don't like me.

Test the worry by conducting an experiment

Mum: OK. How about we test it out. What could you do to find out if they like you or not? *(Setting up an experiment)*

Noah: Hmm. I guess I could ask them.

Mum: That would certainly be one way to find out. What would you say? And when could you do that? *(Helping the experiment run smoothly)*

Noah: I'd just say, "Do you like me?" and I could ask them tomorrow at break.

Mum: Great idea.

Next day coming out of school

Mum: So did you ask them? What happened? *(Getting results of the experiment)*

Noah: Yes, I asked them and they said they like me, but they thought I didn't like them because I kept running away from them.

Give lots of praise

Mum: I'm so proud of you. You were really, really brave asking if they liked you. You were probably pretty worried about what they'd say, but you did it anyway. That was such a fantastic thing to do. Well done. *(Giving lots of specific praise for facing fears)*

On the following page is sheet of questions you could use with CYP to get them to test their own thoughts.

Testing Thoughts

What evidence is there that this thought is true?	What evidence is there that this thought isn't true?
What's another possibility?	What would people who care about me say?
What would (another person) think if this happened to them?	If my friend had this thought, what would I tell them?
What's the worst that could really happen? How likely is that to happen?	If the worst really did happen, what could I do to deal with it and who could help me?
What's the best that could happen?	What will probably happen?
If I look back at this situation in 6 months' time, will I find it so upsetting?	What's a more helpful thought?
What experiment can I do to test out if my thought is true?	

Appendix 26: Testing out worries by using a Thoughts – Challenge diary[35]

What it is helpful for young people to know.

- Negative thoughts usually lead to negative emotions

- Positive thoughts tend to lead to positive emotions

- High levels of negative emotions can lead to unhelpful behaviours that get in the way of our ability to live a happy and fulfilling life.

It can be helpful to consider the facts around the situation causing the anxious thoughts (i.e. challenge) in order to consider the evidence for and against that thought. Another strategy is to consider what can and can't be changed about the situation. These can help to indicate whether the reaction is proportional (e.g. based on how important it is) and if there is another way of looking at the situation. It can be helpful to do this from someone else's point of view, e.g. 'If your friend said that they had these thoughts, what would you say to them?'. There is a 'balanced thinking; sheet that you can download here.

A Thoughts-Challenge diary can help the CYP to examine the link between their thoughts and their feelings.

Situation	Feeling	Negative Thought	Challenge	New Thought	New Feeling
What was happening? Where were you?	Label your feeling and rate the intensity of the feeling on a scale of 0-10	What negative thoughts popped into your head? Was there a thinking error?	What evidence do you have to challenge this thought?	What is a more helpful thought?	Feeling including rating intensity of feeling from 1 to 10.

With younger children, introduce the Thoughts-Challenge diary in stages. Get them used to filling out the first three columns before moving onto the last three.

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[35] Taken from "Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.

Example of the Thoughts – Challenge Diary

Situation	Feeling	Negative Thought	Challenge	New Thought	New Feeling
What was happening? Where were you?	Label your feeling and rate the intensity of the feeling on a scale of 0-10	What negative thoughts popped into your head? Was there a thinking error?	What evidence do you have to challenge this thought?	What is a more helpful thought?	Label feeling including rating intensity of feeling from 1 to 10.
I was standing in the corridor outside my classroom. I had to give a presentation in my next lesson	I felt sick and shaky. I was terrified. 9/10	Everyone will be looking at me. I'll embarrass myself. Everyone will laugh at me because my face will go bright red. It will be terrible.	Evidence against: When I gave the talk in class last year, my face went bright red. Two people laughed at me but 25 did not. My friends might not laugh at me. Some of them probably wouldn't even notice if I blushed. If someone else blushed during a presentation, I'd just feel sorry for them not laugh. Worst case scenario – even if everyone laughs, I'll feel terrible for a couple of days, but after a while people will forget about it.	I'll probably blush during my presentation, but if I do, not everyone will notice and probably most people won't laugh. If I do blush, I'll feel embarrassed for a day or so, but then I'll probably feel OK.	Less panicky. 4/10.

Thoughts – Challenge Diary[36]

Situation	Feeling	Negative Thought	Challenge	New Thought	New Feeling
What was happening? Where were you?	Label your feeling and rate the intensity of the feeling on a scale of 0-10	What negative thoughts popped into your head? Was there a thinking error?	What evidence do you have to challenge this thought?	What is a more helpful thought?	Label feeling including rating intensity of feeling from 1 to 10.

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[36] Taken from "Exposure Therapy for Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents" by Raggi et al.

Appendix 27: Practising mindful acceptance

Practising mindful acceptance[37]

Mindful acceptance aims to develop awareness and acceptance of our present moment experience. By being present in the 'here and now', observing our thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and urges as they come and go, we can train our minds to adopt a more willing and accepting stance towards them (instead of reacting to them, avoiding them or trying to control them). It doesn't mean we have to 'like' our emotions; it simply means that we don't resist what we are experiencing. This perspective-taking aims to create a space which helps locate a 'moment of choice' when we can choose how to respond when we are emotionally triggered.

Mindful acceptance may be practised by learning to observe and accept the four parts of emotion: sensations, feelings, thoughts and urges (either when we are resting or when emotionally triggered) and regular practice is recommended.

Below is a simple description for practising mindful acceptance:

- Close your eyes and get comfortable.

- *Sensation acceptance*
  Scan your body for sensations with the intention of observing and accepting them instead of reacting to them. Just notice all the details of the sensations: size, shape, temperature, tension and movement. See if you can soften to the sensation and make space for it … just by allowing it to be exactly as it is.

- *Feeling labelling*
  Try to identify the feeling that goes with the emotion. Name it and allow it to be exactly as it is, without judging it.

- *Thought watching*
  Clear your mind, and then wait and watch for each thought and as it arises, let the thought go without getting involved in it. Come back to the present moment and wait for the next thought to show up. When a thought arises, you might say to yourself 'There's a thought' and then just let it go. If you find yourself struggling to let the thought go, you might just acknowledge it as a 'sticky thought' and then let it go.

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[37] From Emotion Efficacy Therapy: A Brief, Exposure-Based Treatment for Emotion Regulation Integrating ACT & DBT (2016) by Matthew McKay and Aprilia West.

- *Urge noticing*
  Notice if the emotion comes with an urge to do or not to do something. Allow yourself to sit with the urge, without acting on it or judging it. Then notice what it's like not to act on it.

- Before you come out of the exercise, take a few deep breaths and slowly open your eyes as you bring your attention back to the room.

Appendix 28: Reduce reliance on safety behaviours

Talk to the CYP about what safety behaviours they use. Safety behaviours are things that people do to make them feel less anxious. Some safety behaviours may reduce anxiety in the short term, but in the long term can make the anxiety worse. Below are some examples of how safety behaviours can make anxiety worse.

Anna is worried about going into school because she thinks she will not be able to do the work.		
Safety behaviour	**What Anna does**	**Long term consequences**
Avoidance	Anna often refuses to go into school.	Anna does not have the opportunity to learn that she can do the work. The more time she is absent, the more school she misses and the more worried she becomes about falling behind.
Escape	When Anna does go into school, as soon as she starts to find work hard, she panics and tries to leave the classroom.	Anna never learns to master new skills.
Seeking reassurance	When she is in school, Anna repetitively seeks reassurance from her teaching assistant that they will help her with her work.	Anna does not learn that she is capable of coping with the situation by herself.

Mohammed is socially anxious but wants to have friends. He is now refusing to go into class because he is so worried about meeting his classmates.		
Safety behaviour	**What Mohammed does**	**Long term consequences**
Avoidance	Mohammed avoids eye contact with his peers because he is worried about starting a conversation.	Mohammed's peers wonder if Mohammed does not like them.
Escape	If a classmate talks to him, Mohammed gives a short answer then walks away as soon as possible.	Mohammed has few opportunities to develop deeper friendships with his peers.
Comforting behaviours	Mohammed spends all his free time gaming by himself. Gaming distracts him from his worries.	Because he spends all his free time gaming by himself, he does not make time to develop real life friends.
Seeking reassurance	Mohammed frequently seeks reassurance from his TA that he will not have to work with a partner or in a group.	When his TA assures him that he will not have to work with others, it reinforces Mohammed's belief that working with others is something to be frightened off. He never learns that he can work well with his peers.

On the following page is a worksheet to help young people think about what safety behaviours they use.

Safety Behaviours

What safety behaviours do I use?	What are the long-term consequences?	Do they help me reduce my anxiety or feed my anxiety?	What could I do instead?

Appendix 29: Plan in advance how to cope with specific triggers

Encourage anxious CYPs to identify **specific coping strategies** they can use in situations which typically trigger anxiety / negative emotions. This may include ways to calm or solutions to the problem.

- Get them to identify the most common triggers for anxious and negative thoughts. For example, not being able to do the work, starting to get too noisy, worrying about seeing a particular child.
- For each trigger, encourage the CYP to generate a list of coping strategies they could use in each situation to calm themselves down.

If I can't do the work…	- I can ask my TA or teacher for help. They will be pleased I asked. - I can look and see what other children are doing - I can look at the board or books to give me ideas about what to do.
If it starts to get too noisy….	- I will ask my TA for my ear defenders - I will signal to the teacher that I need a 2-minute time out and she will let me go to the library.
If I worry about seeing my bully in break/ lunch time…	- I will take three big breathes in and out. - I will remember that my buddy will stay with me during break. - I will remember that I can go to lunch club whenever I want.

The CYP may want to put each Trigger and Coping Strategy on a card on a key ring as a visual reminder to carry round with them and refer to throughout the day.

It may be helpful to role-play some of these situations so the CYP feels confident they can implement the coping strategy in each situation.

Regularly review the triggers and coping strategies. During reviews, talk about whether the CYP managed to use the coping strategy. What helped them to use it? Was it difficult to use it? Why? Would a different coping strategy be better?

Appendix 30: Worry time
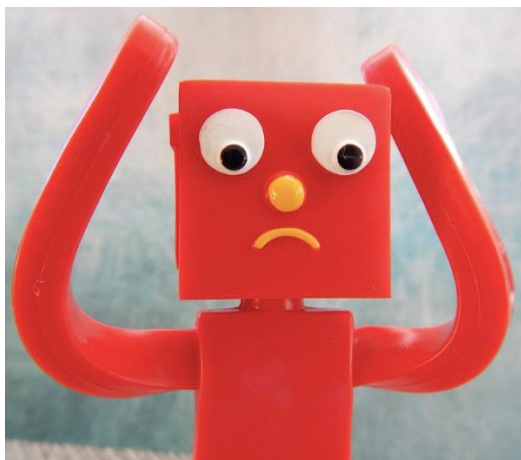
Encourage the CYP to have a set **worry time**. Encourage them to save all their worries for then. This could be a time when they can talk about their worries with an adult (allowing them to guide the conversation), or it could be a time to think about their worries.

If they want to talk about their worries at other times, try to distract them and give praise when they manage this.

During worry time, the CYP could be encouraged to:
- Problem solve
- Test their thinking for thinking errors, either through conversation or through filling out a Thoughts Challenge chart
- Plan in advance how to cope with specific triggers
- It can also be helpful to have ways to externalising worries, such as writing them down on a piece of paper or using worry boxes/dolls and other ways to physically 'get rid' of the worries.

Some CYPs find it difficult to verbalise their thoughts but could draw or write them down. This could then either be given to the adult directly, or put in a worry box or worry monster, for example.

A worry tree (see below) can be used to help the CYP decide whether they have any control over the issues they are worried about and if so, what they could and should do about it.

The Worry Tree

1. Notice the worry

2. Ask 'What am I worrying about?

3. Ask 'Can I do anything about it?'

No — Yes

No:
Let the worry go

Think about something else

Yes:
Make a plan!

What, When, How?

Now — Later

Now:
Do it!

Let the worry go

Think about something else

Later:
Decide 'when?'

Let the worry go

Think about something else

Adapted from Butler and Hope 2007

ELSA support
www.elsa-support.co.uk

Appendix 31: Principles of Emotion Coaching

Based on research by American Psychologist John Gottman, Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the CYP about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the CYP's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling "felt". This activates changes in the CYP's neurological system and allows them to calm down, psychologically and physiologically.

The principles of emotion coaching are:
- Recognise the CYP's feelings and empathise with them. Notice what emotions might be behind the behaviour they are displaying
- Label the emotion and validate the feeling.

Labelling	Empathising - validating
You seem worried / on edge / anxious I can see you're feeling sad I can tell you're furious. I wonder if… You look upset. You're irritated.	I'm sorry that happened to you, you must feel very… I would feel worried / anxious if that happened to me. I can see you get sad / irritated when that happens / when I do this. That would make me angry / cross. I understand why you got upset. It's normal to feel worried about that.

- Set limits if necessary. Try to use limits stated positively to help maintain the sense of calm. For example,
    - "The rules are that we…"
    - Stay in the playground, the field is far away, and I can't see if you are OK
    - Take the ball outside if you want to play with it. Something might get broken if you play inside with it
    - Doing that is not OK
    - You need to play in a friendly way. Make sure X has a turn too
    - Be sure to ask first before you borrow something from your friend.

- Problem solve when the CYP is calm enough to be able to think things through.
    - Explore the feelings that gave way to the problem situation. e.g. How were you feeling? What made you feel like that? Have you felt like that before?
    - Identify more appropriate alternatives.
    - Agree possible solutions the CYP could try if the situation occurs again.

Information taken from www.emotioncoachinguk.com

Appendix 32: The role of the key adult in supporting CYPs who have experienced trauma or abuse[38]

The key adult takes on the role of an "additional attachment figure" for the CYP. Their role is to form a strong relationship with the CYP.

It is **not** helpful if this person is the class teacher, SENCo or other person who the CYP can see has a wider responsibility for a large number of pupils. Relationships with adults who are actively supporting others at the same time may evoke intense feelings of rage and envy. It may also be helpful to have another member of staff involved to a lesser degree than the key adult – a "back-up adult". This can be useful if the key adult is sick or absent for other reasons.

The aim of the key adult in building a relationship with CYP is to help them:
- develop trust in the key adult by experiencing having an adult consistently emotionally and physically available
- manage their feelings. This happens through the adult being attuned to the CYP's feelings and responding sensitively
- develop an increased sense of self-esteem by experiencing acceptance
- feel effective by being engaged in relationships with both adults and peers.

The key adult should attend to the CYP by:
- interacting with them through physical contact, eye contact, smiles, laughter, facial expressions. Either initiate this contact or sensitively mirror non-verbal communication.
- learning about the CYP. What makes them do what they do? What makes the CYP happy? Sad? Uncomfortable? How does the CYP cope with failure? How does the CYP respond to help?
- wondering aloud. The key adult should make tentative remarks about what they think is happening. For example: "I'm wondering if you're feeling pretty happy because we're playing with Lego. Your eyes are sparkling and you're laughing!" or "I'm wondering if you're feeling anxious and that's why you can't make a decision about what to do at this point." This can help the CYP to "own" their feelings and understand their behaviour.
- commentating. Once a key adult has been working with the CYP for a while and has got to know them well, "Wondering aloud" can be replaced by commentating. The adult makes concrete comments about what is happening for the CYP internally or externally, based on direct observation or knowledge gleaned from previous experience. For example, "I can see you're starting to get anxious now. You're starting to breathe more quickly and get more fidgety. I think we should practice something from the calm box. OK, let's start breathing slowly. Ah, that feels good. In a minute, we're going to carry on with our work. I know that now you've practised your breathing you're going to be feeling much calmer." This will help the CYP to "translate" their feelings and practise strategies to manage them.

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[38] Taken from "Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in School", by Louise Bomber, 2018.

- carefully balancing opportunities for practising dependency and autonomy. Initially, CYPs will benefit from having lots of opportunity to develop dependency on their key adult. Only very gradually introduce short bursts of autonomy.

The key adult should demonstrate to the CYP that all their feelings, regardless of whether they are positive or negative can be tolerated, managed, thought about and understood as having meaning. For example, "You're very cross and worried right now because you really want Mum to stay in the room. You probably wish that she would stay with you forever. But before you know it, she'll be back. Take a deep breath."

The key adult should repeat key messages frequently. For example, "Isn't it good to know you're safe at school?", "You can learn to trust me", "You're getting stronger all the time at making right choices".

The key adult should communicate empathy and hope by repeating key messages time and again that the key adult will be there to encourage and support them. For example, "I know you're going to get strong at this. I can see you getting better and better every day". "I'm going to stick in there with you until you can … I know you can do it".

More information about the role of the "key adult" can be found in "Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in School", by Louise Bomber, 2018.

The Toolkit: Checklists to Help Schools Have an Overview

Contents

Appendix 32. Checklist for early intervention to address EBSA

Child's name:	Year group:	Class/Form teacher/HOY:

Parent/carer names and contact details:
(Times when they are available)

Number of days absent to date and reasons provided for absence:

Observation of any of the following behaviours:
☐ Changes in pupil behaviour in lessons (e.g. behaviours indicating anxiety)
☐ Pupil complaining of illness to avoid attending school
☐ Pupil telling their parents that they don't want to go to school
☐ Pupil having difficulties attending some or all lessons
☐ Periods of lateness or missing lessons
☐ Reduced attendance which may show a pattern
☐ Regular absences or sporadic attendance
☐ Weeks of non-attendance;
☐ Pupil rarely leaving their house/bedroom, even if not school related.
Other:

Relevant background information
☐ Any significant life event(s). Relevant details:

☐ Any family/social or economic challenges. Relevant details:

☐ Any medical needs or recent illnesses

☐ Any Special Educational Needs and EHCP. Relevant details:

☐ Any previous professional involvement. Relevant details:

Actions undertaken to date	Date of action taken and by whom	Follow up Actions
Discussion with child *Consider: learning, friendships, self-esteem, bullying issues, home life, engagement in after-school activities etc. (see School EBSA Guidance Document p20-21)*		
Discussion with parent *Discuss recent events (conflict, loss, illness etc.) and their perspective on the absence.* *(see full School EBSA Guidance Document p21)*		
Discussion with relevant staff member(s) *Consider: attainment, SEN, learning support, pastoral support, recent transitions, stability of school personnel, pupil-staff relationships etc.* *(see School EBSA Guidance Document p21-22)*		
Identification of Risk and Resiliency factors *Based on discussions with pupil, parent and staff, identify risks/resiliency factors (see pages 16 – 18 in School EBSA Guidance Document) and draw up a PUSH/PULL Matrix.*		
Implementation of an Assess, Plan, Do, Review Action Plan *Based on the above discussion and understanding of this pupil's unique situation, what further information is needed and how will that be obtained; what support can be put in place; how and when will it be reviewed.* *(See strategies outlined in School EBSA guidance document p23-38)*		
Consideration of appropriateness of involvement of other professionals after one APDR cycle: • *Attendance Team* • *ISL Specialist Advisory Teachers* • *Educational Psychologist* • *School Nurse* • *ESMA*		

Notes

Appendix 33. Checklist of strategies for CYP with EBSA

Likely to be relevant for all CYP with EBSA	
Strategy	**Further details – how/ when / who**
Allocate the CYP key adults in school	
Have clear consistent routines for warmly welcoming the CYP to school	
Ensure the CYP knows what will happen during the day, including what will happen in unstructured times.	
Enable readiness for learning by introducing calming activities at the start of the day.	
Teach the CYP how to recognise, label and self-regulate their feelings.	
Proactively adapt the environment to reduce triggers for anxiety.	
Make a plan in advance with the CYP about what will happen if they become anxious.	
Build the CYP's confidence in their ability to manage their anxiety.	

Develop the CYP's motivation to be in school.	
Keep in contact with CYP who are not attending school at all.	
Share the document "Emotionally Based School Avoidance: A Guide for Parents and Carers" with families when it becomes available.	
For CYP who feel overwhelmingly anxious or sad about attending school	
Address the specific worry or difficulty identified during assessment e.g. sensory difficulties, learning needs, bullying etc.	
For CYP who want to avoid difficult social situations or situations where they feel evaluate	
Teach social skills and mindful acceptance.	
Help develop self-esteem.	
Teach the CYP how to check for thinking errors.	
Teach social problem solving.	

For CYP who need attention and contact with parent / carers.	
Have an organised "meet and greet", with a routine for saying goodbye to the parent/carer.	
Introduce a transitional object.	
Encourage the parent/carer to manage their own anxiety.	
Consider referring to other agencies if the family needs support.	
If CYP has a background of trauma or abuse, consider allocating a "key adult" who takes on the role of an additional attachment figure.	
For CYP engaging in pleasurable and rewarding activities while at home during the school day (e.g. gaming	
Encourage and support the parents/carers to set limits on their child's behaviour.	
For CYP who are about to experience transition (e.g. new school, new class, returning to school after absence etc)	
Develop a detailed transition plan and share this with CYP and family.	

Resources List: Books and Websites

The following pages show a list of books and resources that can be helpful for different aspects (e.g. teaching emotional literacy, calming strategies, developing social skills, developing self-esteem, separation anxiety, those for parents). Where possible, they have been organised by age, although some books are relevant across a wide range of ages. For ease, an Amazon link has been provided for books, so you know what it looks like.

Resources for developing emotional regulation

General resources for adults to use for teaching emotional regulation:

- Zones of Regulation by Leah Kuypers. The EP service can provide training if required
- Think Good, Feel Good: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook for Children and Young People by Paul Stallard
- CBT Toolkit for Children and Adolescents by Liz Phifer
- Building Happiness, Resilience and Motivation in Adolescence. A Positive Psychology Curriculum for Wellbeing by Ruth MacConville and Tina Rae
- Supporting the Well Being of Girls: An Evidence-Based School Programme by Tina Rae
- The ASD Girls' Wellbeing Toolkit. An Evidence-Based Programme Promoting Mental, Physical and Emotional Health by Tina Rae and Amy Such
- Promoting Emotional Resilience - Toolkit by West Sussex. Free download
- Feeling Good: Promoting Children's Mental Health from Centre for Mental Health. Free downloadable activity book
- Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention by Southampton Psychology Service, published by GL Assessment Limited. Available for both primary and secondary
- Helping Children Who Are Anxious Or Obsessional by Margot Sunderland
- Anxiety and Phobia Workbook by Edmund Bourne.
- Materials and worksheets from 'Anxiety' by Paul Stallard.

Teaching resources aimed at younger children/(early) primary years:

- A Volcano in My Tummy by Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney
- The Anger Alphabet: Understanding Anger – An Emotional Development Programme for Young Children Aged 6-12 by Tina Rae
- Draw on Your Emotions and Draw on Your Relationships by Margot Sunderland
- The Big Book of Calmers by Jenny Mosley.

Teaching resources aimed at older primary/secondary years:

- The Homunculi Approach to Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Flexible CBT Programme for Young People on the Autism Spectrum or with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties by Anne Greig. Aimed at children/ young people from 7 into the teenage years
- Dealing with Feeling: An Emotional Literacy Curriculum for Children Aged 7-13 by Tina Rae

- Cool Connections Encouraging Self-esteem, Resilience and Well-being in Children and Young People Using CBT Approaches by Laurie Seiler
- The Learning Mentor's Source and Resource Book by Kathy Hampson and Rhonda Mitchell
- Games and Activities for Exploring Feelings with Children by Vanessa Rogers.
- The Thriving Adolescent: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Positive Psychology to Help Teens Manage Emotions, Achieve Goals, and Build Connection by Louise Hayes

Books for children/young people to read

For younger children/(early) primary:

- When My Worries Get Too Big!: A Relaxation Book for Children Who Live With Anxiety by Kari Dunn Buron
- The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside
- Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud). Encourages positive behaviour and expressing kindness and appreciation
- Puppy mind is a story to help young children manage their thoughts, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xd7Cr265zgc
- The Way I Feel by Janan Cain is a book to talk about emotions with young children
- The Goodnight Caterpillar: A Relaxation Story for Kids by Lori Lite
- Mighty Moe by Lacey Woloshyn. Free download of anxiety workbook for children aged 5-11
- The Koala Who Could by Rachel Bright
- Silly Billy by Anthony Browne
- Willy the Wimp by Anthony Browne
- How to Catch a Star by Oliver Jeffers
- Willy and the Wobbly House by Margot Sunderland
- A Boy and a Bear by Lori Lite
- Starting School by Allan and Janet Ahlberg
- Back to School Tortoise by Lucy M. George
- The Gotcha Smile by Rita Philips Mitchell
- Halibut Jackson by David Lucas
- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae
- Hey Warrior by Karen Young
- Little Meerkat's Big Panic by Jane Evans
- Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival
- Wilma Jean and the Worry Machine by Julia Cook
- On Monday When It Rained by Cherryl Kachenmeister
- My Many Coloured Days by Dr Seuss
- Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia
- How to be a Superhero Called Self-Control by Lauren Brukner
- Presley the Pug Relation Book: A Therapeutic Story with Creative Activities to Help Children Aged 5-10 to Regulate their Emotions and to Find Calm by Karen Treisman

- Binnie the Baboon Anxiety and Stress Activity Book: A Therapeutic Story with Creative and CBT Activities to Help Children Aged 5-10 Who Worry by Karen Treisman
- How Are You Peeling: Foods with Moods by Saxton Freymann

For older primary/ secondary-aged children and young people:

- What To Do When You're Scared & Worried: A Guide for Kids by James Crist
- What To Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide To Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner
- Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- Outsmarting Worry: An Older Kid's Guide to Managing Anxiety by Dawn Huebner
- Help! I've Got an Alarm Bell Going Off in My Head! How Panic, Anxiety and Stress Affect Your Body by K.L. Aspenden
- What To Do When Mistakes Make You Quake: A Kid's Guide To Accepting Imperfection by Claire A.B. Freeland and Jacqueline B. Toner
- What To Do When Bad Habits Take Hold: A Kid's Guide To Overcoming Nail Biting And More by Dawn Huebner
- What To Do When Your Brain Gets Stuck: A Kid's Guide To Overcoming OCD by Dawn Hueber
- Mindfulness For Teen Anxiety: A Workbook For Overcoming Anxiety At Home, At School And Everywhere Else by Christopher Willard
- Get Out Of Your Mind And Into Your Life For Teens by Joseph V. Ciarrochi , Louise Hayes and Ann Bailey
- The free booklet "Doing what Matters in Times of Stress" by the World Health Organisation explains how to manage stress in easy to understand cartoons. It uses an approach called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- My Anxiety Handbook: Getting Back On Track by Bridie Gallagher, Phoebe McEwen & Sue Knowles (for secondary-age children)
- Cutters Don't Cry and Kaylee, The What If Game by Christine Dzridrums and Joseph Dzidrums. Aimed at teenagers
- Managing Your Mind: The Mental Fitness Guide by Gillian Butler and Tony Hope (for older young people)
- Stuff That Sucks: Accepting What You Can't Change And Committing To What You Can by Ben Sedley
- Finding Audrey by Sophie Kinsella. Novel for teens

Resources to support with separation anxiety

- The Kissing Hand (The Kissing Hand Series) by Audrey Penn
- The Invisible String by Patrice Karst
- Owl Babies by Martin Waddell
- The Kiss Box by Bonnie Verburg
- The Huge Bag Of Worries by Virginia Ironside
- Zou and the Box of Kisses by Michel Gay.

Resources to help with transitions

For transition to primary school:
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1
- https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/10-practical-tips-for-school-staff-to-help-children-settle-when-starting-primary-school/
- Early Years getting to know you booklet: https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/pre-school-getting-to-know-you-booklet/

For transition to secondary school:
- From the BBC: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/tags/zh4wy9q/starting-secondary-school/1
- Transition information and questionnaires for children, parents and teachers from UCL.
- Year 6-7 transition activities
- 'Be Awesome Go Big' by Pixl
- Smart Moves transition booklets based on a resiliency framework can be viewed here and downloaded here
- Year 6 worry cards
- Tips for students infographic
- Twitter thread of activities
- The Transition Tool Box – a resource for transition to secondary school.
- The National Strategies PSHE curriculum has a section on changes
- The Resiliency Framework (https://www.boingboing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Interactive_Resilience_Framework.pdf).

Resources for developing social skills

General references

- [Think Social! A Social Thinking Curriculum for School-Age Students](#) by Marcia Garcia Winner
- [The New Social Story Book](#) by Carol Gray
- [Comic Strip Conversations](#) by Carol Gray
- [Talkabout for Children 2 (second edition): Developing Social Skills](#) by Alex Kelly. For children aged 4-11
- [Talkabout for Children 3 (second edition): Developing Friendship Skills](#) by Alex Kelly. For children aged 4-11.

For younger children/ (early) primary:

- [How to be a Friend. A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them (Dino Life Guide for Families)](#) by Laurie Kransy Brown. For children aged 3-7
- [Time to Talk: A Programme to Develop Oral and Social Interaction Skills for Reception and Key Stage One](#) by Alison Schroeder
- [Social Skills Activities for Kids: 50 Fun Exercises for Making Friends, Talking and Listening, and Understanding Social Rules](#) by Natasha Daniels

For older primary/ secondary-aged children and young people:

- [Talkabout for Teenagers (second edition): Developing Social and Emotional Communication Skills](#) by Alex Kelly. For 11 years+
- [How To Handle A Bully](#) by Susanna Palomares.

Resources to support children who are shy or have social anxiety

- [What to Do When You Feel Too Shy: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Social Anxiety](#) by Freeland and Toner. For primary aged children
- [The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook for Teens: CBT and ACT Skills to Help You Build Social Confidence (An Instant Help Book for Teens)](#) by Jennifer Shannon. For secondary aged pupils.

Resources for developing self-esteem

General references

- The 50 Best Games for Building Self-Esteem by Rosemarie Portmann
- Helping Children with Low Self-Esteem and Ruby and the Rubbish Bin by Margot Sunderland.

For younger children/ (early) primary:

- Gilly the Giraffe Self-Esteem Activity Book: A Therapeutic Story with Creative Activities for Children Aged 5-10 by Karen Treisman
- Marvellous Me: Inside and Out by Lisa Bullard
- Positive People: A Self-Esteem Building Course for Young Children by Claire Watts and Tina Rae.

For older primary/ secondary- aged children and young people:

- You're a Star: A Child's Guide to Self-Esteem by Poppy O'Neill, aimed at 7-11 year olds
- You Are Awesome: Find Your Confidence and Dare to be Brilliant by Matthew Syed
- It's OK to be Me by Annie Hamalaoui
- Talkabout For Children 1 (second edition): Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem by Alex Kelly. Programme for secondary schools
- Banish Your Self-Esteem Thief: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Building Positive Self-Esteem for Young People by Kate Collins-Donnelly. For secondary age pupils
- Self-Esteem Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Build Confidence and Achieve Your Goals (An Instant Help Book for Teens) by Lisa Schab
- Mind Matters: Self-Esteem by Marilyn Harvey, for ages 11-19
- The Self-Esteem Program by John Liptak
- The ASD Girls' Wellbeing Toolkit: An Evidence-Based Intervention Promoting Mental, Physical & Emotional Health by Tina Rae.

Resources for parents

- [Overcoming Your Child's Fears And Worries: A Self Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques](#) by C. Creswell and L. Willetts
- [Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents](#) by Ronald M. Rapee
- [Helping Your Child Overcome Separation Anxiety or School Refusal: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents](#) by Linda Engler
- [Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway](#) by Susan Jeffers. Aimed at adults but could be useful for older teens
- [Overcoming Your Child's Shyness and Social Anxiety: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques](#) by Lucy Willets and Cathy Creswell
- [The Anxious Child: A Booklet for Parents And Carers Wanting to Know More About Anxiety In Children And Young People](#) - free download from Mental Health Foundation
- [Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children](#) by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons
- https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2268-mindfulness-for-parents

Resources and organisations that support with child-on-parent violence

- www.reducingtherisk.org.uk/cms/content/child-parent-violence
- https://www.pac-uk.org/our-services/cpv
- https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/training/cpd-courses/child-parent-violence-skills-tools-awareness/
- https://whosincharge.co.uk/

Other useful resources

Book List

- [Becoming an Emotionally Healthy School: Auditing and Developing the National Healthy School Standard](#) by Charlie Smith and Shall McKee
- [Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools](#) by Louise Bomber
- [When Children Refuse School](#) by Christopher Kearney and Anne Marie Albano
- [School Refusal: Children Who Are Anxious and Reluctant to Attend School](#) by David Philbrick and Kat Tansey
- [Overcoming School Refusal: A Practical Guide For Teachers, Counsellors, Caseworkers And Parents](#) by Joanne Garfi
- [Understanding School Refusal: A Handbook for Professionals in Education, Health and Social Care](#) by Karen Grandison, Louise De-Hayes and M.S. Thambirajah
- Lauchlan, F. (2003). Responding to Chronic Non-Attendance: A review of intervention approaches. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 19 (2), p 133-146
- Elliot, J.G. (1999). Practitioner Review: School Refusal: Issues of Conceptualisation, Assessment and Treatment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 40 (7), 1001-1012.

Websites

- Youhue app 'Building Emotionally Healthy Classrooms' (https://www.youhue.com/)
- Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe) – promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing
- DfE guidance: [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England](#)
- [Healthy Young Minds in Herts Self-Review and Kite Mark](#), which addresses a number of areas identified in the checklist related to emotional wellbeing
- http://www.anxietycanada.com/ - information for adults and parents
- [Anxiety self help guide by Mood Juice](#). Free download, aimed at older CYPs
- [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Skills Training Workbook from Hertfordshire Partnership NHS](#). Free download
- Article on [understanding anxiety and panic attacks](#) from Mind
- [Anxiety toolkit](#) from Healthy Young Minds in Herts [needs log-in]
- [Relax Kids](#)
- The book ['Timid to Tiger'](#) (Cartwright-Hatton, 2010) outlines a parenting programme to schools can run that teaches parents how to manage their child's behaviour.
- The [ELSA support website](#) contains a number of free resources that can support CYPs to remain calm and focus on positive experiences, such as: [Just Relax](#): [Take A Calming Strategy](#); [Calm Down Dice](#); [Happy Visualisation](#); [Sunny Smiles](#); [Warm Fuzzy](#).
- [Childline has a Calm Zone Toolbox](#)
- The [Anna Freud Centre](#) has multiple suggestions for how to calm yourself.
- [Go Noodle](#) has movement and mindfulness activities for staff and parents.
- The [Sesame Street website](#) has a lot of information and support for younger children

Support: National and Local Organisations

Hertfordshire County Council Services

Education
- The [Attendance Team](#) offer support to schools regarding CYP where there are concerns regarding their attendance. They have a duty line that can be called to talk about a situation prior to a referral.
- The [Specialist Advisory Teachers for Communication and Autism](#) can offer advice for supporting CYPs in school who have a diagnosis of autism, or are on the diagnostic pathway.
- The [Educational Psychology Service](#) can offer schools advice and support regarding a range of needs that impact on a CYP at school.
- The [Education Support Centres](#) in Hertfordshire offer advice through outreach services and temporary off-site support for CYPs whose behaviour is giving cause for concern. They also provide full-time education for CYPs who have been permanently excluded from secondary school (KS3 and 4) or those who don't have a school placement because of social/emotional needs.
- The [Education Support for Medical Absence](#) (ESMA) team supports schools that have children who are unable to attend school for medical reasons.
- The [Specialist Adolescent Service Hertfordshire](#) (and also see [here](#)) offer an integrated range of early intervention, targeted prevention and specialist services, working primarily with adolescents to support them to make a successful transition to independence and adult life.
- [YC Herts](#) offers services and information for young people in Hertfordshire.
- Each of the 9 [Delivering Specialist Provision Locally](#) (DSPL) area in Hertfordshire commission their own services for schools and families in their area. Many include family support workers, some of whom may provide support for families whose children have additional needs (e.g. autism). Each area has its own website, which can be found on the main site above.
- The Access to Education team (Travellers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers) service can offer support for CYP who meet their criteria.

Social Care

- [Family Centres](#) (see also [here](#)) can offer advice and support. Many schools will have their own Family Support Workers, who can support parents.
- Families can access support through [Families First](#), an Early Help service.
- For concerns regarding Child Protection, schools and other professionals should contact [Children's Social Care](#). For urgent concerns, this should go to [MASH](#).

- For CYPs who are registered young carers, they can access support from the [Hertfordshire Young Carers Support Service](). There is also a [Young Carers in Hertfordshire charity]().

NHS Services

- The [School Nursing service]() work with CYPs aged 5-19, after they transfer out of the [Health Visiting service](). They accept referrals for CYPs requiring support for low-level mental health, emotional and wellbeing concerns including anxiety, low mood, anger, behaviour, and self-esteem, stress and sleep issues. Information on their services can be found on their website.
- [Step 2]() is a service to young people aged 0 to 19 who have a mild to moderate mental health difficulty which is causing distress and impacting on day to day life. Information on their services can be found on their website.
- [PALMS]() (Positive behaviour, Autism, Learning disability and Mental health Services) provides support for children and young people aged 0-19 who have a global learning disability and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families. Information on their services can be found on their website.
- There is a [National Centre for Behavioural Addiction including Gaming Disorder Service for Young People aged 13 to 25]().
- The [Adolescent Drug and Alcohol service]() provides confidential advice, support and specialist assessment and treatment to young people who have drug and alcohol problems under the age of 18, who have a Hertfordshire GP or live in or attend school in Hertfordshire.

Other Services and Resources

National Organisations

- Health for Kids (https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/) and Health for Teens (https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/) – content produced by school nurses with information about physical and mental health, aimed at young people but also has a section for adults.
- Kidshealth (www.kidshealth.org) – advice and information about common worries for children and young people including sections on divorce and separation.
- Time To Change (https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/) – focus on supporting mental health, aimed at professionals (schools and employers).
- NSPCC (https://www.nspcc.org.uk/) – aimed at adults to support CYPs to feel safe.
- Childline (https://www.childline.org.uk/) – provided by NSPCC, aimed at CYPs to access advice and support.
- Child Mind (https://childmind.org/) – has a lot of information on supporting CYPs and yourself, although it is American.
- Mind (https://www.mind.org.uk/) – supporting mental health for all. Aimed at adults.

- Charlie Waller Memorial Trust (www.cwmt.org.uk) – provide free training & resources in mental health issues.
- Hands On Scotland (http://handsonscotland.co.uk/) – has information on a number of mental health issues, which is accessible to parents.
- Mind Ed (https://www.minded.org.uk/ and https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/) – provides free educational resources to support CYPs' mental health needs. There are e-learning modules available that may be helpful for parents who want to learn more about mental health.
- Anxiety UK (www.anxietyuk.org.uk) – has information and resources for parents of children who are experiencing anxiety. Includes a guide for supporting children who are anxious in relation to school.
- No Panic (https://nopanic.org.uk/) – is a charity that helps people who experience panic attacks, phobias, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and other related anxiety disorders. They have some information and resources on their website, including information on school anxiety. They also have a helpline and email address where you can access direct support.
- Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk) – is a website with information, advice and publications on mental health with sections for young people, parents / carers and professionals. A few key links:
  - They have a page about school refusal
  - They have a parent survival guide
  - The publication 'In School Stay Cool' aimed at young people.

- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) (www.ace-ed.org.uk) – independent national advice centre for parents and carers, provide guidance on school problems including attendance.
- Anti-Bullying (www.bullying.co.uk) – providing advice for parents, young people and schools. A free helpline is available.
- Bully Online (www.successunlimited.co.uk) – information about bullying for CYPs, parents and school staff.
- Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk) – advice about bullying and protecting CYPs from abuse, aimed at parents and teachers.
- Royal College of Psychiatrists (www.rcpsych.ac.uk) – website contains downloadable leaflets and fact sheets about a range of problems and mental health issues affecting CYPs.

For CYPs and their families

- Kooth (https://www.kooth.com/) is an online counselling service for anyone aged 10-25 in Hertfordshire. You can access a chat/messenger service, discussion boards, goal setting tools and a journal and a magazine containing a number of articles and some specifically about coronavirus and the impact on CYPs. The website is moderated by trained professionals. You need to register but it is anonymous.

- Parent Partnership (www.parentpartnership.org.uk) – a national organisation which provides independent advice and support for parents and carers of CYPs with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- Family Lives (https://www.familylives.org.uk/) is a national family support charity offering help to families who are struggling.

Local Organisations

- Healthy Young Minds in Herts Website (www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk) has a number of resources on their website, including an Anxiety Toolkit [need to register to access].
- Herts Mind Network (https://www.hertsmindnetwork.org/).
- Just Talk Herts (https://www.justtalkherts.org/just-talk-herts.aspx) – is a multi-agency campaign with the aim to reducing mental health stigma through raising awareness, as well as helping young people develop positive coping strategies and providing information and resources about talking about mental health and self-help support.
- ADD-vance (https://www.add-vance.org/) is a charity that supports families with children who have autism and / or ADHD.
- Health for Teens has a local page: https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/hertfordshire/.

Domestic Abuse

- National Domestic Violence Helpline (www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk) has a 24-hour helpline for anyone experiencing domestic violence or worried for someone else (telephone: 0808 200 0247).
- Women's Aid (https://www.womensaid.org.uk/) has a freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge (telephone: 0808 2000 247, email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk).
- Refuge (https://www.refuge.org.uk/) support those who have experienced violence and abuse – domestic violence, sexual violence, 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, FGM, human trafficking or modern. They run a range of specialist services to help survivors access safety and rebuild their lives.
- Herts Sunflower (www.hertssunflower.org) is a Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline (telephone: 08 088 088 088, email: Support@hertsdomesticabusehelpline.org).
- Safer Places (https://www.saferplaces.co.uk/help-in-a-crisis) is a charity which provides a comprehensive range of services to adults and children affected by domestic and sexual abuse who live in west Essex, mid Essex and east Hertfordshire. They provide support to people living in their own homes or in one of their refuges.

Definitions/Descriptions

Assess-Plan-Do-Review (APDR) process – this is part of the graduated approach from the SEN Code of Practice (2014). Through this cycle, school staff assess the pupil's knowledge/ skills, makes an intervention, implements it and reviews the impact.

CYP - is an acronym for child and/or young person or children and/or young people.

Emotionally-Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – a child who find it difficult to attend school due to emotional factors might be described as having emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

Growth mindset – is the belief that people may be born with certain talents and attributes, but through hard work, appropriate teaching and perseverance, they are able to develop their skills.

ISL – is an acronym for Integrated Services for Learning, which is a large multi-professional service within Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) with a focus on supporting outcomes for children and young people with special educational and additional needs.

Mental Health Lead – under the Mental Health Green paper (2018), all schools are required to have a mental health lead which supports the wellbeing of the school, such as identifying the needs of children with mental health needs, supporting interventions, and ensuring a whole school approach is adopted.

Proprioception - is the sense that lets us perceive the location, movement, and action of parts of the body

Separation anxiety – is when children feel anxiety when they are separated from parents; they may cry or cling to parents.

Social anxiety – is when individuals feel anxious in social situations.

Transition plans – are plans to support children's transition from one setting to the next. This could be for the next year group or a new school.

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<u>Guidance from Other Local Authorities</u>

- Babcock (based in Devon): https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/inclusion-and-ehwb/anxiety-based-school-avoidance
- Barnet: https://barnet.gov.uk/dam/jcr:2fc6fd1f-ac72-447e-9130-d9cd5d0d1e2c/school-based-anxiety-information-for-schools.pdf
- Bath and North Somerset: https://thinkleftdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/ebsr.pdf
- Derbyshire: https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/keeping-%20children-safe-in-education/emerging-school-safeguarding-themes/emotionally-based-%20school-refusal-guide.pdf
- West Sussex Emotionally Based School Anxiety: https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/460-emotionally-based-school-avoidance

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