

EBSA Advisory Team

Emotionally-Based School Avoidance

Information for parents/carers

September 2023

What is emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA)?

- EBSA refers to ‘reduced or non-attendance at school by a child or young person due to emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues’ (Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, 2022).
- EBSA replaces the term ‘school refusal’
- Pupils experiencing EBSA would like to attend school, if they could.
- Pupils can experience EBSA due to feelings that build up over time or as the result of a specific trigger.



In West Berkshire, we think of EBSA being experienced at four different levels

| EBSA level | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Level one | Level two | Level three | Level four |
| <p>The pupil is attending school but shows occasional reluctance to attend and/or is worried about attending school.</p> | <p>The pupil is attending school but they are experiencing some levels of anxiety. Parents express that they can appear reluctant to attend school. Occasional absences may occur.</p> | <p>The pupil displays periods of sporadic absence which are increasing due to high levels of anxiety. Patterns may be found within these periods of non-attendance. Reluctance to attend school is a concern to parents.</p> | <p>The pupil is absent from school over an extended period of time. They are unable to attend school due to their anxiety and their negative feelings about school can feel strong and intense.</p> |

What happens if my child is referred to the EBSA Advisory Team?

- If your child is experiencing Emotionally-Based School Avoidance, their school may refer them to the West Berkshire Council's EBSA Advisory Team.
- A referral form will be completed by school, and a parent information and consent form needs to be completed by you. This will help us to build up a picture of the current situation for your child. (The EBSA Coordinator may also contact you and the school for further information.)
- Your child's referral will then be discussed at one of our monthly EBSA triage panel meetings and the decision will be communicated to your school, who will advise you of the decision and next steps.



EBSA Advisory Team – who are we and what do we do?

- If your child's referral is accepted by the triage panel, then the EBSA Advisory Team will advise school on the best way to support your child back into school/to re-engage with education. This may include meetings with school, meetings with the family and work with you/your child.
- The outcome of this work is that school will be able to produce an EBSA plan that focuses on reducing your child's anxiety and increasing their school attendance. It is important to note that addressing anxiety takes time, and success is more likely where the school, parents and child work together and the focus is on small, achievable, supported steps.
- As part of this work, you may be contacted by the EBSA Advisory Team:
 - EBSA Coordinator (term time only)
 - EBSA Educational Psychologist
 - EBSA Mental Health Workers
- School will implement the plan and regularly review it to monitor progress.



What are the next steps?



- ☑ School will send you 2 forms to complete – so please look out for these:
 - ☑ Please complete and sign the **Parent/Carer Information and Consent**
 - ☑ If possible, please ask your child to complete the **Child/Young Person Information**
- ☑ Please return both of these forms directly to the EBSA Advisory Team
EBSA@westberks.gov.uk

Sources of support

www.youngminds.org.uk, where you can find a range of resources to support your child's mental health. In particular, their pages on supporting children and young people with school anxiety are worth a look:
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-school-anxiety-and-refusal/>
<https://copingskillsforkids.com/calming-anxiety> for calming activities that you and your child can do at home.
<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people/> for advice about young people's mental health.
<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/> for other ways you can take action to increase your child's happiness.
<https://www.autism.org.uk/> for advice if your child has, or is suspected to have autism.
<https://notfineinschool.co.uk/> which is a parent-led organisation that offers peer support to families, shares informative resources and raises awareness of EBSA experiences.
<https://school-refusal.co.uk/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdkn3qt>
<https://www.annafreud.org/> Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/> Children's Commissioner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8JmRgjCics> – Sunday evening/Monday morning plans (Tina Rae)

EBSA Advisory Team contact:

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