

WHAT IS EBSA?

It's natural for children and young people to feel worried or anxious at times—these feelings help us navigate challenges and stay safe. But when anxiety becomes overwhelming and stops a child from doing what they need or want to do, it can be a sign of something more.

Many children feel nervous about school at some point, and learning to manage these feelings is part of growing up. However, for some, anxiety becomes so intense that it makes attending school extremely difficult. **This is known as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).**

IF YOUR CHILD IS EXPERIENCING HIGH LEVELS OF ANXIETY AND IS STRUGGLING TO GO TO SCHOOL, YOU'RE NOT ALONE, AND SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE. UNDERSTANDING EBSA IS THE FIRST STEP IN HELPING THEM FEEL SAFE AND CONFIDENT IN THEIR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.

IS YOUR CHILD FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT SCHOOL?

Many children worry about school from time to time, but if anxiety is stopping your child from attending, they may be experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). It's important to recognise and address these feelings early, as missed time in school can make returning even harder.



SIGNS OF EBSA

Your child might:

- ✓ Feel anxious, fearful, or upset about going to school.
- ✓ Complain of physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches, especially on school mornings.
- ✓ Experience racing heart, shaking, or feeling sick when faced with attending school.
- ✓ Feel better at weekends and during school holidays.





HOW YOU CAN HELP

Listen and reassure – Acknowledge your child’s worries and let them know they’re not alone.

Work with school – Share your concerns and create a plan together to support your child.

Stay positive and consistent – Encouragement and routine will help ease the transition back.

Be prepared for setbacks – Some days will be harder than others, but keep going.

Seek support – You don’t have to do this alone —talk to family, friends, or professional services.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR WORRIES

Starting a conversation can be hard, but open-ended questions can help:

“What are three things that worry you about school?”

“What are the three best things about school?”

“How can we make school feel easier for you?”

If they find talking difficult, encourage them to write, draw, or message their thoughts.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TO HELP

- ✓ Listen and understand your child’s concerns.
- ✓ Stay in regular contact with you and your child, even if they’re not attending.
- ✓ Identify and address any issues at school, like academic struggles or friendship worries.
- ✓ Put a plan in place with agreed next steps.
- ✓ Offer support strategies like a quiet space, a buddy system, or a trusted adult to check in with.
- ✓ Involve professionals if difficulties persist.

FURTHER SUPPORT

Shropshire SENDIASS – Impartial information, advice, and support for families.

YoungMinds – Support for parents concerned about their child’s mental health.

Free helpline: 0808 802 5544 | [Website](#)

