

WE CAN MAKE IT TOGETHER

When children are worried
about going to school



Information
and help
for families

There are many things that can happen to a child or young person that can result in them feeling worried about school and seek ways to avoid going:

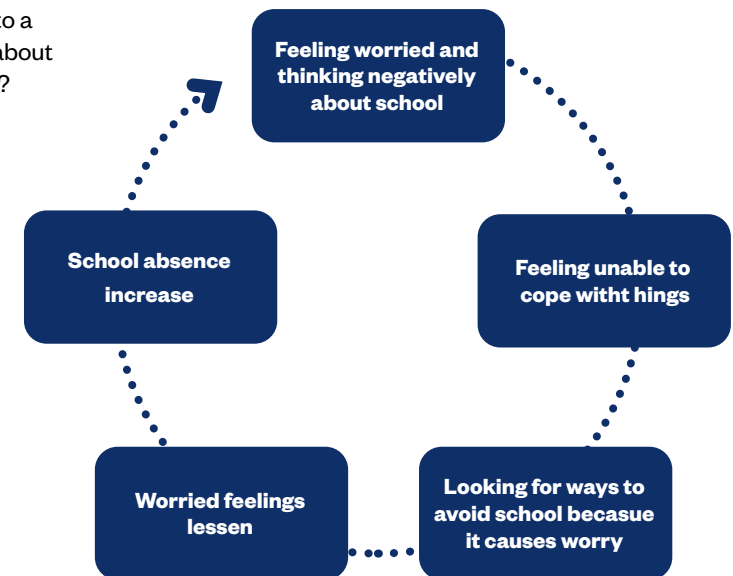


WHAT SHOULD WE LOOK OUT FOR?

If this pattern of behaviours, thoughts and feelings continues, the child or young person can enter into the EBSA cycle:



What can lead to a child worrying about going to school?



HOW YOU CAN HELP

How we respond to a child / young person's worries about school is important to think about so here are a few ideas to consider:

- **Let them know you're there to listen and they can open up to you**
 - You could try asking questions such as "Can you tell me 3 things you like about school?" then "Can you tell me 3 things you are worried about / that have worried you recently?"
- **Listen calmly and thank them for sharing with you**
 - Give them options of how they share their thoughts and feelings – talking, drawing, writing, texting
- **Let them know their thoughts and feelings are valid**
- **Remind them that going to school is important**
- **Let them know that you and the school will work together to help**
- **Try to be positive and take one day at a time**
 - If they don't manage school one day, try again the next day

- **Make sure you have someone you can talk with who can listen**

You can also find further advice via the organisation *YoungMinds*. This charity promote the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. They have a lot of helpful information on their website plus different ways parents can contact them to request advice:

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>
- Parent helpline 9:30am to 4:00pm weekdays (0808 802 5544)
- Parent webchat
- Parent e-mail service

YOUNGMINDS

Try to make contact with the school as soon as possible and request a meeting to discuss the situation and how to move forward. When you talk to the school:

- Emphasise that you want to work together with them to build a joint plan to help resolve the situation
- Request a specific adult to be named as the key staff member for contact about the plan by all parties
- Agree regular reviews as part of the plan
- Be firm and consistent when implementing the plan, even if the child / young person appears more unhappy to start with; this is the child / young person's way of telling us they are trying to adjust to the new way of being
- Be positive and only share concerns about the plan with the school
- Be prepared for there to be a few bumps along the road as you work towards changing the perception of child / young person towards school

- Be prepared for it to be harder for the child / young person after weekends, time off for illness or holidays
- Stick with it; you may think about moving schools but research shows that even if a move happens, the difficulties are likely to continue / re-emerge

The school can also seek advice from the Southampton Educational Psychology Service.

