



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance



Young Person Information Leaflet

www.socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer

What if going to school is making me feel worried?

From time to time we all tend to feel down, worried, stressed or frightened – these feelings are all part of being human.

The purpose of these feelings are to keep us safe and they will usually pass. However, if these feelings don't pass, we can feel so worried that something bad might happen that it stops us from doing normal everyday things, such as going to school.

Does the idea of school make you feel...?

upset

worried

sad

tired

nervous

unwell

scared

frustrated



Although all of these feelings are completely normal, sometimes they can get so bad that they can make us feel like we don't want to go to school. If you are feeling anxious about going to school you may be experiencing something called **Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSN)**.

Is there anything that makes you feel like you don't want to go to school?

- ⇒ feeling worried about learning, tests or exams
- ⇒ bullying or falling out with friends
- ⇒ worried about the way you look
- ⇒ worried about what others think of you
- ⇒ it feels too loud or crowded at school
- ⇒ worried about transitions – such as walking through corridors and getting changed for PE
- ⇒ feeling like your teachers don't like you, or you don't like them
- ⇒ worried that you're not clever enough and feeling that you don't understand and struggle with school work
- ⇒ being behind on school work and worried that you'll not catch up



Is there anything that makes you feel like you want to stay at home?

- ⇒ being at home with parent/carer(s)
- ⇒ separation or divorce of parents/carers
- ⇒ moving to a new house or school
- ⇒ feeling like your parent/carer(s) or family don't understand you
- ⇒ death or illness of a relative or somebody close to you
- ⇒ physical illness

What happens when you don't attend school?

When you feel worried about attending school and stay at home, it may make you feel better and you may feel a sense of relief from being in a safe place. However, it is very important that you try to overcome these worries as soon as possible as the more time you spend away from school the more difficult it will become to get back into school and start learning again.

When we don't attend school we are not getting the education that we all are entitled to get. This means that we miss out on learning which will make it trickier to learn more things in the future.



While we are at home we are also not seeing our friends, meaning that we are missing out on maintaining relationships that are good for our social and emotional wellbeing.

What should you do?

Talk to someone you trust. When we have problems that we cannot solve on our own it can often be helpful to look to others for help. If you feel that you are struggling with ESNB, the thought of going back to school can be really scary. You should talk to somebody close to you that you can trust; it might be a parent/carer or another member of your family, a teacher or school staff, or a friend.

You might find it really difficult to talk about the worries that you are experiencing. It can sometimes be helpful to write these thoughts down and show them person you trust to initiate a conversation. Make sure you pick a time when neither of you are busy or distracted and choose a quiet and safe space so you wont be interrupted.

What can school do to help?

You can expect school to listen to your worries. They will work with you and your parent/carer(s) to ensure you feel supported and safe and will aim to get you back into school to start learning again.



What can I do to get back into school?



There are ways in which you can help yourself to get back into school. These are ideas of things to do alongside the support you will have from your parents and school and will ensure you feel more comfortable and safe when attending school again.

- ⇒ Take an active role in planning your transition back to school with the support from your parent/carer(s) and school staff. You are the expert in knowing what works best for you!
- ⇒ On mornings before school, you can start getting ready for a normal school day by putting on your uniform and packing your school bag ready to leave on time. This may feel a little bit funny if you are not yet ready to actually attend school, but it is going to be really helpful in setting up your routine. It will make you feel more at ease by decreasing anxiety with a familiar start to the day for when you do decide that you are ready to go back to school.
- ⇒ You can ask your school to send you some of the missed work to catch up on.
- ⇒ Try to keep contact with your friends to know what is happening at school.



Where else can I get help from?

- ⇒ **Kooth** provides a free online support service for young people that is safe and anonymous. <https://www.kooth.com/>
- ⇒ **Youthspace** is a website providing advice and help for young people, visit <http://www.youthspace.me/>
- ⇒ **Youngminds** is a charity providing mental health information and support for young people, visit <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
- ⇒ **Solar** provide emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Solihull. For more information about Solar visit <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/> and if you wish to make a self-referral click on the 'young person' box and find the form under 'More for young people' on the left hand side.
- ⇒ You can call **childline** for free on 0800 1111 to talk to a counsellor, or visit their website to chat to someone online, go to <https://childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>

