

# Emotionally Based School Avoidance



## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>What is Emotionally Based School Avoidance?</b>      | <b>3</b>  |
| <i>Definition and terminology</i>                       | 3         |
| <i>Prevalence</i>                                       | 3         |
| <b>What causes Emotionally Based School Avoidance?</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <i>Possible indicators of EBSA</i>                      | 4         |
| <i>Risk/resilience factors</i>                          | 5         |
| <i>Push and pull factors</i>                            | 5         |
| <i>Perspectives and blame</i>                           | 6         |
| <b>Seeking Information</b>                              | <b>7</b>  |
| <i>Seeking information from children</i>                | 7         |
| <i>Seeking information from parents</i>                 | 8         |
| <i>Reflective Thinking</i>                              | 8         |
| <b>Strategies and Interventions</b>                     | <b>10</b> |
| <i>Strategies to use at home</i>                        | 10        |
| <i>Strategies to use at school</i>                      | 10        |
| <i>Making the challenge manageable</i>                  | 11        |
| <b>Case Study</b>                                       | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Resources</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>What support is available in Camden?</b>             | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Camden EBSA pathway</b>                              | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Appendix 1: Blank push and pull factors template</b> | <b>19</b> |

## Introduction

This guidance has been produced by the Camden Educational Psychology Service in collaboration with multiple agencies in Camden, including the School Nursing Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Virtual School, Early Help, School Inclusion Team, Pupil Attendance Service, Royal Free Hospital School and Camden Learning. It is based heavily on the 'West Sussex Educational Psychology Service Emotionally Based School Avoidance: Good Practice guidance for schools and support agencies' with their kind permission.

Additional support from Camden services, including a pathway for targeted support for students experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance, can be found from page 14.

The current evidence base of the factors associated with positive outcomes include:

- Intervening early
- Working with parents and school staff as well as the young person
- Working in a flexible manner paying attention to the individual case and function served by non-attendance
- Emphasising the need for rapid return to school alongside good support and adaptations within the school environment (Baker & Bishop, 2015)

## What is Emotionally Based School Avoidance?

### Definition and terminology

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe children and young people who have difficulty in attending school due to emotional needs. This can include decreases in attendance, patterns of non-attendance (for example Mondays), and prolonged absences from school. The onset of EBSA may be sudden or gradual. The literature suggests that there tends to be peaks in EBSA corresponding to transition between school phases and year groups (King & Bernstein, 2001). We recognise that all behaviours are a communication of an emotional need that is either unmet, or being met elsewhere. It might not always look like an emotional need but our knowledge about trauma helps us see beyond what children and young people say and the externalising behaviours they may present with. It is important to remember survival mode and how differently the fight, flight, freeze response can present.

Although the literature in this area often cites the phrase 'School Refuser', this terminology could be considered misleading as the term 'refuser' implies that the young person has control over the school non-attendance. Language is very powerful. The first intervention is to change the language used around this by professionals and families. By changing the language used, the way we choose to intervene will change.

Terminology such as '*School Refuser*', '*Truant*', '*Choosing to stay at home*' and '*delinquent*' locates the 'problem' within the young person and detracts from how their lived experiences can tell us how to support them

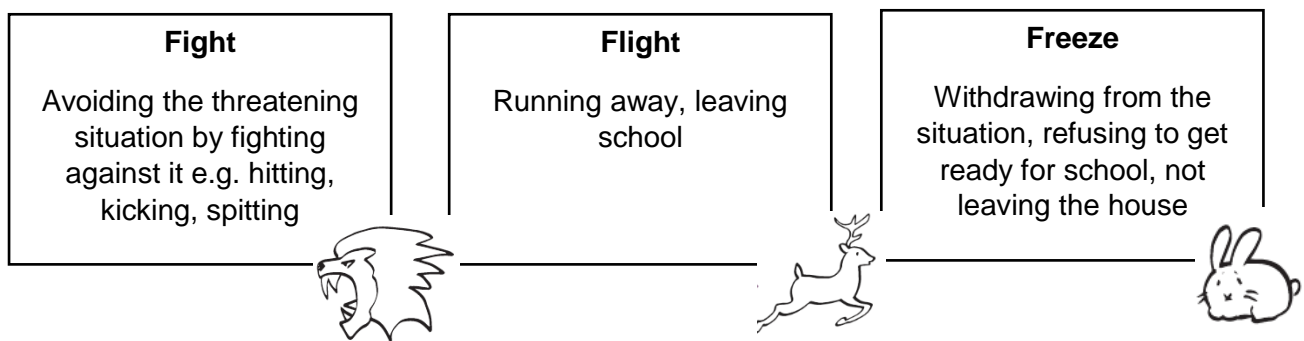
### Prevalence

- It is difficult to estimate the prevalence of EBSA but UK literature reports that this affects between approximately 1 and 2% of the school population (Elliot, 1999).
- There is a slightly higher prevalence amongst secondary school students absent from school due to emotional reasons (Guilliford & Miller, 2015).
- EBSA is reported to be equally common in males and females with little evidence of a link to socioeconomic status (King & Bernstein, 2001).
- It is predicted that the COVID 19 pandemic will also play a significant role in increasing school avoidance.

## What causes Emotionally Based School Avoidance?

Anxiety has been identified as a key feature of EBSA. Although a certain level of anxiety is considered a normal and natural part of growing up and we can teach coping mechanisms to function with anxiety in everyday life, sometimes this escalates.

When the anxiety is linked to school avoidance, the young person may experience anxious and fearful thoughts around attending and coping with school. These feelings may also be accompanied by physiological symptoms of anxiety such as nausea, vomiting, shaking, sweating etc. and may start the night before, or even a few days before school. In order to avoid these overwhelming emotions and the fear associated with school attendance, students might use the fight, flight, freeze survival response. These behaviours, and the avoidance of school, may then contribute to the maintenance of EBSA over time.



### Possible indicators of EBSA

Although there is a higher prevalence of EBSA among secondary students, signs of school avoidance may appear during primary school. The longer the problem goes unaddressed, the bigger it becomes and the greater the intervention needed. It is crucial to identify this early (i.e. when attendance drops to 90%) and put support in place to ensure a rapid return to school.

Possible indicators include:

- Difficulty attending school with periods of prolonged absence
- Child reluctant to leave home and stays away from school with the knowledge of the parent/carer
- For younger children, reluctance to leave parents or get out of the car
- Regular absence
- Frequent absences for minor illnesses
- Patterns in absences, for example, particular days and/or subjects, after weekends and holidays
- Reluctance to attend school trips
- The young person expresses a desire to attend classes but is unable to do so
- Anxiety on separation and dependence on family members e.g. worry expressed about the safety of those at home
- Evidence of under-achievement in learning
- Social isolation and avoidance of class mates or peer group
- Challenging behaviours, particularly in relation to specific situations at school
- Severe emotional upset with excessive fearfulness, outbursts of temper and complaints of feeling ill on school days
- Depression, low self-esteem and low confidence
- Confusion or extreme absent mindedness due to lack of concentration
- Physical changes i.e. sweating, sickness, aching limbs, headaches, panic attacks, abdominal pain, rapid weight loss or gain

- Withdrawal in class for example head on desk, hood up, avoiding work or interactions

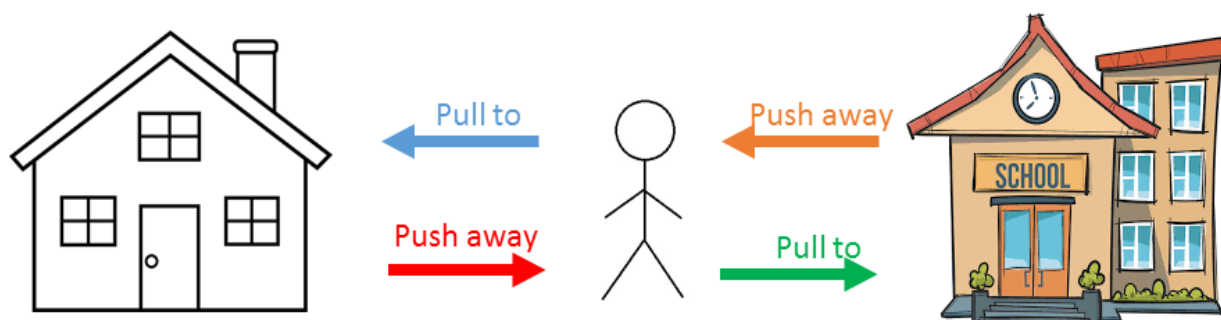
### Risk/resilience factors

Just as with general mental health, there have been factors identified that place children at greater risk of EBSA. It is usually a combination of factors interacting with a change in circumstances that leads to what we see as EBSA. The predisposing factors may be present in the nature of the school, the child's family or the child themselves.

| School Factors   | Family Factors  | Child Factors   | Community factors   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Difficulties in specific subject</li> <li>• Transition to secondary school,</li> <li>• key stage or change of school</li> <li>• Structure of the school day</li> <li>• Academic demands/high levels of pressure and performance orientated classrooms</li> <li>• Exams</li> <li>• Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships with peers or staff</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation, divorce, change in family dynamic</li> <li>• Parent physical or mental</li> <li>• health challenges</li> <li>• Attachment relationship with parent</li> <li>• High levels of family stress</li> <li>• Domestic violence or abuse</li> <li>• Loss or bereavement</li> <li>• Family history of EBSA</li> <li>• Young carer</li> <li>• Financial situation</li> <li>• Sibling non-attendance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social anxiety</li> <li>• Fixed mindset</li> <li>• Low self confidence</li> <li>• Physical illness/injury</li> <li>• Period pain/period poverty</li> <li>• Transition ages (5-6, 11-12, &amp; 13-14 years)</li> <li>• Difficulties accessing learning/making progress at the same rate as peers</li> <li>• Trauma experiences</li> <li>• Separation anxiety</li> <li>• Gaming addiction</li> <li>• Health anxiety</li> <li>• Uncertainty about future aspirations beyond school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racism</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Gang membership</li> <li>• Transport or journey to school</li> <li>• Community safety</li> </ul> |

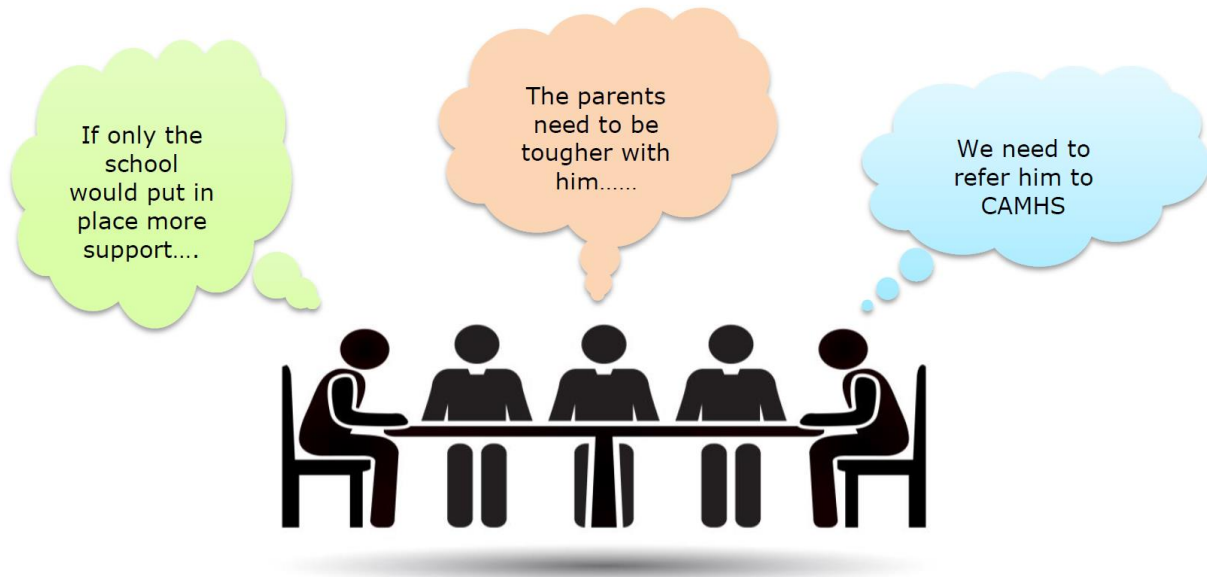
### 'Push and Pull' factors

The literature indicates that Emotionally Based School Avoidance is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience, when stress and anxiety exceeds support, and when the factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the factors that encourage school attendance. By mapping out what is going on for a young person, you can identify where there are imbalances which would tell you how to intervene to support a young person.

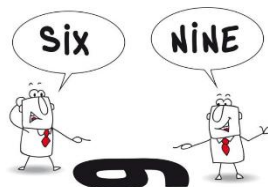


A helpful framework for this is the 'Push/Pull' factors approach. This is intended to be used by professionals to support their own thinking in the first instance. Tools that can be used with the young person to gather information for this grid can be found on page 7. If a professional chooses to use this with a young person, it is advised that they remove the terms 'push' and 'pull' which can be interpreted literally. See Appendix 1 for a template.

### Perspectives and blame



It is often tempting to try to locate a simple reason and simple solution for behaviour. However as identified earlier it is often an interaction of a number of factors and trying to find simple causation often encourages blaming. Individuals can then become anxious and defensive. Parents may feel blamed for the absences, feel that their parenting skills are being criticised and they may be fearful that they will get into trouble or even prosecuted for nonattendance. Children may feel guilty or scared that they will be forced to attend school.



Each person may have a different perspective on EBSA and have a different story to tell. It is essential that different people's views are respected and differences in views are acknowledged. When there is a difference of views it is often more helpful to focus on *how* the behaviour is occurring rather than *why*.

## Seeking Information

### Seeking information from children

#### School Wellbeing: Risk and Resilience Card set

The School Wellbeing cards are designed to be used by education, health and social care colleagues and are suitable for children aged 7+. Through a card sort activity, the young person is empowered to share their experience of school and the factors that they feel are significant in terms of any risk factors that may need to be addressed, as well as any resilience factors that could be further harnessed to improve their experience of school and their school attendance.

Link to page: <https://www.schoolwellbeingcards.co.uk/>



**School Stress Survey**

|                        | ☹️ I very often or always feel stress at this. I can't cope with it. | 😐 I sometimes feel stress. I don't like it but I can cope. | 😊 I feel OK about this. I can cope with it easily. |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Getting Up & Ready  |  |  |  |
| 2. Journey to & from   |  |  |  |
| 3. Assembly            |  |  |  |
| 4. Corridors           |  |  |  |
| 5. Written Work        |  |  |  |
| 6. Break Times         |  |  |  |
| 7. Teacher Q&A         |  |  |  |
| 8. Team / Group Work   |  |  |  |
| 9. Lunch Times         |  |  |  |
| 10. 1 to 1 with Adults |  |  |  |
| 11. Tests              |  |  |  |
| 12. Homework           |  |  |  |

#### School Stress Survey

This is a short reflective exercise designed to encourage students presenting with anxiety (often manifesting in things like non-attendance) to identify the 'stress points' in their day.

Link to tool:

<http://www.humansnotrobots.co.uk/p/resources-hub.html>

#### School Refusal Assessment Scale – Revised C<sup>1</sup>

This is a psychological assessment tool designed to identify reasons for avoiding school for young people aged 6-17 years. This looks at four functions of school avoidance: (a) avoidance of school-related stimuli provoking negative affectivity (e.g., teacher, test), (b) escaping from aversive social or evaluative situations, (c) to increase attention from others and (d) to pursue positive tangible reinforcement outside of school (e.g., television, play). The first two are centred around negative reinforcement and the other two around positive reinforcement of school avoidance.

Link to tool:

<https://www.oxfordclinicalpsych.com/view/10.1093/med:psych/9780195308297.001.0001/med-9780195308297-interactive-pdf-003.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Note that we use the term avoidance rather than refusal



## Other approaches

|  |
|--|
| <b>Drawing thoughts and feelings about school</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What name would you give the feeling that you experience when you think about going to school?</li><li>• If it was a thing, what would it look like? What would it say?</li><li>• How does the ..... get in the way of you attending school? When is ..... in charge and when are you in charge?</li><li>• Ask them to draw how their body feels when they are worried</li><li>• This helps to externalise the anxiety</li></ul> |
| <b>Scaling anxiety about school on a thermometer</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The physical environment e.g. toilets, corridors, assembly hall.</li><li>• Times of the day or social interactions e.g. arriving at school, play and breaktimes, lining up to go into school or classroom, lunchtimes, going home, changing for PE</li><li>• Particular lessons or activities within lessons e.g. writing, working as part of a group, reading aloud, verbally answering a question</li></ul>                    |
| <b>Life graphs</b>   |
| A life graph or path can help them tell you their 'story so far' and what they would want in the future.   |

## **Seeking information from parents**

### School Refusal Assessment Scale – Revised P<sup>2</sup>

This tool maps on to the young person version of this scale, and is completed by the parent based on their observations and understanding of their child's behaviour. The tool can be used alongside or instead of the young person measure (depending on age or stage). It can be helpful to look at similarities and differences between the primary maintaining function for both young person and parent. [Scoring document can be found here.](#)

Link to tool:

<https://www.oxfordclinicalpsych.com/view/10.1093/med:psych/9780195308297.001.0001/med-9780195308297-interactive-pdf-004.pdf>

## **Reflective thinking**

Below are some questions you can use to structure an explorative conversation about a child who is struggling to attend school.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Description of behaviour</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the current rate of attendance?</li><li>• Are there any patterns to non-attendance? Particular days or lessons?</li><li>• History of behaviour; when did it first occur, have there been similar difficulties?</li><li>• Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety – what does it look like? What does the child say about any specific fears and difficulties?</li></ul>         |
| <b>Risk factors (school, child, family and community)</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developmental and educational history (health, medical, sensory or social factors). What are child's previous experiences of school?</li><li>• Any changes in family dynamic? (Separation, loss, birth of a sibling, health issues of other family members)</li><li>• Who is the child closest to in the family?</li><li>• Are there any other needs within the family?</li></ul> |

<sup>2</sup> Note that we use the term avoidance rather than refusal



|  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do members of the family respond to the situation?</li> <li>• Does the child have any learning needs or difficulties?</li> <li>• What do we know about their local community?</li> <li>• What do we know about their 'social graces' and how these interact with their experiences of school? (gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Strengths and protective factors</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the child think is going well?</li> <li>• What strengths do they have?</li> <li>• Do they have any aspirations or ambitions for the future?</li> <li>• What positive relationships do they have at home and at school (peers and staff)?</li> <li>• What positive experiences have they had at school?</li> <li>• What was different about the times when the young person was able to get into school?</li> <li>• What has been helpful in the past?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Formulation &amp; integration of various factors</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is people's understanding of why the young person is demonstrating these behaviours?</li> <li>• Are there any differences of views?</li> <li>• What risk factors have been identified (child, school and family)?</li> <li>• What strengths have been identified that can be built upon?</li> <li>• What is the function of the behaviour – is it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To <b>avoid</b> something or situations that elicits negative feelings or high levels of stress (e.g. fear of the toilets; the noise in the playground; lots of people moving all together in the corridors between classes, tests/ exams)</li> <li>○ To <b>escape</b> difficult social situations (e.g. feeling left out at playtime; reading out loud in class or other public speaking/group task; working as part of a group)</li> <li>○ To get <b>attention</b> from or spend more time with significant others (e.g. change in family dynamic, concerned about the wellbeing of parent).</li> <li>○ To spend more <b>time out of school</b> as it is more fun or stimulating (go shopping, play computer games, hang out with friends).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are there any maintaining factors?</li> </ul> |

## Strategies and Interventions

### Strategies to use at home

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Attachment Strategies</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support development of a secure attachment at home so that the young person feels like they are able to separate. This may involve creating special time to be spent together which will vary depending on age, or more specialist intervention, such as Video Interactive Guidance (VIG)</li> <li>• Consider using transitional objects such as teddies, hair ties, photos, keyring that the child can take from home into school</li> <li>• Give the child some protected quality time with you at home ('special time')</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Managing Feelings</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge that anxiety is ok but don't over re-assure or dismiss the feeling. Accept the child's emotional experience of school, allow them to feel heard and normalise their experience.</li> <li>• Encourage and positively affirm the child when they go to school (e.g. 'I'm really happy for you')</li> <li>• Try to present a balanced view when talking about school and try to avoid negative narratives about school ('I was never good at Maths either')</li> <li>• Encourage the child to engage in mindfulness or other activities that may make them feel relaxed (e.g. mindful colouring)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Routine and predictability</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the school day as predictable as possible by creating a visual planner for the week and checklists for school equipment. Encourage the child to tick days spent at school off on a calendar as they achieve them</li> <li>• Ensure a clear routine is in place. This may include use of visuals/weekly planner/organisation, etc. It is important to try and capitalise on a sense of momentum. It may be easier to keep going through the week and routine helps with this</li> </ul>  |

### Strategies to use at school

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Attachment Strategies</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of belonging in school by greeting the child when entering school/class and giving them a role and responsibility</li> <li>• When the child is not at school, continue to communicate with them via email, notes, video calls etc</li> <li>• Start and end the school day with protected quality time with a safe, consistent adult for 15 minutes</li> <li>• Ensure there is a clear transition between parent/s and a trusted staff member at the start of each day</li> <li>• Ensure the child sees positive interactions between home and school</li> <li>• Consider using transitional objects such as teddies, hair ties, photos, keyring that the child can take from home into school. Allow them to text or phone home during the school day if needed</li> </ul> |
| <b>Routine and predictability</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the school day is predictable by creating a consistent routine that it outlined on a visual schedule.</li> <li>• Try to keep elements of the school day the same (e.g. entering school via the same route each day, having the same settling activity at the start of the day)</li> </ul>   |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Managing feelings</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the safe spaces that pupils can go to, such as a pastoral zone or library, as these may be less stigmatising for some pupils than the learning support area</li> <li>Encourage and positively affirm the child when they go to school (e.g. 'I'm really happy that you've come into school today')</li> <li>Encourage the child to engage in mindfulness or other activities that may make them feel relaxed (e.g. mindful colouring)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Additional interventions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional strategies may include: Anti-bullying programmes , buddying pupils, mentoring and teaching coping strategies</li> <li>Support the child with peer interactions (e.g. circle of friends, social skills groups)</li> </ul>   |

It may be necessary to seek further support and consultation from specialist services where school avoidance has become entrenched

### Making the challenge manageable

Re-exposure to school should happen gradually, using an **avoidance hierarchy** created with the young person from least feared school situation to most feared. To create an avoidance hierarchy, the young person can be asked to name situations (or shown cards representing possible fears) and rank them in terms of how they feel about that situation or object from 'least worried about' to 'most worried about'. When thinking about next steps it is important to start with the item that causes the least amount of anxiety, helping them think about how they will cope with this situation and what support they will need. When they have overcome this fear and consolidated this a number of times, they can begin to work his or her way up the hierarchy.

| Most feared   |  |
|---|--|
| Going into lunch hall without best friend             | <div> <p>For each situation the young person will need to be supported to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What coping technique they will use (e.g. relaxation, thinking, distraction)</li> <li>What support will be in place (e.g. key worker available, time out card, access to secure/ quiet base)</li> <li>Some situations may need to be broken down into even smaller steps</li> </ul> </div> |
| Going into lunch hall with best friend                |  |
| Going to PE lesson                                    |  |
| Going into next 2 favourite lessons                   |  |
| Going into favourite lesson                           |  |
| Joining in a small group activity                     |  |
| Staying in the resource base                          |  |
| Entering the school going into the reception area     |  |
| Entering the school when the school is closed         |  |
| Standing outside the school when the school is closed |  |
| Least feared  |  |

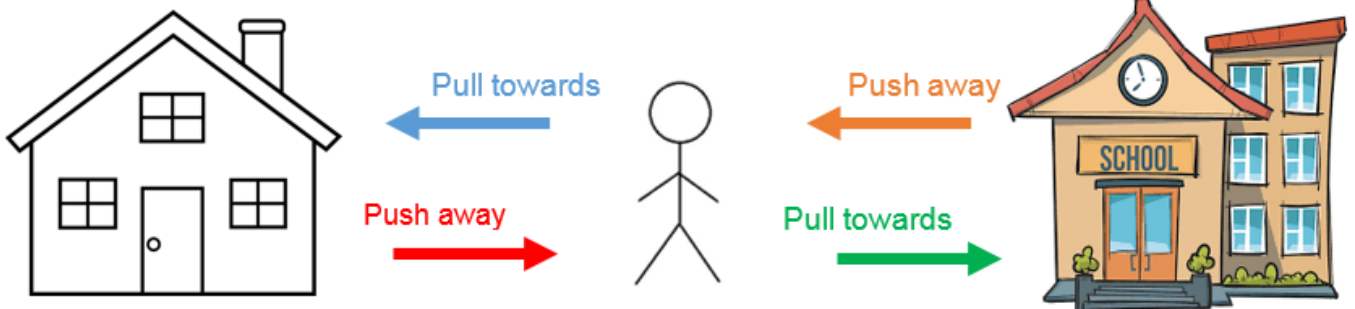
When supporting young people to manage negative feelings or high levels of stress in certain experiences (e.g. fear of the toilets; the noise in the playground; lots of people moving all together in the corridors between classes, tests/ exams), interventions should include learning about anxiety and how it affects our thinking, feelings and behaviours. The child should be taught anxiety management techniques such as relaxation training and deep breathing. Links to resources can be found in the Resources section (pp. 13).

## Case Study: Esther

An example of a case study is included below. After considering push and pull factors, school were then able to intervene to enable the young person to check-in with mum throughout the day, mentoring with a key teacher to build a supportive relationship, and information sharing with all teachers to better understand what her behaviour in class was communicating. School also did some work to develop a friendship group by setting up activities she would enjoy with peers.

- Worry about mum's health/wellbeing- young carer
- Mum spending time with younger sibling without her
- When at home, spend time dreading going back to school which makes her unwell
- Fear of journey

- Teachers 'rejecting' her
- Feeling anxious about learning and 'punished' when anxious (hood up/withdrawing/texting mum)
- Lessons are hard
- No close friends and experiences of bullying
- Low self-confidence

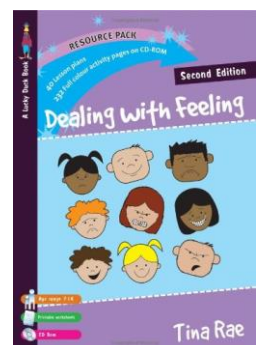
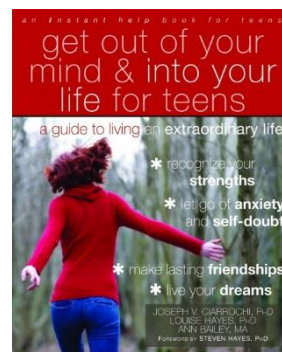
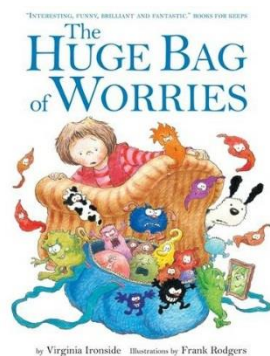
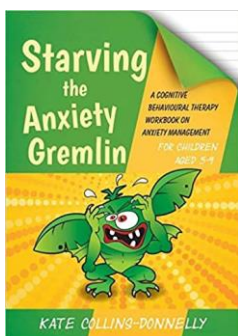


- Mum wants her to go to school and is keen to work with school around this

- Good relationship with head of year
- Likes Spanish

## Resources

- *Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside
- *Worry Box: managing anxiety in young children* by Hannah Mortimer
- *When my worries get too big! A relaxation book for children who live with anxiety*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Kari Dunn-Buron
- *A Volcano in My Tummy* by Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney.
- *Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People* by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- *Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents)* by Eline Snel
- *Dealing with Feelings* by Tina Rae
- *My Book of Feelings* by Tracey Ross
- *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life for Teens* by Joseph V. Ciarrochi, Louise Hayes and Ann Bailey.
- *Anxiety* by Paul Stallard -Examples of activities <http://tandfbis.s3.amazonaws.com/rt-media/pp/resources/CBTCHILD/worksheets.pdf>
- *Supporting Children and Young People with Anxiety: A Practical Guide* by Elizabeth Herrick and Barbara Redman-White
- *Promoting Emotional Resilience- Toolkit* <http://hbtg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/KAN-Emotional-resilience-toolkit.pdf>



## What support is available in Camden?

Schools can seek additional support from services in Camden for young people experiencing EBSA. The Camden EBSA Pathway (see pp. 17) outlines support that is available and can be put in place across three phases of intervention. The following services can also support where EBSA is a presenting difficulty. While awaiting support from external services, continue with the 'plan, do' review' cycle.

### **Children and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

There are a range of CAMHS teams available for children attending Camden schools and Camden residents, including:

- Education Mental Health Practitioners who help children and young people with mental health difficulties
- Named CAMHS Clinicians for each secondary school who clinically work within the school context; school professionals can liaise with this CAMHS Clinician and discuss any young people they are concerned about. CAMHS are also aiming for all Camden Primary Schools to have a named CAMHS Clinician who will be able to offer consultation to primary schools on a fortnightly basis
- Community CAMHS teams who work with children, young people and families who present with a range of difficulties including emotionally based school avoidance. Community CAMHS is made up of a multi-disciplinary team who are qualified in various evidence-based talking therapies. CAMHS Clinicians will aim to work alongside the young person, family and school in completing a CAMHS Assessment and, following this, discuss what support would be most helpful.

For contact information, click [here](#).

### **Early Help Service (Camden residents only)**

Early Help is a free support service for families with children aged 0 to 19 in Camden. It offers practical and emotional support for a range of life issues and works with young people and their families to help them make changes and feel connected in their community. Early Help comprises a range of services offering short and long term support both for families and young people directly.

*For non-Camden residents, please refer to resident borough Early Help Services*

For further information, click [here](#).

Email: [LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 7974 3317

### **Educational Psychology Service**

Educational psychologists draw on a range of psychological frameworks to help understand the factors that may be contributing to a child or young person's escalating anxiety about school and the complexities underpinning their avoidance of school. We work in consultation with school staff, families and other professionals to develop a holistic picture and identify small steps of change that help lessen anxiety and support the child to return to school.

Sometimes, but not always, educational psychologists will work directly with the child or young person to contribute to the assessment or a direct intervention.

Email: Contact your link EP

Tel: 02079746500

### **Pupil Attendance Service**

The Attendance Service offers advice and guidance on attendance issues for all pupils in Camden schools. We can discuss processes in schools, individual cases and additional support for CYP and their families. Support is also available for pupils who are electively home educated.

Weekly zoom meetings are available for attendance leads at 11.30am each Wednesday for up to 45 minutes to look at the latest guidance, strategies to improve attendance and brief case discussions. There is also a weekly attendance update for attendance leads in schools.

Email: [pas@camden.gov.uk](mailto:pas@camden.gov.uk) or [ehe@camden.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@camden.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 7974 1653

### **Royal Free Hospital School**

The Royal Free Hospital Children's School is a community special school and a leading practice school for mental health and well being. As part of its wider work the school runs the Medical Needs Panel in conjunction with Camden's School Inclusion Team. The school can also offer:

- Two alternative provision programmes 'RFHCS@The Hive' and 'The Thomas Group' that can address issues around emotionally based school refusal (see [www.royalfree.camden.sch.uk](http://www.royalfree.camden.sch.uk)).
- A team of Outreach teachers who are allocated cases through the panel.
- General support and advice around EBSA and access to successful case studies

Email: [admin@royalfree.camden.sch.uk](mailto:admin@royalfree.camden.sch.uk)

Telephone: 02074726298

### **School Nursing Service**

The School Nursing Service works in partnership with children and families across education and health, providing a link between the school, home and community delivering the 5-19 years National Healthy Child Programme. The role of the School Nurse is to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people to maximise their chances of reaching their full potential in school. Written referrals can be sent to the confidential email address stating name of school, child details (including date of birth) and summary of concern. Please indicate on the referral that you have sought consent from the family to refer to the service (unless there is clear evidence that information must be shared in order to safeguard a vulnerable child).

Tel: 02033172304

Email: [camdenschoolnurses@nhs.net](mailto:camdenschoolnurses@nhs.net)



## **Virtual School for Looked After Children**

Camden Virtual School can provide support and advice for children who are Looked After and those with a Child in Need Plan. The Virtual School:

- provides training, advice and support to early years providers, schools, colleges and other education institutions as well as social workers, independent reviewing officers, foster carers and related professionals to promote the attainment of children and young people in care, those previously in care and children in need.
- ensures that the providers of fostering services, residential care and alternative educational provision can show that they prioritise the educational success of Looked After Children.
- ensures there is timely communication and effective co-operation with the Virtual School head from other local authorities, particularly in relation to possible education placement changes, school admissions and attendance, educational success and exclusions.
- undertakes multi agency work, collaborating with a range of other professionals and using mentors to improve attendance at school and education outcomes.
- maintains rigorous and robust tracking and monitoring of individual attendance, success and progress.
- provides advice, guidance and resources in the form of mentors for Children in Need to their schools and social workers.

Email: [Natalie.white@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Natalie.white@camden.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 7974 2359

## **Youth Early Help (Camden residents only)**

Youth Early Help offer direct support to young people to: stay safe; be healthy; succeed in education, training and employment and contribute positively to their community. The service is comprised of multi-disciplinary youth practitioners based in youth hubs across three localities in Camden. Youth Early Help offers both universal open access and targeted, bespoke support for vulnerable young people and their families. Support is offered to young people aged 11-19 (and up to 25 years for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities).

Email: [youthearlyhelp@camden.gov.uk](mailto:youthearlyhelp@camden.gov.uk)

### **Additional services include:**

Kooth- *online counselling service*

<https://www.kooth.com/>

Family Action Islington and Camden Young Carers Service- *support for young carers*

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>

CARAF Centre- *support service for black and minority ethnic and low income families*

<https://www.thecarafcentre.co.uk/>

## Camden EBSA Pathway

### Guiding Principles of Intervention:

- Research highlights the importance of intervening early before behaviours become entrenched. We need to be particularly aware of early warning signs in primary school.
- Use a collaborative, cooperative approach which involves families, school staff and professionals
- Consider the function of the behaviour and the potentially unmet emotional needs
- For further information, see Camden's EBSA guidance document

### Phase 1: Attendance low/intermittent patterns of attendance identified (initiate Phase 1 when attendance falls below 90%)

- Gain YP and family/carer views to consider barriers to attending, and factors contributing to non-attendance. Use this to inform a plan of push and pull interventions.
- School to arrange an initial TAF meeting to establish intervention plan. If additional services are already involved consider the coordination of network.
- Seek evidence of effectiveness of interventions (Plan, Do, Review)
- Seek support from relevant services if additional needs are identified

#### Suggested Strategies for Schools

- Ensure that the YP has regular contact with a trusted adult
- Create a safe place in school that the YP can go to
- Daily communication between home and school
- Continue to keep in touch with the YP when they are not on site
- Create a predictable and consistent daily routine and schedule
- Allow the child to use transitional objects
- Explicitly teach coping and relaxation strategies
- Consultation with Pupil Attendance Service

### Phase 2: Persistent absences for 6 weeks

- Review attendance weekly in light of plan (plan, do, review) and monitor response to intervention, making adaptations where appropriate.
- Review effectiveness of interventions in place
- Organise a TAF meeting review
- Seek support from additional services if appropriate

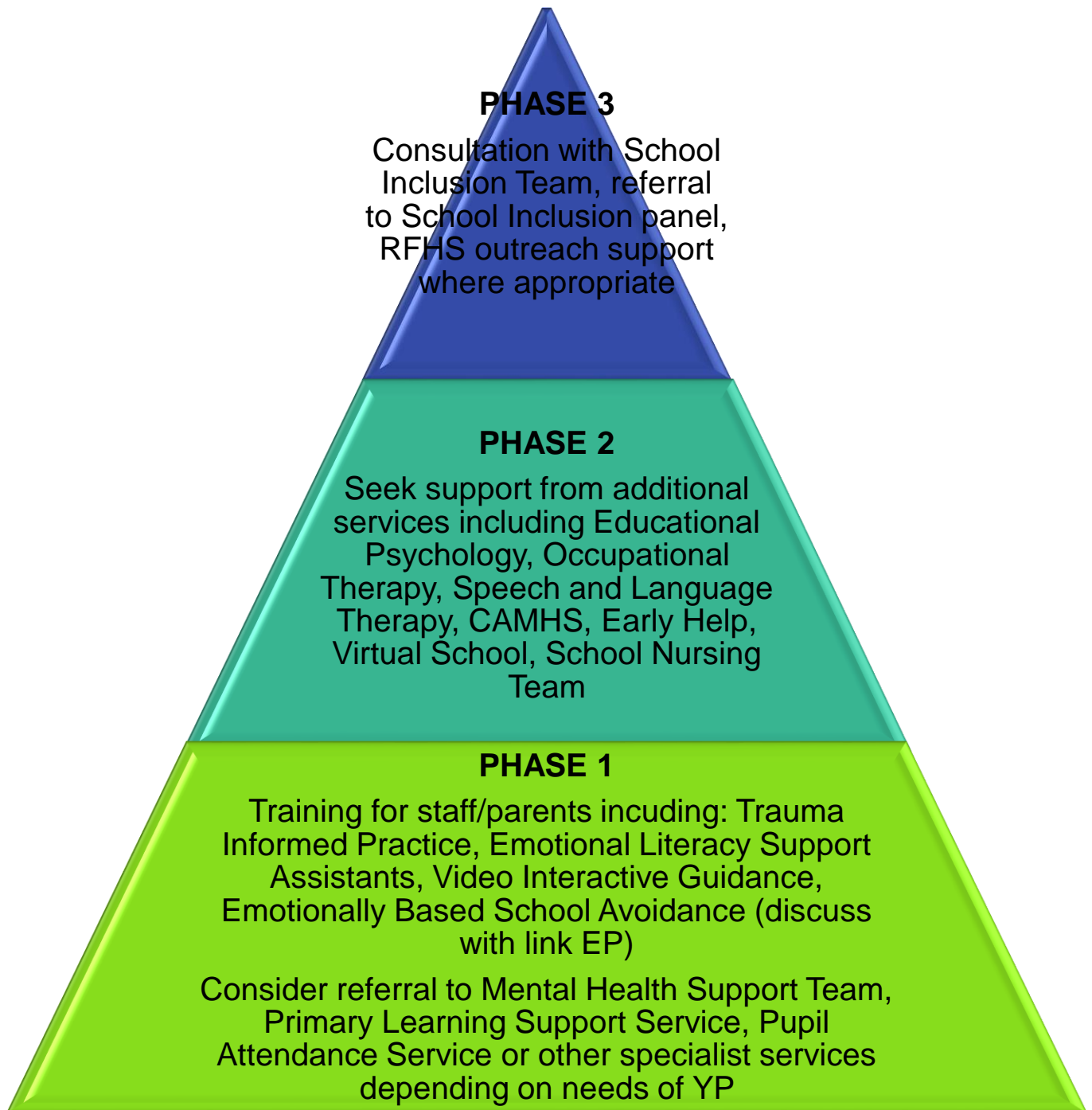
#### Suggested Strategies for Schools

- Ensure a graduated approach to increasing attendance
- Create a hierarchy of anxiety with the YP that they work through gradually
- Consider delivering evidence based interventions directed at developing key skills such as social skills, coping strategies

### Phase 3: Not attending despite professional involvement and intervention

- Review impact of interventions
- Refer to School Inclusion Panel (Camden residents only) \*\* Please email Camden School Inclusion Team (Dylan.Buckle@camden.gov.uk) for a referral form

## **Additional Services**



## Appendix 1: Blank push and pull template

