

EBSA – Actions and Advice

- Part of the EBSA Factsheet Series



Please note: 'child' = 'child or young person'

This factsheet explores some of the actions you can take if your child is experiencing EBSA. Positive outcomes may vary depending on the severity of your child's anxiety and how much attendance at school is taking place.

What can you do?

1. Keep a **diary/file** documenting everything related to the school refusal/anxiety and school attendance.
 - describe what happens with your child when trying to get to school (or after school)
 - keep notes and records of all conversations with school or medical staff (follow up with email summaries of conversations so that you have written records),
 - Keep records of all medical appointments and any assessments.
 - Keep all relevant letters and print outs of emails (or copy them onto a word document and save with easy to find file names)

(you will need this information to prove you are doing all you can, if it goes to prosecution for non-attendance or should you need to request alternative provision)
2. Keep a **paper trail of evidence**, by sending an email to school for every absence, explaining when and how your child has struggled and what you have tried.
3. Speak to your **GP or any other medical professionals involved** – can your child's needs (mental health/emotional wellbeing, depression, anxiety, school phobia, any other diagnoses impacting on ability to attend school) be put in writing and shared with the school/Local Authority Teams?
4. Speak to the **WSCC Pupil Entitlement Advice Line** – 0330 222 8200. Explain the background and reasons for your child's difficulties with school attendance prior to any school referral being made.
5. **Book an appointment** with the [WSCC Educational Psychology Telephone Consultation Service for parents/carers](#)
6. **Self-refer** to [WSCC Single Point of Access \(SPoA\)](#). This is a dedicated service which provides a simplified single route to access specialist emotional wellbeing and mental health support. The SPoA helps direct you to the right service, eliminating the need to refer to multiple services.
7. **Speak with the SENCO or Inclusion Manager** - Share that there is a problem as soon as possible with the SENCO as this could require SEN Support (or an EHC needs assessment). Work in partnership with the school to create a plan to help your child. This may involve Pastoral Care staff as well – but neither should be instead of the other.

Please see our 'School duties and School Resources factsheets for more information on schools strategies and referrals.

General questions to consider

- Is the anxiety/EBSA due to an unmet special educational need? (in which case is SEN Support or a request for an EHC needs assessment needed?)
- Are there any particular triggers, i.e. specific lessons, situations, staff, pupils, learning activities?

- Are the current difficulties due to a situation in the current specific school or would child/young person experience same feelings even if they moved settings?

Transitions as Flashpoints

Transitions from one school year to the next, and starting a new school, can be a major flashpoint – a change of routine or circumstances which can create a lot of anxiety. Your child may be more anxious about school at certain times of the school year but relatively settled at other times. If your child has a tendency to be anxious, it will be crucial to alert the school in advance and ensure they have a transition plan in place.

What can help in school?

- **Early identification** of the issues and a **quick response** to re-engaging with the pupil
- Develop a **Sunday evening plan** with the family and a special **Monday morning school plan**
- **Positive relationships** with educational staff
- **Positive peer relationships**
- **Develop a signal** with the child so they can communicate when they are overwhelmed e.g. show a card or use BSL
- Having a **designated area** in which to retreat if feeling under threat
- Having an **empathic adult** to talk issues through with
- **Planned transition** from primary to secondary school
- A **trusted adult** who can negotiate the timetable and support a more flexible approach
- **Lack of bullying**
- Opportunities to engage in **extra-curricular activities**
- A well organised and responsive **SEN department**
- Schools whose staff are **ALL** aware of the issues and how to deal with them
- A welcoming, nurturing context which promotes a sense of **belonging**

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More interventions, strategies and links to support can be found in our other EBSA factsheets.

Further information:

[WSCC EBSA Toolkit – Guidance for West Sussex schools by the Educational Psychology Service.](https://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/10483) Link: <https://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/10483>

West Sussex [SEND Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIAS\)](https://westsussexsendias.org/) have a website with several resources. Link: <https://westsussexsendias.org/> including guides and factsheets.



The [Local Offer](#) (includes information on EBSA)

Service Statement

The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their situation. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with any individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help in the circumstances. For more detail, view our [policies and privacy notice](#) on our website.

How to contact us: Tel: 0330 222 8555 / Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk or cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (up to age 25) / Website: www.westsussexsendias.org

To view factsheet online and access all links: <https://tinyurl.com/btwbxzep>

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