

Heath Hayes Academy



Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Guidance and Procedure

Audience:	Parents, school staff, Local Governing Bodies and Trustees
Approved:	Headteacher Sept 2025 – Sept 2028
Other related policies:	Safeguarding and Child Protection
Policy owner:	Headteacher
Review:	3 yearly, or more frequently if legal or statutory frameworks change
Version number:	1

EBSA concerns raised

This can look like:

- Child is finding it difficult to transition into the school building in the morning or finding it difficult to separate from parents/Carers.
- School attendance has reduced, is intermittent or there is non-attendance.
- Child is avoiding their classroom, lessons or parts of the school building.

The above concerns may also be linked to emotional factors, there are four main reasons for EBSA, these are:

1. To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, such as feelings of anxiety or low mood.
2. To avoid situations that might be stressful, such as academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment.
3. To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, such as parents or other family members.
4. To pursue tangible reinforcers outside of school, such as going shopping or playing computer games during school time.

Explore additional areas of need if necessary

- Are there concerns about an unidentified special educational need?
- Are there any significant mental health concerns?

Working with parents/carers and child

Prior to the scheduled meeting, school can provide parent/carer and child with the Emotionally Based School Avoidance Parent Workbook provided by Action for Children and linked below.

<https://reach2.sharepoint.com/sites/HeathHayes-SharedDrive/Shared%20Documents/Administration/Policies/Policies%202025%20-%202026/Emotional%20Based%20School%20Anxiety%20procedure%202025.docx>

Parent/Carer:

- Gather parent/carer views and narrative.
- Plan a graduated return to school – including discussion around home to school transition, routines at home and at school etc.
- Discuss how the child's emotional literacy can also be supported at home.

Child:

- Explore trigger events (obvious/ subtle/ gradual)
- Explore potential factors around parent health & family dynamic (if separation anxiety)
- Explore peer relationships and any changes (bullying/ isolation present?)
- What they find difficult in school (risks/ pull factors)
- What are their strengths and things they enjoy about school (resilience/ push factors)
- What is their level of emotional literacy?

The meeting should be a collaborative approach, discussing possible factors and barriers that may be behind the EBSA and reasonable adaptations that school and home can make to improve school attendance and child wellbeing.

Gather parent and child voice and provide an individualised action plan to support. In some cases, this may result in the implementation of a part-time timetable (PTTT).

Consideration should always be made about the child's safety and welfare before a PTTT is introduced. The PTTT must comply with Safeguarding best practice and a statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

Re-integration plan and part-time timetable

- Along with child & Parents, as well as through information gathered, plan the graduated return or reintegration into school/class to begin at the earliest opportunity using the PTTT paperwork. Parents and child (if applicable) must sign to agree to this.
- Ensure steps are small manageable, planned in advanced and never changed at the last minute
- Ensure adoptions/ supports are in place before the child starts.
- Ensure there are opportunities to experience success at each stage and engage in positive and enjoyable tasks.
- Be proactive - Prepare the child for difficulty.
- Explain how the child can access safe spaces/ regulation activities & how to ask for help (e.g. key adult/s)
- Ensure time is scheduled to check in with child at the end of any time in school to address issues and discuss what went well. Praise successes, no matter how small and in a way the child would find meaningful and helpful.

Review the current part-time timetable after 2-4 weeks

- Discuss what has been working well, and what may need to change.
- Set new targets and expectations in small and manageable steps
- Always aim to increase time in school, if in the best interests of the child, however in some cases, the time may need to be reduced based on other factors.
- All reviews must be signed by parents/carers