

# Emotionally Based School Absence (EBSA)

## What is Emotionally Based School Absence (EBSA)?

“**Truancy**” refers to pupils who deliberately avoid attending school, without their carer’s knowledge.

“**EBSA**” is when a child experiences extreme anxiety and distress in relation to attending school and as a result, remains absent or unfocused. Other phrases used have included: **School phobia, School avoidant, School refusal, School anxiety.**

## What are the causes?

Potential reasons for EBSA could include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Academic pressures                                  | Physical difficulties                                 |
| Home related worries                                | Concerns around Coronavirus/ diseases                 |
| Emotional developmental delay                       | Friendship issues or social anxiety                   |
| Testing and assessments                             | Learning difficulties                                 |
| Sensorial difficulties                              | Ineffective SEND support                              |
| Undiagnosed SEN or illness                          | Adolescent hormone and brain development              |
| Bullying or abuse                                   | Unstructured break times                              |
| Classroom disruption                                | Navigating around school or travel to and from school |
| Separation anxiety                                  | Changes to routines and staff and more!               |
| Not feeling difficulties are understood or believed |   |

## What are the signs/symptoms?

Children With Anxiety May...



Appear more clingy than normal



Be restless and fidgety



Complain of stomachaches



Display changes in eating and sleeping habits



Express negative thoughts or worries



Get upset or angry more quickly



Have bouts of unexplained crying



Struggle to concentrate

These signs and symptoms can be very distressing physically and mentally and can feel like something is seriously wrong. In relation to EBSA, children can also display a reluctance and/or avoidance against school related demands, such as getting dressed for school and/or leaving home. They may also repeatedly check things, seek reassurance, and struggle to make decisions.

**Anxiety Symptoms**

Other symptoms listed in the word cloud include: racing heart, nausea, brain zaps, falling sensation, difficulty breathing, chest pressure, tight band around the head, hearing loss, yawning, crazy thoughts, sweating, shaking, knot in stomach, weak legs, difficulty breathing, chest pain, blurred vision, lightheadedness, body jolts, dizziness, restful legs, giddiness, hot flash, night sweats, head pressure, body pain, bloating, memory loss, depersonalization, chronic fatigue, weak limbs, frequent urination, startle easy, anxietycentre.com, palpitations, sudden weight loss, lump in the throat, twitching, muscle tension, eye strain, tightness, numbness, facial tic, tingling, burning, swaying feeling, skin, stabbing pains, stuck thoughts, chest pain, bloating, memory loss, depersonalization, chronic fatigue, weak limbs, frequent urination, startle easy, anxietycentre.com.