



# Improving School Attendance Parent Workshop

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# Local Authority: 4 Core Duties



Communication  
and Advice

Targeting  
Support  
Meetings (TSMs)

Multi-  
Disciplinary  
Support

Legal  
Interventions

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# Did You Know?



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All parents have legal obligations to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education which includes, age, ability and any special educational needs they may have.

Section 7, Education Act 1996

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Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE – August 2024

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If your child is struggling to go to school, both their school and your local authority have a responsibility to help you to support your child's attendance.

Education Hub, DfE - GOV

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# Persistent Absences / Severe Absences



- The (DfE) defines pupils as **persistent absentees (PA)** if their attendance falls below 90%
- Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being **severely absent (SA)**

# Did You Know?



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90% attendance is the same as 20 missed school days.

Attendance Ladder, Twinkl

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The higher a pupil's attendance, the more they are likely to learn, and the better they are likely to perform in exams and formal assessments.

Education Hub, DfE - GOV

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It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

Is my child too ill for school, NHS

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# Illnesses



## Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

## High temperature

If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.

## Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

## Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis.

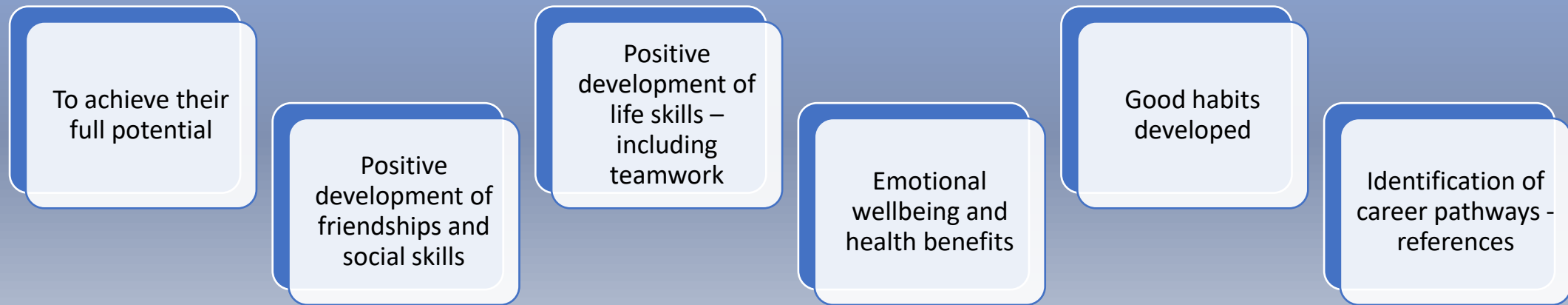
## Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

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# Why is attendance important?



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# Impacts of poor attendance



Staying at home - difficult to get up and get dressed and out of the house

Lack of motivation

Not able to socialise with friends at school

Missing out on extra-curricular activities inside and out of school

Becomes vulnerable - crime

Impacts of social media: low self-esteem, low self-worth

Missing out on work experience opportunities

Not enough GCSEs to progress into sixth form or college

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# EBSA – What is it?



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Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe pupils who experience severe difficulties in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

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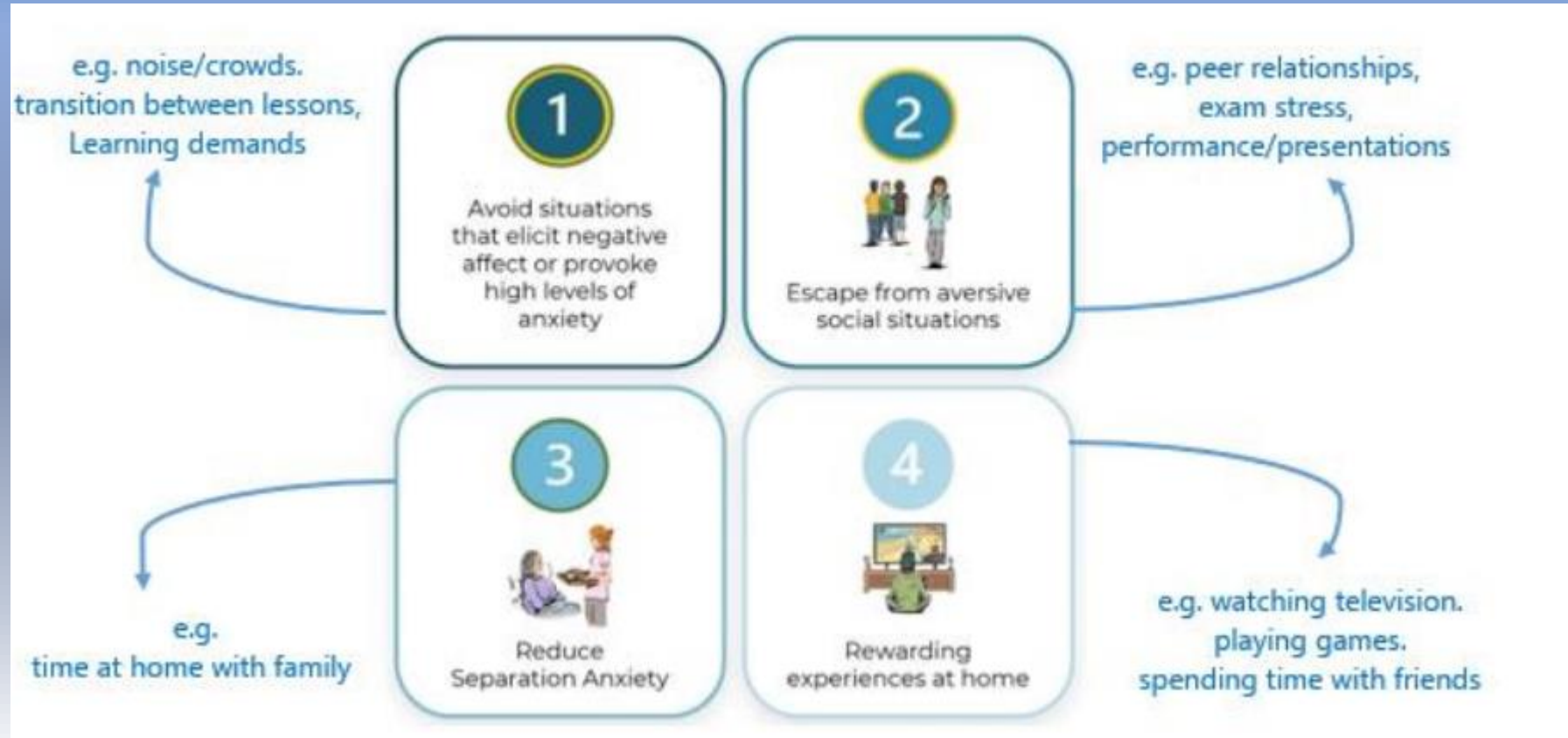
This is different from truancy, which refers to non-attendance at school without parent/carer knowledge.

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Young people of all ages and in all forms of educational settings can experience EBSA

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# Four Main Functions to school avoidance



## WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD?

Once you have identified possible indicators that your child is experiencing anxiety, together with the school, an action plan based on the main function of avoidance identified is required. The following provides tailored strategies based on the function of avoidance.

### Function 1: Avoiding uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school.

- Reassure your child that anxiety is a natural, normal feeling that everyone experiences. Read books together such as *'What to Do When You Worry Too Much'* by Dawn Huebner.
- ★ Irrespective of your own thoughts and feelings about school, ensure your child receives positive messages that school is safe and supportive. Managing your anxiety effectively is key to supporting your child.
- ★ Speak with your child to identify particular situations or events in school which seem to underpin their anxiety.
- Develop an action plan with your child and school with small steps for gradual exposure. Tell your child they are brave and you are proud of them for every small step they achieve.

### Function 2: Avoiding situations such as social pressures and academic demands.

- ★ Normalise anxiety in relation to high-stakes situations and help your child realise anxiety can be reduced.
- ★ Talk about social skills and provide opportunities for them to practise in real life social situations e.g. developing scripts to talk to peers and manage disputes.
- Discuss your child's concerns, and if they are demonstrating 'what if' thinking e.g. 'what if everyone laughs at me', follow up with gentle questions to help them reframe their thinking such as 'what's the chance that will happen?'
- Liaise with school to ensure changes are made to support the stressful situation e.g. differentiation in their learning, adjustments to exam situations, or a social club.

### Function 3: avoiding school due to separation anxiety.

- Provide time for your child to learn about anxiety and how this affects them.
- ★ Provide highly structured and consistent morning and evening routines even if they are not currently in school. They should be waking up at least 90 minutes before school starts, getting dressed and undertaking learning tasks during the day.
- Establish positive and individual time to spend with your child outside school hours and limit the attention they receive when they do not attend school. Ensure they are not spending time having 'fun' when at home.
- Read *'The Invisible String'* by Patrice Karst.
- Establish rewards for attending school and appropriate consequences if they do not.
- ★ Be aware of parental behaviours that unintentionally reinforce school avoidance. For example, jumping in too quickly to 'rescue' and allowing them to stay at home.

### Function 4: Avoiding school to pursue reward outside of school.

- Increasing rewards for attendance and disincentives for nonattendance. This can be negotiated using a 'contract' for everyone to agree.
- ★ Try to be calm, supportive, and consistent when communicating with your child about school, acknowledging their concerns and referring to the contract.
- ★ During school time, when your child is at home, ensure that the day represents school as much as possible so that home does not become a motivating factor. For example, sticking to school timings and completing activities at a table, whilst removing motivating activities such as TV or computer games.
- It may be necessary to escort your child to and from school.

# Attendance concerns



- Staged approach
- Letters, meetings (WHSG, Attendance and Punctuality Policy)
  
- Support to improve attendance
  
- Referred to Local Authority
  - Intervention
  - Legal action

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# What can you do?



- Encourage attendance
- Build resilience, positive role models
- Positive communication about your child's day
- Appointments – book outside of school hours
- Holidays – not during term time!
- Talk to the school – maintain good communication

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# Top tips



- Set clear night before routines e.g. Uniform set out, shoes by the door, bag packed -this sets intention
- Limit screen time before bed, low lighting, soft music, exercise, stretching, meditating,
- Limit caffeine fizzy drinks/ coffee 2 hours before bedtime
- Relaxing, breathing techniques – mindfulness, YouTube videos, writing down thoughts in a diary
- Breakfast , water – stay hydrated
- Homework, are they up to date, speak to head of year, form tutor if extra support is needed

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# Parenting Support Offer - Sutton Information Hub



## Here's some services you might be interested in

Your search: 4 results found

View as

Grid

Map

### Time out for Parents - Teen Years



Sutton Council (Family Hubs)

Group Free Family Hubs

2 locations

Eight sessions aimed at parents/carers of young people aged between 11-17 years wanting general advice and guidance, in supporting their young person's social, behavioural and emotional needs.

### EPEC (Being a Parent - Together Course)



Sutton Council (Family Hubs)

Group Free Family Hubs

Early Help

The Quad

Being a Parent - Together is a version of the Being a Parent programme, that has been adapted for couples and main carers who co-parent their children and who want to attend a parenting course

### Time out for Parents - Managing Anger in the Family



Sutton Council (Family Hubs)

Group Free Family Hubs

Tweeddale Children's Centre

Four parenting sessions to help you and your child understand, recognise and handle anger in a safe and healthy way.

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# Further resources

<https://www.sutton.gov.uk/children-and-families>

[Attendance Support for Parents and Carers – Cognus](#)

[Cognus-EBSA-guidance-for-parents-V2.pdf](#)

[Establishing a school routine | Family Lives](#)

[Morning routine planner.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Parent/carer information sheet \(cognus.org.uk\)](#)

[3 Ways to Have a Great Morning Routine Before School - wikiHow](#)



Any Questions? 😊

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