

## ***Is your child anxious about attending school?***

High anxiety levels together with difficulties in attending school could suggest your child is experiencing emotionally based school refusal. It is very important to catch emotionally based school refusal as soon as possible.

### ***What parents may notice***

- Child complains of physical symptoms just before leaving for school, e.g. feeling sick or a headache.
- If the child remains at home they quickly feel better.
- The symptoms reappear the next morning.
- They may just refuse to go giving no reason.
- They arrive at school later and later.
- They may lose their appetite
- They may become angry, defiant or distressed when asked to attend.
- They may sleep more/less and complain of being tired.
- They may have difficulty concentrating.

### ***Reasons for school refusal***

- Transition to secondary school
- Legitimate absence due to illness
- Family stress
- Academic problems/exam stress
- Illness in other family member
- Traumatic life event
- Parent returning to work
- Bullying
- Mid-year change of school
- Divorce/separation

## ***General Information about anxiety***

- It can occur in between 2 & 5% of young people
- It is more common in females
- It can be associated with depression
- It can increase with age
- It can have a long-term impact

### ***How can Parents Help?***

- Keep in touch with school about any absence. Communication is extremely important.
- Understand and acknowledge anxiety and school refusal.
- Talk to your child about their fears, help put them into perspective.
- Promote a coping 'can do' attitude.
- Emphasize positive aspects of school attendance, being with friends, attending favourite subjects.
- Have a calm morning routine.
- Have a united, consistent approach.
- Encourage interests that help with relaxation and build self-confidence.

### ***Why is school attendance important?***

- It helps them maintain a routine.
- It helps them keep up to date with school work and reduces the stress that can occur when they fall behind their peers.
- It helps them maintain friendships and social support.

### ***What can school do to help?***

- Provide a point of contact via house office or a specific member of staff.

- Address school issues of concern, academic support and anti-bullying.
- Facilitate a gradual return to school after an absence, over one or two weeks.
- Temporarily allow a flexible school day.
- Work with parents to monitor attendance.
- Advise on access to mental health services.
- Provide a safe place where students can go when feeling stressed or overwhelmed.
- Support parents efforts to get the student to school.
- Create a welcoming environment to help students connect with school and staff.

### ***Developing an attendance plan***

- Student to be involved in shaping the plan.
- To be written down, detailing arrival times and what to expect.
- Set achievable goals with a back-up plan.
- Include support needed to achieve goals.
- Gradual increase in expectations.
- Work towards main target – attendance and achievement.

### ***What about absence due to medical treatment?***

All students have these appointments, where possible we ask that these are made outside of school time. If it has to be in school time please inform us as soon as you know the time and date of the appointment.

This helps us ensure we both know where your child is and that they are safe.

## Support

**The sooner you seek help; the sooner school can work with you and other relevant professionals to help your child.**

We want to work together with you to support your child in their education and development. We want to promote a positive attitude towards school.

## Professionals' we work with on behalf of your child

- Education Welfare officer
- School health
- The Educational Psychologist
- GPs
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service. (CAMHS)

## Useful Web sites

Epic Friends [www.epicfriends.co.uk](http://www.epicfriends.co.uk)

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Royal College of Psychiatrists  
[www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Aldridge School  
Tynings Lane,  
Aldridge,  
Walsall,  
WS9 0BG



[www.aldridgeschool.org](http://www.aldridgeschool.org)



## Do you need further information?

The following services are available to help:

Aldridge School **01922 743988**

Walsall Children's Services **01922 653383**

YoungMinds Parent Service **0800 0182138**

Childline (24 hour helpline) **0800 1111**

Parentline **0808 8002222**

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) **01922 607400**

## Anxiety and

*Missed lessons = missed opportunities*

## School Refusal

**A guide for parents and carers**

