

How can parents help their child experiencing EBSA?

Listen to your child

Communication with your child key. Supporting them and letting them know you take their concerns seriously and believe them is important to be able to keep trust and try and move the situation forward. Ask what's worrying them and what it is about school that makes them not want to go. Stay as calm as you can, focusing on listening and providing emotional support. Reassure them that you can work together to make things better.

Be consistent

Be consistent with the strategies you try to help them get back to school. Think with them about changes that could be made at school, at home or in their daily routine to help them feel less worried. Remember that it might take a while for something to work. Changing between lots of strategies quickly can be confusing, so only move on when you've tried something for a while without it helping. Praise them for each step they take.

Managing the Anxiety

Talk with your child about strategies that help them to express and manage their anxiety. This could be spending time with particular friends, listening to music, reading, playing sport, drawing, cooking, watching a favourite film, to give a few examples. They might find it helpful to make a [worry box](#) and/or a [self soothe box](#). There are also more ideas in this [Autism anxiety resource pack](#)

Document Everything

Create a paper trail of evidence documenting everything relevant to your child's struggles and your efforts to resolve things and find help - you may need this if absence leads to threats of prosecution. Keep a diary and file in date order. For example:

- Describe what happens daily with your child – what they say or do, if you are able
- Make a log of the days when your child doesn't want to go to school. This will give you a better sense of when and how often they feel like this, and can also help you raise it with the school
- Record evidence of the action you and the school are taking in writing. Keep notes and records of all conversations with school or medical staff. Follow up conversations with written summaries, and ask for written confirmation of any verbal agreements
- Keep records of all medical appointments and any assessments or meetings
- Keep all relevant letters and print outs of emails
- For every absence send an email to school detailing why, each time

Further practical advice

Work together with the school, see more on the next pages of our EBSA factsheet

Not Fine in School [Resources Page](#)

Our [EBSA webinar](#) on Youtube

Go and see a GP

Explain the difficulties your child is experiencing and ask for the GP's help, which could include:

- Referring your child to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). This is the NHS service that assesses and treats young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
- Writing to the school to confirm that they suspect your child has an anxiety disorder and is currently medically unfit to attend school. Please note that GP's do not have a statutory duty to provide informal sick notes for children.
- Documenting anxiety symptoms and any other difficulties in your child's medical records (for evidence if needed)

Look after yourself

- School attendance difficulties can be very stressful for parents and can affect the whole family. Consider seeking medical advice & support for your own health.
- Employment commitments can be problematic. Consider seeking advice regarding Work and Benefits. [Citizens advice](#)
- Remember that you are not alone. There are other parents experiencing the same issues. Consider linking up with local [Parent support groups](#)