Emotionally Based School Absence (EBSA)

Information Summary Sheet

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 signs/symptoms?

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.

What are the causes?

Potential reasons for EBSA could include:

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