

Understanding EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance)

A Supportive Guide for Families

What is EBSNA?

EBSNA occurs when a child struggles to attend school due to emotional distress, like anxiety or stress. Unlike truancy, these children want to attend, but overwhelming feelings make it feel impossible.

Key Features

- ✓ Emotional distress linked to school
- ✓ Not truancy driven by anxiety
- ✓ Avoidance as a coping strategy
- √ Often develops gradually with complex causes

Common Signs & Causes

- Emotional distress: anxiety, panic, sadness
- Physical symptoms: headaches, stomach aches
- Avoidance behaviours: refusal to get ready or leave home
- Causes include child-specific factors (e.g., anxiety, autism), school environment, and family dynamics

How Families Can Help

- Stay calm and supportive
- Seek advice from GP or Educational Psychologist
- Work with school on a gradual reintegration plan
- Celebrate small steps and progress
- Focus on resilience and coping strategies

What We Do at Meadow Pathways

We create safe, nurturing environments, develop personalised support plans, and work with families to help children build confidence and thrive.

Space

HOW: Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views

- Have children's views been actively sought?
- Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves
- Have steps been taken to ensure that

Voice

HOW: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views

- Have children been given the
- Do children know that they do not
- Have children been given a range options as to how they might

Audience

HOW: Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

- Is there a process for
 semmunicating children's views
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- power to make decisions?

Influence

HOW: Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

- Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children's views hav
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?