

Help
With

Emotional School Avoidance - Support for Parents

When caring for a child that displays school refusal, it can become all-consuming and very overwhelming to manage alongside other responsibilities. It is very important to seek support for yourself and advice on how you can best cope with it. Be sure to reach out to your child's school as soon as you can and prioritise creating continual communication with them. Share your concerns with your child's teachers, as well as sharing insight into your child's behaviour and anxiety surrounding school. This will allow their teachers to help you in this process and make beneficial changes for them inside the classroom as well as at home.

If your child's refusal and their emotional reactions to school are intensifying it is crucial to seek support for them from mental health professionals as soon as possible. This will help to lift some of the pressure you may be feeling, as counsellors can also be an advocate for the child with the school and help to push for changes to be made. It also ensures that your child has multiple people that are supporting them, creating a safe support network not only helps them to feel cared for but also allows you to share some of the responsibility.

Whilst it is important to encourage your child to see a mental health professional, reaching out to receive help yourself is also incredibly beneficial. Experiencing and watching the anxiety of your child can be distressing and scary. Having people to share your worries with and offload will help you feel less alone in this situation and aid you in offering level-headed support to your child as well.

Specific resources can help you to support your child in the process of getting back to school. Every school will have an education welfare officer these individuals can be met with, and you can discuss any issues your child is having directly. Additionally, SENAC offer services to help children and parents with specific educational needs locally, every school will have contact details for this service, or they can be found online to seek free and independent advice.

If you are struggling to manage and find that your child staying out of school is impacting on your ability to attend or complete work, be sure to share this with your employer. Having an honest conversation about your concerns and discussing the support they may be able to offer you such as parental leave may begin to make the scenario feel more manageable. Dealing with not only your worries, but also the time required to support your child properly can make it difficult to prioritise your other responsibilities. So, communication with those around you, including employers, can really help you to feel more supported and that your hopes for the situation are achievable.

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Helplines:

- Parenting Focus support line: 0808 8010 722
- Young Minds Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544
- SENAC: 028 9079 5779

Sources:

<https://childmind.org/article/when-kids-refuse-to-go-to-school/>

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/school-life/school-behaviour-wellbeing/coping-school-refusal/#where-can-i-get-help>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/#Helpingyourchildreturntoschoolafteranabsence>