From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Information for Schools and Professionals

June 2022

Introduction

Through Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) procedures Aberdeenshire schools work in partnership with other agencies and professionals to promote positive school attendance and well-being for all pupils. We recognise the protective value of regular school attendance and its impact of personal and social development as well as academic attainment and achievement. GIRFEC approaches follow a staged assessment and intervention to ensure the correct support is received at the correct time - with an emphasis on early intervention.

Aberdeenshire schools are expected to embody a nurturing ethos which supports and meets the needs of all pupils. This guide has been created for schools to develop their understanding and ability to support children and young people who find it difficult to consistently attend and positively engage in school.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a framework to support planning for children and young people who experience emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). The guidance follows a staged approach to support and intervention in keeping with GIRFEC procedures.

With Thanks to:

Solar and Solihull Community Educational Psychology Service (CEPS) and West Sussex Educational Psychology Service for giving us permission to adapt their resources.

Focusing on promoting school attendance and psychological well-being

School attendance is not only important for academic achievement, but to support the holistic development of young people as citizens within their community (Pellegrini, 2007).

Poor school attendance is linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships; emotional and behavioural difficulties and poorer employment opportunities. Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community. Lack of school connectedness has been associated with a range of poor outcomes including attainment, wellbeing and involvement in offending behaviours. Attendance and participation are also protective factors for children and young people experiencing adversity or trauma and can support early intervention. (Included, Engaged, Involved part 1 2019).

Some pupils experience significant difficulties in attending school leading to prolonged periods of non-attendance. There can be many underlying factors which have contributed to this non-attendance. Karney and Silverman (1990)cited in Lauchlan (2007) identified four main reasons for non-attendance by pupils:

1. *To avoid the experience of severe anxiety or fearfulness related to attending school*
2. *To avoid social situations that are feared, or which cause anxiety*
3. *To seek attention or to reduce feelings of separation anxiety*
4. *To enjoy rewarding experiences that non-attendance at school may bring.*

Every pupil is an individual and therefore their personal situation must be understood to enable those working within them to create a bespoke support package.
This guidance is based on the current evidence base of the factors which are associated with positive outcomes. These include:

- Early intervention
- Collaborative working: working with families, school staff and the young person
- Person centred assessment, planning and intervention according to individual needs
- Emphasis on the need for a quick return to the educational setting alongside intervention, support and adaptations with the school and home environment (Baker and Bishop, 2015).

Definitions of non-attendance (Solihull Guidance 2020)

It is helpful to unpack the definitions around non-attendance as these have evolved over time. Previous terms include 'school phobia', 'school refusal', 'school withdrawal' and 'truancy' (Kearney, 2008, Pellegrini, 2007). More recent definitions used within practice include 'emotionally based school avoidance' as coined by West Sussex Educational Psychology (2018). See definitions below:

Truancy: 'generally refers to unexcused, illegal, surreptitious absences, non-anxiety-based absenteeism, absenteeism linked to lack of parental knowledge about the behaviour, absenteeism linked to delinquency or academic problems, or absenteeism linked to social conditions such as homelessness or poverty' (Kearney, 2008, p.452).

School phobia: 'generally refers to fear-based absenteeism, but youths are rarely phobic of school and so this term has been deemphasized in recent research literature (Hanna, Fischer, & Fluent, 2006; Suveg, Aschenbrand, and Kendall, 2005)' (Kearney, 2008, p.453).

School withdrawal: where parents deliberately keep a child home from school for economic purposes, to conceal maltreatment, to prevent abduction from an estranged spouse, to protect a child from perceived school-based threat, to assist a parent with psychopathology, or for other reasons (Kearney, Lemos and Silverman, 2004)' (Kearney, 2008, p.452)

School refusal: 'generally refers to anxiety-based absenteeism, often from separation, generalized, or social anxiety' (Kearney, 2008, p.452). School refusal is a psychosocial phenomenon defined by a prolonged absence from school, with parents'/carers' knowledge, and the prospect of going to school causing severe distress (Maynard et al, 2015, Berg, 1997). Kearney and Silverman (1993) proposed school refusal occurs when children experience lowered anxiety through avoidance of the school setting, which results in negative reinforcement.

Emotionally based school avoidance: a 'broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school' (West Sussex Guidance, 2018, p.3).

What is emotionally based school avoidance?

Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) is a 'broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school' (West Sussex Guidance, 2018, p.3). The term EBSA is used rather than 'school refusal', as children and young people in this situation often have a desire to attend and are not refusing, they simply feel as though they cannot attend. The children and young people concerned often experience emotional upset or dysregulation and may feel overwhelmed. In these instances, the easiest way to cope is to avoid school - this is defined as a maladaptive coping strategy.

The onset of emotionally based school avoidance is most common during adolescence and the onset may be sudden or gradual. It is equally common in males and females (Kearney, 2008).

Kearney,1990, cited in Lauchlan (2007) highlighted the importance of understanding the underlying reasons for children and young people's avoidance. This is important in order to intervene appropriately with the most effective supports. As highlighted earlier, Kearney identified four potential functions of emotionally based school avoidance: avoiding school related stressors, avoiding social situations and/or activities, attention needing and reinforcing activities (see Table 1 for further description). These four functions can be separated into two categories: negatively reinforcing and positively reinforcing.

Table 1: Four functions of school non-attendance (Kearney, 2008) (taken from Solihull)

	Function	Description
Negatively reinforcing	Avoiding school related stressors	• This describes a child's/young person's non-attendance with school-related activities due to negative mood, feelings or attitudes or general anxiety linked with these activities. • School-related activities may describe activities such as classroom transitions, entry into school and the journey to school etc. • Some children/young people may struggle to engage with school-based activities 'to avoid uncomfortable feelings brought …, such as feelings of anxiety or low mood' (WSCC, 2018, p.4).
	Avoiding social situations and/or activities	• This describes the child's/young person's difficulty in engaging with peers and/or adults within school, or a difficulty with evaluative situations such as exams, speaking/reading aloud in class, class sports, presenting and eating around others at lunchtimes etc.

		• These situations may involve social pressures, academic demands and other elements of the school environment e.g. lunch and break times, assemblies. • Some children/young people may therefore avoid these types of situations as they may be anxiety inducing.
Positively reinforcing	Attention needing	• This describes children/young people struggling to engage in school activities because they prefer to remain at home or with a significant adult (e.g. parent, carer). • In these cases, the children/young people may not view the school as negative, and the function of non-attendance with school may be associated with separation anxiety and the desire to remain with a significant adult.
	Reinforcing activities	• This describes children/young people who wish to remain outside of the school setting as they perceive activities outside of school to be more positive e.g. playing videogames at home, spending time with family/friends at home etc

Risk factors of emotionally based school avoidance

Some children and young people are at a higher risk of non-attendance. Understanding these risk factors can inform early intervention. Emotionally based school avoidance is typically a combination of factors that lead to patterns of behaviour.

Environmental/contextual risk factors

As a school, it is important to consider how environmental and contextual factors may be promoting and/or maintaining non-school attendance. These include; school ethos and environment; curriculum, teaching and learning; parent/carer attitudes, and family and community (see Table 2 below for examples).

Table 2: Environmental and contextual risk factors for school Non-attendance

Risk Factor	Description
School ethos and environment	A young person may: • experience bullying (found to be the most common school factor). • have a lack of involvement in extracurricular activities. • perceive behaviour management policies/approaches to be punitive and harsh. • feel unsafe within the school environment. • lack a sense of belonging within the school setting. • have poor relationships with teaching staff. • not feel valued. • fall through the net due to poor attendance processes within the setting.
Curriculum, teaching and learning	A young person may: • struggle to access the curriculum due to lack of appropriate differentiation and/or unrecognised needs. • perceive lessons as boring. • not feel supported with academic or other additional needs. • perceive learning tasks to be unachievable. • lack opportunities to experience success in their learning.
Parent/carer attitudes	Parents/carers may: • have little involvement or interest in their child's academic lives. • adopt a disciplinary approach to school Non-attendance. • have poor relationships, difficult interactions and/or conflict with school professionals. • have experienced difficulties within their own education.
Family/community	A young person may: • have experienced high levels of conflict within the home. • have parents/carers who have difficulty caring for them due to lack of capacity. • live with parents/carers who have mental health difficulties. • live in unsafe or problematic neighbourhoods.

Kearney (2008)

Anxiety and non-attendance

Anxiety can be a key feature of school non-attendance for many young people. Anxiety can present with psychological and physical symptoms (e.g. shortness of breath, palpitations, hot flushes, nausea, needing the toilet more, headaches and blushing). Sometimes anxious feelings can lead to a child struggling to get into school or missing a significant amount of school and that is when it becomes EBSA. When the anxiety is linked to school non-attendance, the young person may experience anxious and fearful thoughts around attending school and their ability to cope with school. These feelings may also be accompanied by physiological symptoms of anxiety such as nausea, vomiting, shaking, sweating etc., and may start the night before, or even a few days before school. These symptoms often dissipate at times of school holidays and breaks (Solihull guidance,2020).

In order to avoid these overwhelming emotions and the fear associated with school attendance the young person may withdraw from the situation, refusing to get ready for school or to leave the house or enter the school. The young person may also turn to hostile behaviours as a means to avoid the threatening situation and to try and control what feels like a very 'out-of-control' situation (Thambirajah et al., 2008).

Children and young people who suffer from anxiety related non-attendance can often find themselves stuck in a negatively reinforcing cycle, as shown in the diagram below:

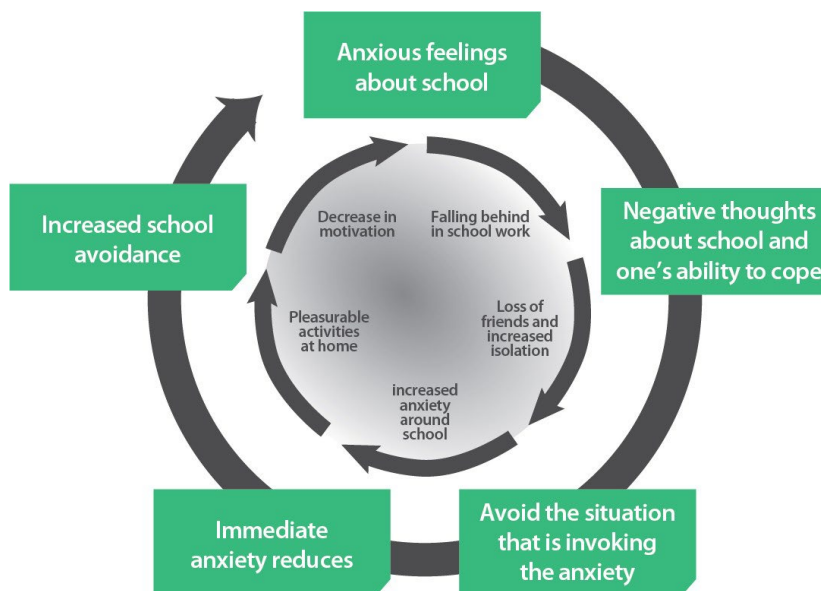*Figure 1. Diagram showing the initial anxiety causing the non-attendance and the secondary maintenance factors (taken from West Sussex EBSA guidance, 2018).*

What is most important from this diagram is that the sense of relief that comes from avoiding the situation acts as a powerful re-enforcer for the avoidance of anxiety. The relief 'rewards' the avoidance behaviour while at the same time undermining the

young person's belief in their ability to handle the situation. This can lead to a further vicious circle with anxiety increasing over time (West Sussex EBSA Guidance, 2018).

Autism and Anxiety

Tyler (2016) suggests that 'given the nature of the condition, young people with Autism have a lot to be anxious about.' Studies indicate that between 11% and 84% of autistic children experience some degree of impairing anxiety. A developmental and preventative approach to understanding how anxiety develops and how it may interact with the core features of Autism is important. Adapting our approaches and environment in a manner which is understanding and responsive to each individual is a key intervention to prevent, support and reduce anxiety for our young people.

For more information please refer to the Autism ALDO course.

The Autism Education Trust website cites three key areas of difference which create high levels of stress and anxiety for autistic young people, and this can have an impact on an individual's wellbeing, behaviour and attendance.

1. Sensory processing difficulties

Differences in perceiving sensory information, including: hypo (low)/hyper (high) sensitivity, touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular inner ear (balance), proprioceptive (body awareness). For further support in understanding Sensory Processing difficulties please refer to the *ALDO course Understanding Sensory Behaviours.* Course: Understanding Sensory Behaviours (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

2. Interests and information processing

Differences in perception, planning, understanding concepts, generalising, predicting, managing transitions, passions for interests and ability to absorb auditory or spoken information.

3. Communication

Differences in understanding and expressing communication and language, with skills ranging from individuals who are highly articulate, to others who may be non–verbal. Good language skills may mask a deep level of misunderstanding.

Schools are complex social environments that autistic children can often find overwhelming and exhausting; they are spending cognitive energy managing this social experience and can become overloaded.

Given the increased risk of an autistic child experiencing high levels of anxiety that may lead to school avoidance, it is essential that there is early intervention and support given to developing the child's social skills, emotional literacy, resilience and

their ability to self-regulate. It is also important to build an individual profile of children and young people and their support needs - responding to and meeting the individual needs of autistic young people can contribute to positive school attendance. Autistic children and young people benefit from bespoke coping plans and strategies that can be used when they are feeling overwhelmed.

For further information on Anxiety related absence and Autism please see NAIT Anxiety Related Absence Guidance 2020.pdf (autismtoolbox.co.uk) and

EBSA - Autism Guidance.pdf (westsussex-local-offer.s3.amazonaws.com)

Targeted Support

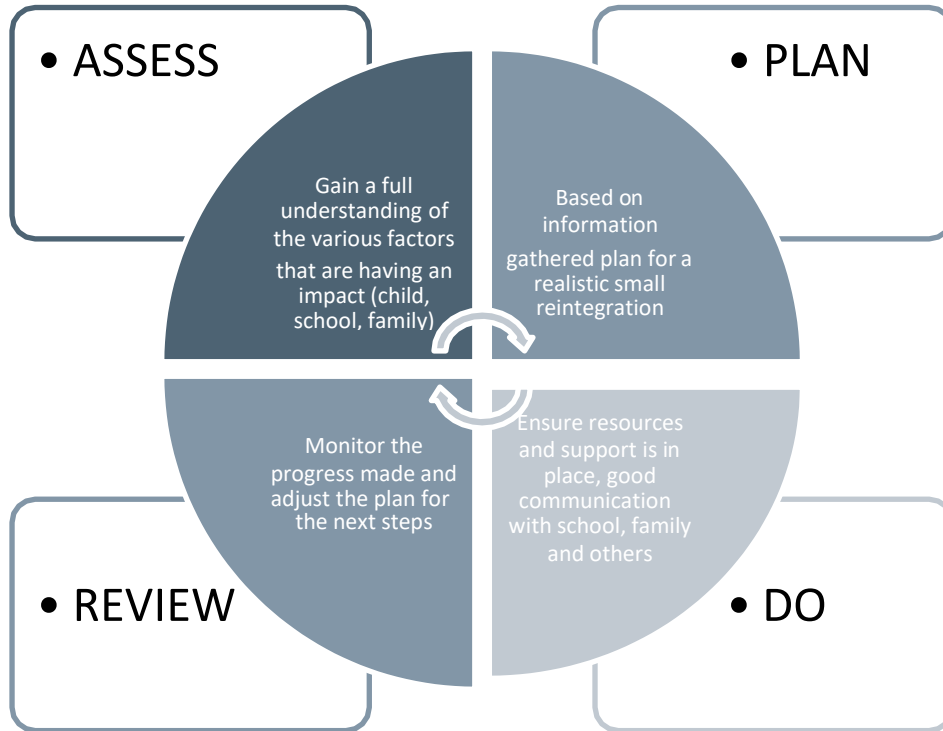## Assessment and Intervention

It is important that all staff have an awareness and understanding of the possible risk factors for emotionally based school avoidance in order to ensure early intervention. Please see Table 3 below which outlines some possible early indicators of emotionally based non-attendance (those you may notice before the child/young person's patterns of behaviour become entrenched).

Table 3: Indicators of Emotionally based non-attendance (Solihull Guidance 2020)

Early indicators of emotionally based school avoidance	Indicators of emotionally based school avoidance
- Sporadic attendance and/or lateness. - Parent reporting that child/young person does not want to come to school - Physical signs of stress believed to be linked to stress (e.g. stomach ache, sickness, headache) or complaining of feeling ill - Behavioural changes or fluctuations e.g. interactions with others, reduced motivation and engagement in learning tasks.	- Periods of prolonged absence - Persistent lateness - Parent/carer is unable to support child/young person to attend school - Identifiable patterns within non-school attendance e.g. specific days, subjects, staff members - Providing minor reasons for school absences - Child/young person experiences anxiety in relation to home factors e.g. parental separation, divorce, conflict, loss, bereavement - Child/young person displays greater reliance upon family members e.g. separation anxiety, increased proximity - Concerns around academic progress due to non-school attendance/missed education - Child/young person displays increased anxiety in relation to their learning and/or poor self-concept as a learner - Low self-esteem and/or lack of confidence - Struggling in relation to peer relationships and/or social situations - Physical signs of stress believed to be linked to stress (e.g. stomach ache, sickness, headache) or complaining of feeling ill - Displays of emotional dysregulation and/or distress.

Where risks of emotionally based school avoidance are identified, it is important to gather further information from the young person, families and school staff involved with the young person and put in place strategies to support them **as soon as possible.** Prompt and timely action can prevent patterns of non-attendance from becoming entrenched and result in much better outcomes. It is helpful for the

schools to follow an assess, plan, do and review cycle with the young person at the centre of the planning and interventions.

- ASSESS

Gain a full understanding of the various factors that are having an impact (child, school, family)

- PLAN

Based on information gathered plan for a realistic small reintegration

- REVIEW

Monitor the progress made and adjust the plan for the next steps

- DO

Ensure resources and support is in place, good communication with school, family and others

Information Gathering (Assessment)

Once there has been a difficulty identified in school, through regular monitoring, a prompt information gathering process should begin. This can be started by a class teacher, Principal Teacher of Guidance (PTG), Pupil Support Worker (PSW) or Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) - or anyone with a relationship with the child/young person. The main aims of this are to gather information regarding the various child, family and school factors that may be contributing to the emotionally based school avoidance experienced by the child. It is important that careful consideration is given to how to genuinely seek the voice of the child/young person in a meaningful way. Following GIRFEC approaches a holistic approach to assessment should be taken using the My World Triangle and the SHANNARI approach.

For more information and support on assessment please see the GIRFEC Aberdeenshire Portal (Course: GIRFEC: Assessment and Chronologies (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
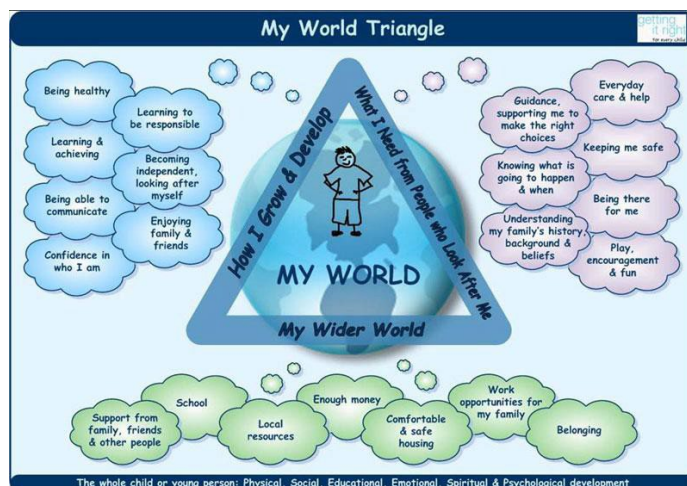
Understanding the reasons for school avoidance

Understanding the specific reasons for non-attendance will help to inform the appropriate interventions and supports for the child/young person. It is helpful for the child/young person to share their views with a trusted person with whom they have a relationship.

Examples of possible tools:

- *The School Refusal Assessment Scale (*SRAS-child-version.pdf (schoolavoidance.org) is an example of a tool which can be used, alongside other information gathering tools, to understand the function and root causes of the non-attendance.
- The West Sussex Profile of Risk of emotionally based school avoidance (Appendix 1) can be used to gather a profile of the young person and their

specific circumstances. EBSA_Guidance_-_Profile_of_Risk_of_EBSA.docx (live.com)

- RISE questionnaire RISE Assessment: Children's Wellbeing and Resilience Profiles (edpsyched.co.uk)

Other person centred and person construct tools/approaches can be used to understand the perspective of the child/young person. Person Centred Planning | (glowscotland.org.uk)

It is important to remember that any child/young person currently avoiding school may become anxious when asked to discuss returning; they are managing their feelings of anxiety by employing avoidant behaviour, so any talk about going back may raise their anxiety as you are proposing taking away their coping mechanism. It can be good to start with an acknowledgment of their feelings and returning to school could be difficult. It is important that the adult working with them does not dismiss anxieties or worries, all feelings are valid.

Working with Families and gaining views

Non-attendance can have a significant impact on the dynamics of a family (emotional and physical). For example, a pupil who regularly does not attend can affect a care giver's employment. It is important that time is taken to build positive relationships with families in the best interests of the young person. It is important to show empathy and understanding and acknowledge the difficulties and potential stress for all within the family. There should be ongoing and regular contact with families throughout the assess, plan, do and review cycles and schools should identify a key person to communicate with parents/carers.

Working with school staff and gaining views

It is important to ensure that information from all staff who work closely with the child/young person experiencing difficulties. For a secondary young person, it is helpful to gather information from different subject staff to create a holistic picture of what is working or not working in different contexts. Each member of staff may have valuable information to help identify triggers for anxiety and strategies the young person responds positively to. It is helpful to establish which staff have positive relationships with the young person.
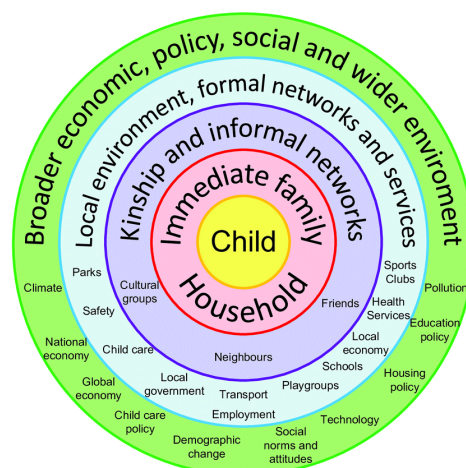
Analysing and understanding behaviours

Following the gathering of information from the child, family, school and other professionals the next step is to make sense of this information. It is important to look beyond the immediate presenting information and consider underlying feelings and needs. Looking at the information gathering, what is reinforcing (positively or negatively - see page 5) the non-attendance? It is important to check out your analysis with the young person and their families. This information should then inform the intervention and return to school support plan.

In order to understand the cause of emotionally based school avoidance, professionals must consider the child/young person's underlying needs and how these may be contributing towards their presenting behaviour. It can be helpful to consider what the function of the behaviour is and what it may be communicating. Try to separate behaviours from feelings and underlying needs.

Systemic thinking

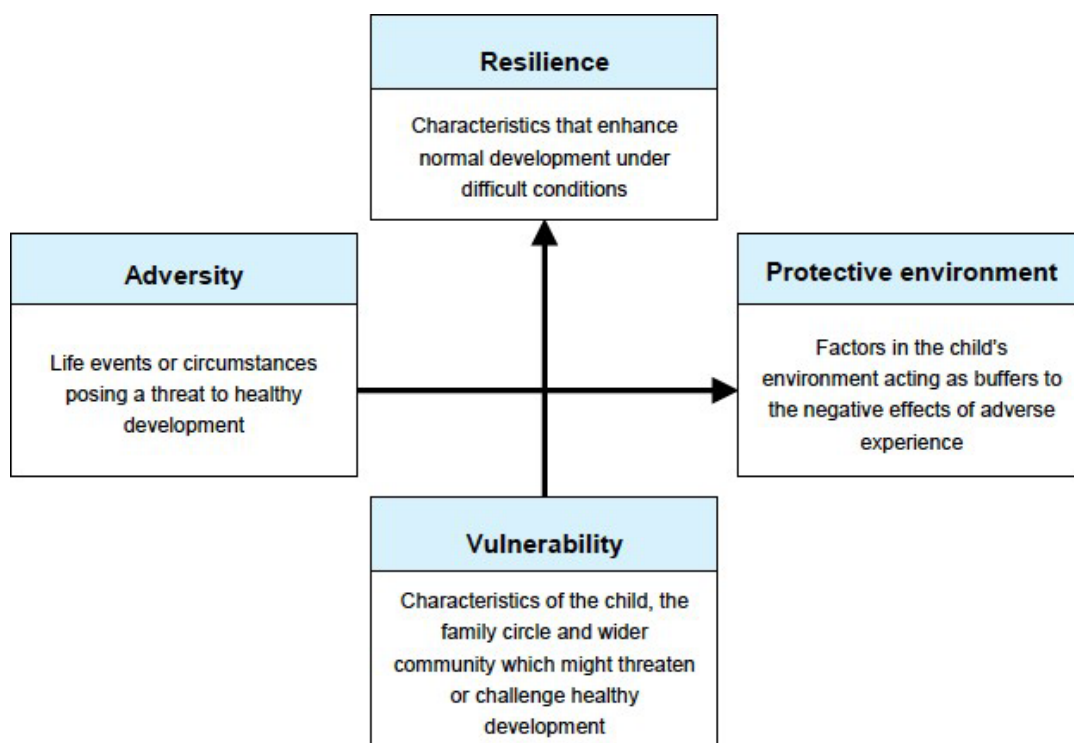According to the ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) everything within a child and his/her environment affects the way they grow and develop. As such, assessment needs to consider the different systems around a child in order to provide support at the right time and in the right place.

With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Solar & Solihull community Educational Psychology Service

Risk and protective Factors

The diverse range of influencers that may exist across a child/young person's systems are often referred to in the literature as 'risk' and 'protective' factors:

- Risk factors: influencing factors that reduce the likelihood of child/young person engaging in school.
- Protective factors: influencing factors that promote child/young person engaging in school.
- Risk and protective factors are likely to be present across systems. The balance between these factors is likely to fluctuate. It is helpful to gather the information about the risk and protective factors which may be affecting school attendance.
- The resilience matrix can be used to support deeper analysis and to help make sense of the information. For more information on analysis please see the Aberdeenshire GIRFEC portal on ALDO Course: GIRFEC: Assessment and Chronologies (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

Resilience

Characteristics that enhance normal development under difficult conditions

Adversity

Life events or circumstances posing a threat to healthy development

Protective environment

Factors in the child's environment acting as buffers to the negative effects of adverse experience

Vulnerability

Characteristics of the child, the family circle and wider community which might threaten or challenge healthy development

Defining the young person's needs

Through the gathering and analysis of information from the young person you will be adding to your overall understanding of their specific additional needs. It is important to have a clearly articulated and understood picture of these needs which is accessible to all staff who work with/may work with the young person. This may be captured within a single agency or multi-agency assessment, an individual support profile, a one-page profile or an Individual Education Plan**.**

Intervention planning and implementation

It is important to not jump to intervention planning without properly gathering and analysing the information about the presenting reasons and underlying reasons for non-attendance. Interventions and support should be individually tailored to the specific needs of the individual. The intervention and support plan (or action plan) should be collaboratively produced with the team around the child, including their family. The young person's voice and views are vital. The action planning process could be at single or multi-agency level.

The outcomes on the action plan should be individual to that child/young person and therefore each plan will be different. The desired outcomes should be clear and actions to meet these desired outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely). It is likely that the return will be gradual and graded, however this will depend on the circumstances for the individual. A part time timetable may be necessary as part of this process, but this should always be temporary and not seen as a long-term option as all children are entitled to a full-time education. For further guidance on part-time timetables please see Pupils-not-in-full-time-education-guidance-vs1.1.pdf (asn-aberdeenshire.org)

Sometimes things do not always go to plan and young people should be supported to "try again" if appropriate, the next day - we all have an off day. It is important to review the plan and to get the young person's feedback in case things need to be changed. It should be anticipated that there is likely to be more difficulties following a weekend, illness or school holiday.

At the start of the planning cycle the young person may show more distress and everyone involved should be aware of this and work together to agree firm, consistent approaches. A unified approach is recommended between all involved and any concerns should be communicated away from the young person.

Key elements of a plan

The literature in this area has identified key elements of support that should be in place in order to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration. These are:

- A return to school at the earliest opportunity
- Early home visits if appropriate to discuss the young person's difficulties attending school
- Everyone involved (team around the child) agree actions and keep them until the next review date
- A personalised programme for each young person
- Ensuring the young person's needs are clearly communicated with all staff in the setting

- Identification of a key member of staff who can be approached by the young person if anxiety becomes temporarily overwhelming in school
- A safe space in school that the young person can go if needed (they may need more than one)
- Consideration of what support the family requires.

External agency support

Following GIRFEC protocols external advice and guidance can be sought if professionals are unsure or under confident planning or implementing interventions, and in instances where:

- The young person has significant, on-going mental health needs or a history of such.
- The young person is on a waiting list for therapeutic support with an external agency.
- The young person is unable to come into school building despite ongoing intervention.

Interventions

As part of the school's staged approach following the plan, do, review process, it is important that evidence-based interventions are offered to young person to support them to reduce the barriers to non-school attendance.

Questions to ask when considering whether a school-based intervention is appropriate:

- Is the young person in the right place emotionally and psychologically to access an intervention?
- Does the child want to change their behaviour? What is their readiness to change?
- Is the environment able to facilitate and harness change?
- Are parents/carers in agreement of such support?
- Does the young person require more specialist/targeted mental health support?
- When would you stop an intervention?
- What are the aims of the intervention? How will you know once you have achieved them?
- What pre and post measures can you use to monitor impact over time?
- Is there someone who could deliver this intervention that the young person has a good connection with?
- Is the person delivering the intervention adequately trained?

- Does the person delivering the intervention have access to adequate support and supervision?
- Is an individual intervention appropriate given the young person's needs, or are the issues broader (e.g. across home, neighbourhood) and require multi-agency support?

Monitoring and evaluating interventions

As with all interventions, it is crucial that we monitor the impact of the interventions that we utilise. By assessing the young person's progress in response to the intervention, adaptations can be made accordingly and we can identify an appropriate end point.

Data collection can take the form of qualitative and/or qualitative measures, such as:

- Quantitative data: attendance figures and progress data
- Qualitative data: such as exploring the views and experiences of young person's and families or measuring behavioural changes

APPENDIX 1: Profile of risk of emotional based school avoidance guidance

(West Sussex Guidance, 2018)

The Profile of Risk schedule consists of five key areas, each of which contains a number of items you are asked to consider in terms of their possible importance in influencing emotionally based attendance difficulties.

You should be as objective as possible when completing the schedule and base assessments on evidence.

During the process of completing the schedule, it may be useful to note factors associated with particular items, such as:

During the process of completing the schedule, it may be useful to note factors associated with particular items, such as:

- This has been an issue in the past, but doesn't appear to be now.
- This has been an issue in the past and has persisted as an important item.

Items on the scale are not rated numerically, like a typical rating scale, as one single item (e.g. death of a parent) is so important it cannot be rated in the same way other items might be rated.

If the profile suggests to you that the child/young person is at risk of emotionally based school avoidance, the next step would be to obtain the views of the young person, parents and other staff.

	Level of concern				
Loss and Change	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Death of parent, relative, friend					
Death of pet					
Sudden traumatic event					
Sudden separation from parent					
Moving house, school, area					

With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Solar & Solihull community Educational Psychology Service

Loss of classmate					
Parent, relative, friend illness					

Note on key items

Family Dynamic	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Inappropriate parenting					
Birth of new child					
Parents separated					
Parents arguing/fighting					
Practical problems bringing child to school					
Problems with parental control					
Jealous of sibling at home					

Note on key items

Social Personal	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Being bullied					
Seems to have few friends/friendship issues					
English as an additional language					
Dislikes play/break times					
Few leisure interests					

Note on key items

Curriculum/Learning issues	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Low levels of literacy					
PE and/or games issues					
General learning difficulties					

With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Solar & Solihull community Educational Psychology Service

Subject specific difficulties					
Exam or test anxiety					
Difficulties with a particular teacher/adult					
Problems keeping up in lessons					
Note on key items					

Psychological wellbeing	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Often seems tired					
Low self esteem					
Appears depressed					
Appears anxious					
Keeps feelings to them selves					
Has a pessimistic nature					
Note on key items					

Other issues	High	Med	Low	Not an issue	Not known

Note on key items

APPENDIX 2: Intervention planning and implementation
Guidelines for the 'Drawing the Ideal School Technique'

Introduction:

The 'Drawing the Ideal School Technique' has been adapted from an approach developed by Moran (2001). Heather Moran has been a teacher and educational psychologist and now works as a clinical psychologist. The technique enables children to become actively involved in understanding themselves and expressing their views. It is based on ideas from Personal Construct Psychology which was introduced by Kelly in 1955. This approach seeks to explore children's important or core constructs about themselves, and how they view the world. Children (and adults) behave in a way which makes sense to them according to their own view of the world. We are likely to understand children (and the sort of provision which is most likely to help them) more fully if they are able to express these core constructs to us.

To summarise, this type of work attempts to:

"Understand the child's unique perspective on life through the careful use of questions and extremely sensitive note of the child's answers." (Moran 2001)

The technique itself is very simple to use once the child understands what is expected. This sheet gives guidelines for the adult completing the technique to follow and the next two pages list how to complete the technique.

Guidelines for use

1. Equipment needed: a black pen and two sheets of plain A4 paper.

2. Allow about an hour to complete to activity, perhaps with a short break if necessary.

3. Explain to the pupil that you are going to be doing the writing today, acting as scribe, this is to take the pressure off the pupil and keep the process moving.

4. The pupil is asked to make quick drawings or sketches (rather than detailed drawings), reassure the pupil that it doesn't matter if an error is made.

5. It is important to record exactly what the pupil says using their own words.

6. If the pupil is overly anxious about drawing either model stick people drawings first or just record the pupil's verbal responses.

With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Solar & Solihull community Educational Psychology Service

7. Allow time for the pupil to process the requests – repeat/reward/simplify the questions if not understood.

8. Provide reassurance that there is no right or wrong answers or responses.

9. Provide encouragement and praise for the pupil's involvement with the activity.

10. Be sensitive about sharing the drawings with others, ask the child's permission and ensure that other adults understand that the child has trusted you in revealing such views which must be respected.

11. Talk to other colleagues about planning any follow up work which might be indicated

Part 1: Drawing the kind of school you would NOT like to go to.
The School
Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of this paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The Classroom
Think about the sort of classroom you would not like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The Children
Think about some of the children at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The Adults
Think about some of the adults at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of the adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me
Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

With thanks to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service and Solar & Solihull community Educational Psychology Service

Part 2: Drawing the kind of school you would like to go to.
The School

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of the middle of this paper.

Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

The Classroom

Think about the sort of classroom you would like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in this school.

Draw some of the things in this classroom.

The Children

Think about some of the children at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

The Adults

Think about some of the adults at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

Me

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

RAG activities

To gain a better idea of how a child/young person thinks and feels about their school environment it may be helpful to use a copy of their timetable and/or diagram of the school layout. You can then ask the child/young person to 'RAG' (red, amber, green) their timetable and/or diagram of school layout according to a self-made rating scale.

Collaboratively agree upon a key, for example:

- Green = I am happy here or I enjoy this subject.
- Amber = I feel ok here or I find this subject alright.
- Red = I feel uncomfortable here or I do not enjoy this subject.

These activities can provide useful conversation starters, further exploration around what may be causing a child/young person difficulty and/or anxiety within the school setting can be further explored through follow-up questions. Try using open questions rather than closed.

APPENDIX 3: West Sussex (2018) analysis template

Name		School	
Year Group		**Key school staff**	
Other agencies involved			

Description of behaviour
What is the current rate of attendance?   *Are there any patterns to Non-attendance e.g. particular lessons or days?*   *When did the behaviour first occur?*   *What does the behaviour look like? What does the child/young person say about specific fears and difficulties?*
Risk factors school, child and family

Strengths and protective factors

What strengths does the CYP person have?

What are the CYP's aspirations or ambitions?

What positive relationships do they have at home and school?

What positive experiences have they had at school?

What was different about the times when the young person was able to get to school?

What has been helpful in the past?

Formulation and integration of various factors

What is people's understanding of why the young person is demonstrating these behaviours?

Are there any differences of views?

Function of behaviour

These are based on Kearney's (2008) four factors. Is the behaviour:

- *To avoid something or situations that elicits negative feelings or high levels of stress?*
- *To escape difficult social situations?*
- *To get attention from or spend more time with significant others (e.g. change in family dynamic, concerned about the wellbeing of a parent)?*
- *To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating (e.g. play computer games, hang out with friends)?*

Are there any maintaining factors?

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