

SCHOOL ANXIETY IN CYP WITH SEND

SENDIASS Leicester Publication

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For children with SEND, **anxiety** and **sensory overload** are common factors affecting behavior and attendance. If you think there may be underlying needs, discuss and explore with school how these might be identified and supported.

Things you can do:

- Ask your child what they find **difficult** and what they would **like to change**—this can help identify **triggers and worries**. Your child’s view should always be the starting point of any discussion about support.
- Speak to the **school** (look at page 2 for some ideas of what to ask for)
- Speak to the **school nurse** or your child’s **GP** for advice, recommendations or a referral to specialist services. Share this information with the school
- If your child has an **Education, Health and Care Plan** and they are refusing to attend the named school, you can **request an early Annual Review**. This will give you the opportunity to let the LA know about attendance difficulties and discuss progress being made towards outcomes. You can also request further assessments and/or amendments to the plan.



Signs of Anxiety

- Selective mutism
- School Refusal/Avoiding social situations
- Sleep problems, nightmares, insomnia
- Mood changes, tantrums, crying, clingy
- Physical symptoms—headaches, dizziness, sweating, panic attacks, stomach problems
- Problems eating/drinking

Reasons why your Child may be Refusing School

- Particular subjects, situations, teachers and/or students
- Is your child experiencing bullying?
- Are they experiencing sensory overload? Noises, scents, lighting?
- Changing classrooms (such as moving between lessons) being too busy, getting lost or confused
- Organisation stress (for example, missing equipment)
- Exam stress

Contact SENDIASS Leicester if your child has Special Educational Needs (diagnosed **and** undiagnosed).



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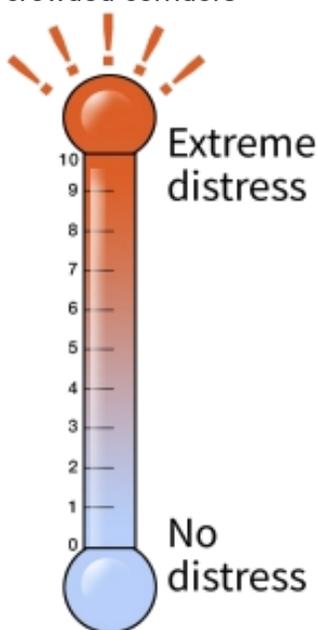
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Some ideas for **support strategies** that you can raise with the school:

- **Meet and greet** by a trusted member of staff at the start of the day
- Adult-led approaches, regularly checking with a child that they are okay throughout the day
- Help to **understand** and **manage** their **feelings** and **emotions**
- Positive praise (such as, for getting through a lesson. Replacing sanctions for challenging behaviour and focussing on the positive instead)
- “Time-Out” card for when they feel overwhelmed in lessons
- Changes to timetable if particular lessons are a trigger
- Learning away from the classroom in a dedicated area/”safe
- Lunching away from the dinner hall, lunchtime clubs, “safe space”
- 1:1 or small group interventions, support programmes, anxiety or friendship groups
- Leaving lessons/school 5 minutes early to avoid crowded corridors



When meeting with the school, you can discuss your child’s **support plan**.

You can also ask about a referral to one of the following:

- Counselling (in school or out of school)
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) for further assessment and support, such as an Educational Psychologists and Clinical Psychologists
- Home tutoring
- Social Workers
- Other outside agencies

Contact SENDIASS Leicester if your child has Special Educational Needs (diagnosed **and** undiagnosed) and you are concerned about their Anxiety and/or School Refusal. We can offer impartial help and advice to ensure that your child receives the appropriate help and support.



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