



**Agapé, Courage
Thankfulness**

Emotional Based School Absence (EBSA) Policy

Name of Policy/Procedure	
Author	Michelle Dunford
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Name	Role	Contact details
TBA	Trustee for Attendance ACT MAT	TBA
Michelle Dunford	Director of Attendance & Pupil Premium for ACT MAT	doa@act-academytrust.org
Michelle Heather	Head Teacher	MHeather@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Mel Anderson	Attendance Champion	MAnderson@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Susan Tarpey		STarpey@bpa.act-academytrust.org
TBA according to need	Link Worker	
Nicola Butcher	SEND CO	SEND@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Laura Fozzard		SEND@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Michelle Heather	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	MHeather@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Mel Anderson		MAnderson@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Susan Tarpey		STarpey@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Nicola Butcher		NButcher@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Laura Fozzard		LFozzard@bpa.act-academytrust.org
Allocated as required	Family Support Worker	
Leanne Martin	Local Authority Education Inclusion Family Advisor (EIFA)	leanne.martin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Anita Hunt - Gioia	Early Help Support Officer	Anita.hunt-gioia@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Gianni Fasulo	Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)	Gianni.Fasulo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Elizabeth Allen	Local Authority Access and Inclusion Worker	Elizabeth.Allen@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
	NSA Help Line	NSA.Helpline@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Introduction and aim

The ACT Multi Academy Trust is committed to a strong culture of ensuring that all our children reach their full potential and we recognise that attendance is an essential part of that journey.

Aim

Emotional Based School Absence (EBSA) is a term used to describe the difficulty children and young people experience in attending school due to emotional reasons, such as stress, anxiety and/or feeling overwhelmed. This can result in prolonged periods of absence from school.

The purpose of the ACT Multi Academy Trust's Emotional Based School Absence policy (EBSA) is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at each of our schools has the same opportunities and equal access to high quality education.

We recognise the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex and are not limited to inside the school building. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and families to identify potential barriers, understand individual needs and listen to our children's voices in order for our children to feel safe, secure and happy in school.

This policy sets out the aims, purpose and ethos of how we aim to support all our children across our Trust, the roles & responsibilities of the Trust and those of our Academies. Each school within our Trust will adopt this policy and outline the school specific details and procedures for working together to supporting children and families where anxiety and mental health are barriers to attending school. Regular attendance is the responsibility of all staff and this policy will give clear direction, outlining the legal responsibilities of all parties, to ensure regular attendance.

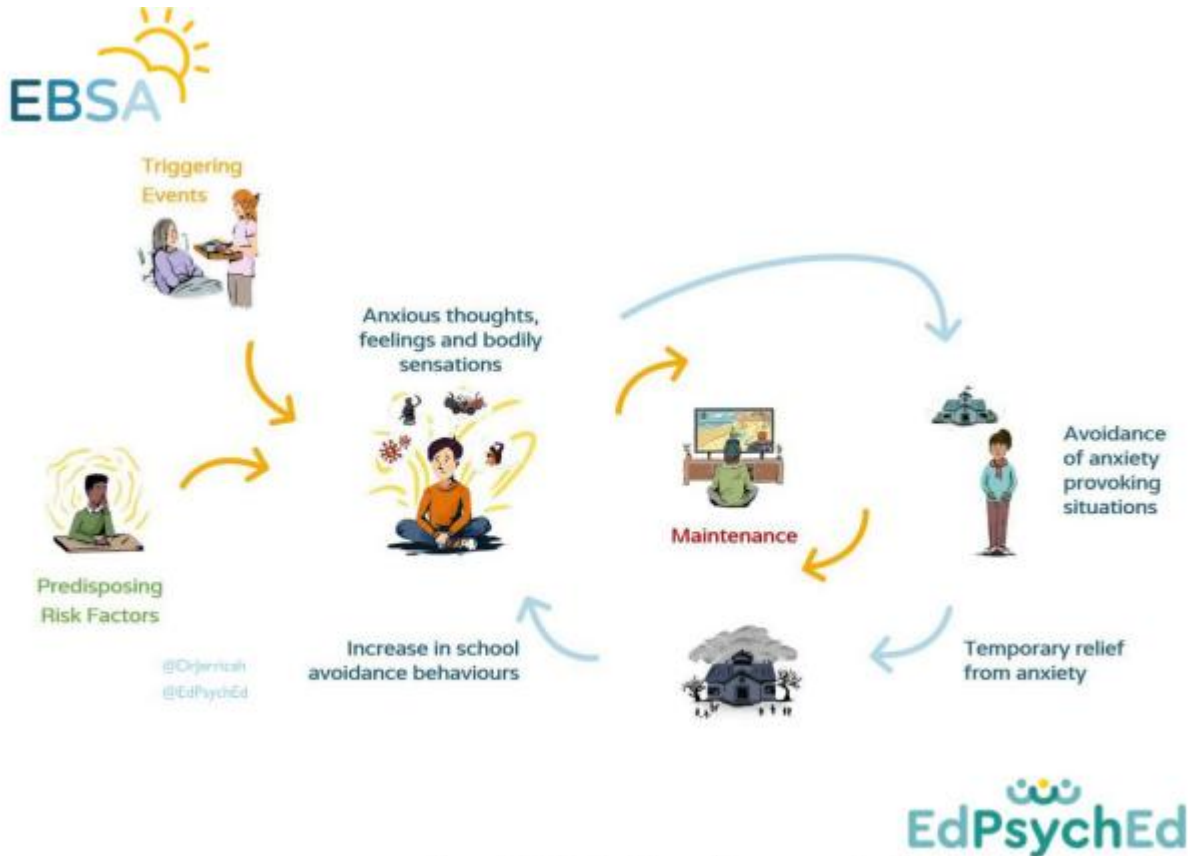


Figure 1: EBSA Anxiety maintenance cycles (developed by Ed Psych Ed)

To break the cycle and move forward, a holistic view of the child/young person, their school experiences, and their family life should be understood. School staff, parents/carers and the child/young person will need to work together to feel heard, prior to planning a return to school (if a child is no longer attending school on-site). It is important to remember that school-avoidant behaviour is not a choice that the child is making, but rather a way for them to cope with their emotions and experiences.

Schools within the Trust will:

Working in partnership with parents/carers and families, we will identify the main causes of school absence and work together to find reasonable adjustments to the school day to enable the child(ren) to feel safe, secure and have their needs met. We will:

- Listen carefully to pupil(s) and their parents/carers and acknowledge the challenges faced by your child and you as their parent(s).
- Maintain close contact with you and your child, even during extended periods of non-attendance. An agreed member of staff should be named as a link person. Should a period of absence from school exceed 5 consecutive days, the link person will visit you and your child at home to maintain contact and offer additional support if needed.
- Work in partnership with you and your child to find out what difficulties your child is experiencing and find ways of making school a happier place and improve their attendance.



Hold regular meetings to devise a plan in conjunction with you and your child, with the aim to eventually returning to a normal timetable and/or attendance. The plan will include what the next steps will be and a mutually agreeable timetable.

- ✿ Respond to any school-based needs, such as academic support, dealing with bullying or support with social relationships.
- ✿ Consider the support your child might require upon arriving at school. This might include meeting with a friend at a specific place and time, using a quiet space to settle before school starts, engaging in a preferred activity or being given a responsibility such as a monitor role.
- ✿ If needed, arrange for your child to have a later start to the school day, allowing time for them to regulate. This will be authorised by the Head Teacher and marked on the child's record as authorised absence.
- ✿ The Class Teacher will be made aware of the circumstances and will adapt the class timetable to ensure your child does not miss the same lessons every day. They will also provide a pack for your child to keep at home so they can have access to the subject content and complete this work at home when they are ready to do so.
- ✿ If difficulties persist the school should consider requesting involvement from other professionals.
- ✿ If there is no engagement from parents/carers, the school will implement the next steps as detailed in the ACT Multi-Academy Trust Attendance Policy (See link)

We expect that all parents/carers will:

Agree to the school's EBSA policy in supporting child/children with EBSA and agree to work with the school to encourage child/children to:

- ✿ Attempt to arrive and stay in school at the start of the school day. Where there is an agreed reduced timetable, ensure child(ren) arrive on time.
- ✿ Where this is not possible, contact the school by 9am and work with the school to encourage child/children to attend as soon as they are able to.
- ✿ Where there is total refusal, ensure that child/children access the home work pack from the Class Teacher and facilitate home learning.
- ✿ Liaise with the named Link worker on a daily basis and keep them informed of any additional barriers and concerns that could impact child/children attending school or completing work at home.
- ✿ During periods where child/children are not in school, as parents you agree to keep your child/children at home (unless attending agreed off-site Appropriate Provision, eg Forest Schools)
- ✿ If child(ren) refuse to attend school for 5 days or more, allow Link worker/Attendance Officer to visit the home address to engage with child(ren) and support additional interventions to encourage attendance.
- ✿ Where the homework pack has been completed at home, return this to the Class Teacher regularly during the school week to enable marking and feedback.
- ✿ Attend all meetings requested by the school to discuss progress and agree next steps.

Pupil

Parent/Carer/Guardian

Head Teacher

Date:

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