

West Sussex Thriving in Education Process to reduce Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)



In West Sussex we describe all of our work in schools and colleges to support mental health and wellbeing through the lens of the [i-Thrive framework](#). This helps us to be needs led, child-centred and strengths based. The framework thinks about mental health and wellbeing needs across five different groupings, through which children, young people and families may move at different times depending on their support needs. Emphasis is placed on the prevention and promotion of mental health and wellbeing. The five groupings are:

- **Thriving** - those who can maintain mental wellbeing through effective prevention and wellbeing promotion strategies available for everyone.
- **Getting Advice** - those who need advice and signposting to further support.
- **Getting Help** - those who need focussed goals-based input.
- **Getting More Help** - those who need more extensive and specialised goals-based help.
- **Getting Risk Support** - those who have not benefited from or are unable to access support and require more bespoke help from services.

EBSA is a broad term to describe a group of young people who experience significant difficulties in attending school due to emotional factors. This guide should be read alongside the [WSCC EBSA Guidance document](#).

Use this document to:

- **Assess** work already in place to prevent and reduce EBSA in school and map what else is needed.
- **Plan** what else could be put in place to support whole school and individual approaches to reducing EBSA or helping those already experiencing EBSA.
- Support you in **Do**-ing your work to prevent and reduce EBSA.
- **Review** and adjust your work in a consistent way.

Thriving	Getting Advice	Getting Help	Getting More Help	Getting Risk Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your whole school approach (WSA) to mental health and wellbeing. • Ensure school or college Senior Mental Health Lead has undertaken DfE approved training for SMHLs. • Use the WSCC reflective tool or the Implementation and Outcomes Self-Assessment Tools to audit, plan and monitor impact. • Access training listed on Thriving in Education online. • Attend SMHL networks. • Seek whole school approach support from Thriving in Education online, Thought-Full, Education Psychology Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access EBSA process (this document), EBSA guidance, training and consultations. • Access Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice guide, Assess Plan Do Review and Graduated Approach. • Focus on relationship building with the child or young person and their family. • Think about involving Thought-Full for whole school, group support or training (where eligible). • Think about involving Dedicated Schools Team link worker, Specialist Advisory Teaching Teams (particularly Autism and Social Communication or Learning and Behaviour teams), and/or Virtual School as applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access EBSA process (this document), EBSA guidance to help understand what is going on and make a plan, involving the child, their parent/carer and other teams or services, including school colleagues (Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Designated Safeguarding Lead). • Allocate link person in school for the child and parents. • If at primary school, sign up to WOWSI and offer to parents. • Consider a request for 1:1 support with Thought-Full or school-based service. • Provide parents with access to support and advice via Thriving in Education online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use EBSA process (this document) and guidance at all times. • Keep revisiting the plan, stay in touch with child and their family, take Multi-Disciplinary Team approach as appropriate for child. • Talk to DST worker and jointly consider Early Help Referral. • Consider use of Alternative Provision and flexible timetabling. • Consider request for support from Single Point of Access (SPOA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access EBSA process (this document) and EBSA guidance. • Make a My Wellbeing and Safety Plan with the CYP and their family. • Consider planned and short-term use of part time timetable. • Seek advice from Fair Access Team; consider Blended Learning package. • For eligible CYP, consider IPT consultation. • For secondary schools and eligible year 6 CYP, consider Multi-Agency Mental Health and Education Triage (MAMHET).

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Work through this process when a child or young person's (CYP) attendance and/or anxiety triggers concern.

Reference EBSA Thriving in Education Guide (page 2 of this document) at every stage.

Stage one

- Start this work as soon as possible and be curious. What's going on? Be CYP centred and strengths based. Work in partnership with parents and carers. One size does not fit all.
- Consider whole school or reasonable adjustments particularly when the child or young person (CYP) is or may be neurodivergent or has SEND. Link with SENCO, Pastoral team and SMHL in school.
- Relationships are important. Identify a trusted person at school for the CYP and parent/carers.
- Reference "Getting Advice" section of EBSA Thriving in Education Guide. Consider requesting a CARM from the ASCT or LBAT, support from DST or Thought-Full.

Stage two

- Book onto [EBSA training](#).
- Follow EBSA guidance p13-15. **Listen well** and build a picture of what is going on. Involve family and others in CYP's life. Make a plan using [Assess, Plan, Do, Review](#) (APDR), running several cycles.
- Reference "Getting Help" and "Getting More Help" sections of EBSA Thriving in Education Guide.

Stage three

- If the situation has improved, great news! Capture learning and continue to review. If concerns reoccur, begin this process again, using APDR. Be aware of transitions as possible trigger points.
- Consider accessing an EBSA consultation [Emotionally Based School Avoidance | West Sussex Services for Schools](#).
- If the child or young person is neurodivergent or has SEND, and their education placement is at risk of breaking down, consider a consultation with the [Intensive Planning Team](#).
- Continue to use EBSA guidance and materials at all times. Follow "**Getting More Help**" and "**Getting Risk Support**" sections of EBSA Thriving in Education Guide.