



Attendance Policy

Equality Statement

Centre Academy East Anglia is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief. We provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

Review Date: May 27
Last Review Date: May 26
Held on website: Yes

Centre Academy East Anglia is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Signed by Chair of Proprietor Body

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Murphy'.

Signed:

Date: 08/05/26

Chair of Proprietor Body

Mr R Murphy

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1. Aims

Centre Academy East Anglia is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources. It cannot solely be the responsibility of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance

- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
 - Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to Head of School and reporting concerns about attendance.
- Working with the parents/carers of our pupils who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barrier
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Caitlin Banham and can be contacted via the school office on 01449 736404 or c.banham@centreacademy.uk

3.4 Class Teachers/Tutors

Class teacher/Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information on BromCom

3.5 Admin staff

Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Head of School/SMT Attendance Lead, where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and are on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any individual transition timetables that they make with the school

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Miss Caitlin Banham, SMT Attendance Lead who can be contacted via the school office on 01449 736404 or c.banham@centreacademy.uk

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time

4. Recording attendance

CAEA recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, alongside attendance and safeguarding children. It perceives that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence. This will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If the absence of a child is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at CAEA will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Attendance has a very high profile at CAEA and is systematically monitored. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken during lunchtime and will be kept open until 2.00pm.

Registration is also taken at 3.30 pm (Monday to Thursday) and 3.00pm (Friday), when students leave the school site.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling or emailing the school office, who can be contacted via the school office on 01449 736404 or absent@centreacademy.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The school office should be emailed on admin@centreacademy.uk ahead of the appointment detailing the date and time of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please contact the school office for a 'Request Leave of Absence Form' please see appendix 2. Information is given in section 5 regarding which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head of School.
- Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class. If they are late, they will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence. With regular lateness for classes or regular absences parents will be asked to meet with the SMT Lead for Attendance or the Head of School.
- For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building, pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office and sign in. It is important that all pupils / students arriving late follow this procedure.
- For the same reason it is important that pupils / students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil / student is staying at home to mind the house
- the pupil / student is shopping during school hours
- the pupil / student is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the pupil / student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the elected Education Welfare Officer or the police. We will also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will issue a penalty notice as appropriate (see section 5.2 below).

4.6 Reporting to parents

As CAEA is a small school, the SMT Lead for Attendance and the Head of School will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the parents and the Governance termly. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

As Centre Academy East Anglia is exclusively a school for children with special educational needs, it is imperative that attendance is always monitored throughout each day. Accordingly, attendance is taken regularly and consistently. In essence, the school's policy is designed to ensure that the whereabouts of each child is known throughout the entire school day.

We believe attendance is essential for all our students and accordingly it is analysed termly; we are particularly cognisant of children who previously have been school refusers or otherwise have been vulnerable to poor attendance.

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.6 above), within the termly reports, about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:
- A pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a limited period
- In exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school term dates allow a significant window of opportunity for family holidays to be taken outside of term time. Requests from parents of Year 11 students, or from any parent for during the assessment week period are unlikely to be authorised, as this impacts on educational progress of the student.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office (see appendix 2). The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail). Please also refer to appendix 3 for Guidance for Absence relating to Sickness and COVID-19 related illnesses
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Head of School (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Display of weekly whole school attendance percentages
- Posters promoting the benefits of good attendance

7. Supporting pupils and families who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers, health needs or SEND

As a specialist school for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We operate in line with DfE guidance on improving school attendance and recognise that pupils with SEND are statistically more likely to experience barriers to attendance and that absence is often linked to unmet needs, anxiety or health-related factors. As such, our approach prioritises early identification and collaborative working with families so that reasonable adjustment/support can be put in place.

To support pupils at risk of absence or returning to school following absence, the following strategies are in place:

- Individualised transition and reintegration timetables, including graduated or reduced timetables where appropriate, reviewed on a six-weekly basis.
- Access to on-site therapeutic support, with referrals made promptly for pupils experiencing emotional or regulation difficulties impacting attendance.
- Individual in-school strategies designed to remove barriers to attendance and promote engagement, based on each pupil's SEND profile.
- Oversight and support from the Head of School, Senior Leadership Team, Attendance Lead, SENCo and pastoral staff.

Early identification and family support

Attendance is monitored weekly by the Attendance Lead. Where a pupil's attendance falls **below 90%**, this triggers early supportive intervention. In an SEN context, this threshold reflects national guidance recognising that pupils with additional needs are at greater risk of persistent absence, and that early action reduces the likelihood of prolonged disengagement.

Where attendance dips below 90%:

- Parents/carers are sent a supportive letter alongside an Attendance Support Pack, which outlines:
 - The importance of attendance for wellbeing and progress
 - Practical strategies to support attendance at home
 - How the school will offer support and next steps
- This process is designed to be supportive rather than punitive, in line with DfE expectations that schools work in partnership with families. Please find copies of the pack and letter distributed in appendix 4 and 5.

Monitoring and review

- The Attendance Lead completes a half-termly whole-school attendance analysis, which:
 - Identifies patterns and reasons for absence
 - Compares attendance data with previous half terms
 - Informs targeted interventions and strategic planning
- This document is reviewed by senior leaders to ensure accountability and timely response.

Ongoing family support and reintegration

- Weekly supportive phone calls are offered to families experiencing ongoing attendance difficulties, providing regular check-ins and collaborative problem-solving.
- Where pupils struggle to attend due to emotional or mental health needs, referrals to the therapy team are made to provide additional support.
- Pupils returning after absence are supported through bespoke reintegration plans, which may include phased returns, enhanced pastoral support and therapeutic input.
- Where necessary and deemed appropriate, home visits may be carried out by a member of the therapy team/a child's tutor to support with reintegration.

7.2 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Centre Academy East Anglia will work with the parents and student, utilising strategies based on individual needs to support the student's return to school (please refer to 7.1 above)

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are individual students or particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and compared alongside the national statistics. The School Secretary and the SMT Attendance Lead will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board. The SMT Attendance Lead will have termly meetings with the dedicated Educational Welfare Officer to discuss the school's attendance data. Transition timetables for individual students will be reviewed and updated every six weeks.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders, including the special educational needs co-ordinator and designated safeguarding lead.)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The SMT Lead for Attendance will write to the parent of the student outlining the concern with attendance.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum will be reviewed annually by the Head of School and the SMT Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governance board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Therapy policy
- Student Conduct-Discipline & Exclusion policy
- Student Behaviour Policy and statement of Behaviour principles + Addendums.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2:



Centre Academy East Anglia

Request For Leave of Absence

To be submitted two weeks before the requested date

Removing your child from school during term time may harm your child’s academic progress. Please read the notes (overleaf) carefully before submitting this form as refusal often offends. We aim to be consistent and transparent within the law.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Head Of School in **exceptional circumstances**. Therefore, please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Exceptional Circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:

.....

.....

.....

Signed: _____ Date submitted: _____

Print name: _____ Relationship to child(ren) _____

For school use:

Attendance %:

Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:

Total unauthorised absence this year:

Request authorised: Yes/No

Evidence Submitted: Yes/No

- **Leave of Absence during term time – Important Information**

The Department for Education states; every day at school counts enormously and so does every consecutive day attended by pupils. Pupils need to be able to absorb new facts and knowledge, acquire new skills and consolidate before building further and progressing. They simply cannot do so if their structured school terms are disrupted by too many preventable absences.

- **Absence during term time**

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school. The Head of School may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- **Requests for Leave of Absence**

A request for a leave of absence must only be considered if:

- The parent the child normally lives with applies in advance for the absence; and
- There are **exceptional circumstances** for the absence

- **Exceptional Circumstances**

Dictionary definition of exceptional (*Adjective*)

- unusual; not typical.
- forming an exception or rare instance; unusual; extraordinary.

A request for leave of absence could be considered exceptional in the following circumstances:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave of absence outside term time at any point in the academic year; Providing written proof respectfully requested
- The terminal illness or bereavement of a parent or sibling if the absence is concurrent.

- **Any other absence.**

There may be other circumstances when a parent may request an absence for their child, which may involve some time away from home. Examples of these include:

- The wedding of a family member
- Family bereavement
- Prison visits

The overriding principle should be that the absence ought not to be authorised if it will have a detrimental effect on the child's education. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Head of School may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head of School should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

- **Unauthorised Absence**

If the absence has not been authorised by the school and an absence occurs, where the child's total unauthorised absences amount to 10 or more sessions (5 school days), continuous or aggregated within the previous six months within the current academic year (including the most recent unauthorised absence), schools are expected to notify the Education Welfare Officer. **In all circumstances a written application must be made by the parent with whom the child normally resides at least two weeks before the requested leave.** The Head of School has the discretion to authorise up to ten working days of leave if exceptional circumstances are agreed. The burden of proving this lies with the parent.

The Head of School is not allowed to authorise:

- Availability of cheap holidays or flights
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term

Appendix 3

Guidance for Absence relating to Sickness and COVID-19 related illnesses

Sickness

If your child has vomited during school hours, you will be contacted by the medical team to come and collect your child.

Your child should remain at home for 48 hours from the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This is to help minimise the risk of spreading any infectious illness around the school community.

COVID-19

UKSHA guidance says **that it is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.** For children and young people aged 18 and under who are recommended to take a COVID-19 test by a health professional and test positive, the advice is to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

As COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people, combined with high vaccination rates in the population, there are no longer specific rules relating to it in schools, colleges, childcare and other education settings.

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to go to school, college or childcare.

However, those who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

All students with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

It can be difficult to know when to seek help if your child is unwell. If you are worried about your child, then you should seek medical help.

Appendix 4

Attendance support letter sent to parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to you as we have noticed that your child's school attendance percentage has recently begun to fall. We want to reassure you that our intention in getting in touch is purely to offer early support and to work together to understand whether there are any challenges that may be impacting attendance at this time.

We recognise that there can be many reasons why attendance may become more difficult for a child, including worries, anxieties, changes at home, or other barriers that may not always be immediately visible. Our aim is to identify any potential difficulties early so that appropriate measures can be put in place to support your child and encourage regular school attendance in a way that feels manageable and positive for them.

To support this, I have attached a CAEA Attendance Support Pack to this email. This pack includes a range of helpful strategies that parents can use at home to support conversations with your child about attendance, explore any worries they may be experiencing, and introduce techniques to help manage school-based anxiety where this may be a contributing factor.

We would really encourage you to share any concerns or difficulties you or your child may be experiencing. Open communication between home and school is incredibly important, and by working together we can ensure the right support is in place. Please be assured that we will continue to monitor attendance closely and maintain clear communication with you so that your child feels fully supported both at home and at school.

If you would like to discuss this further or feel that a conversation would be helpful, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are here to support you and your child.

Kind regards,

Caitlin Banham

Occupational Therapist and Advanced Sensory Integration Practitioner
SMT Lead for Intervention, Personal Development, Attendance & Risk Assessments
Centre Academy East Anglia
www.centreacademy.net



Appendix 5
Attendance support pack

CAEA Parent Support Pack: Anxiety-Related School Absence (EBSA)



Introduction for Parents

At Centre Academy East Anglia, we recognise that anxiety can impact on our children's ability to access their school environment. We want to empower parents as much as possible with the knowledge and skills to be able to support children at home, while also building a strong, compassionate partnership between families and the school team to provide children with reassurance and safety to help with emotion-based school absence. This pack has been created with care to support you if your child's anxiety is affecting their school attendance. It includes information, practical strategies, sensory tools, and worksheets to help you understand your child's needs and work with school to support them.



Understanding School Anxiety & EBSA

School anxiety is when a child feels such strong worry or fear about going to school that it becomes very hard for them to attend. You might notice this showing up as reluctance to go in, becoming upset in the mornings, feeling physically unwell, or refusing to attend altogether.

Anxiety is closely linked to how the central nervous system responds to stress. When a child senses something as overwhelming (whether that's schoolwork, friendships, noise, sensory overload, routines, or separation from home) the brain's "alarm system" (often called the fight-flight-freeze response) can switch on.

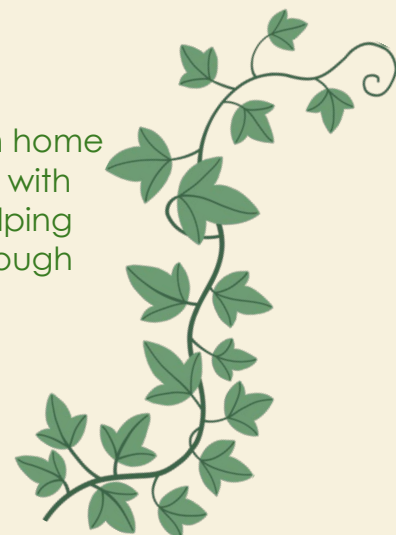
This system is designed to protect us, but for some children it becomes activated very quickly. When this happens, their brain and body send out strong signals like tummy aches, rapid heartbeat, shakiness, or intense emotions. These are all signs that the child is trying to find safety, not that they're choosing to avoid school.

Children with additional needs or sensory differences can be especially sensitive to feeling unsafe or overwhelmed, because their nervous system processes the world more intensely. This can make school feel unpredictable or demanding, even when they can't explain why.

School anxiety, at its heart, is the nervous system saying:

"This is too much right now-I need help to feel safe again."

With understanding, gentle support, and a team approach between home and school, children can gradually build confidence and reconnect with school in a way that feels manageable. Parents play a key role in helping regulate their child's nervous system, and this pack will guide you through strategies to support that journey.



Strategies to support parents at home

1) Support for communication of issues and barriers

The resources below are there to help you have gentle, supportive conversations with your child about how they're feeling about school and whether anything feels difficult or worrying for them at the moment.

Anything that comes up during these chats can be shared with school and the Attendance Lead so we can work together to put the right support in place. This helps us understand your child's experience better and make sure any worries are shared with teachers and support staff, so plans can be created to support attendance in a way that feels right for your child.

You'll find some ideas and activities below to help guide these conversations and support you in gently unpicking what might be causing or adding to your child's anxiety around school.

When starting the conversation, it can help to keep things open and relaxed. Simple questions like *"What feels hardest about school at the moment?"* or *"What do you think would help you feel a bit better or safer at school?"* can really encourage children to open up.

We know that many children find it hard to name their feelings or explain why they feel the way they do. The worksheets and tools included are designed to help children explore and share their emotions in a way that feels manageable, as well as highlight what they may be finding challenging. There's also a social story included to help support these discussions.



There are a few different activities to choose from, so please just use the ones you feel would work best for your child.

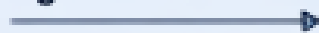


Talking About School



How Are You Feeling?

Right now, I feel...



Happy Worried Scared Sad Angry Okay Okay

What's Hard About School?

- Lessons Playtime
- Friends Teachers
- Noise/Crowds
- Getting Up / Travel
- Other: _____

What Worries Me Most Is...


- _____
 - _____
 - _____
- 

What Helps Me Feel Better

- Talking to someone
- Deep Breaths
- Quiet space
- Favourite activity
- Hug/Comfort
- Music/Exercise

My Body Feels...

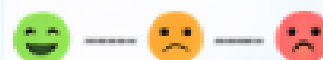
(tick what happens)

- Tummy ache
 - Headache
 - Fast heartbeat
 - Shaky
 - Tired
 - Sick
- 

Friends & Teachers

Do I feel safe?

Yes Sometimes No



Do I have a friend?


Yes Kind No



Who can help?

What Could Help?

I would feel better if...

- _____
 - _____
 - One small step I can try: _____
 - _____
- 

My Plan

This week, I will try...

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Well done!




Remember: You are not alone - We are here to help!




Talking About School

How Are You Feeling About School?

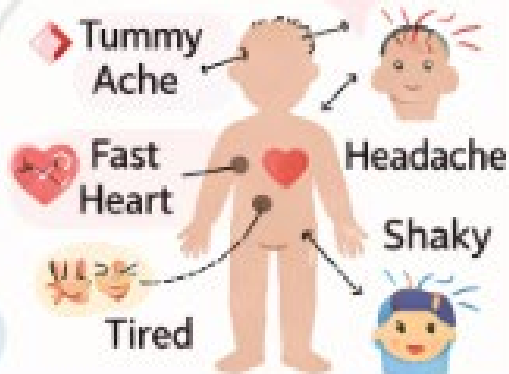
 Happy
  Worried
  Scared
  Sad
  Angry
  Confused



What Part of School Feels Hardest?



 Classwork
  Teachers
  Friends


 Break Time
  Lunchtime
  Going in

What Happens in Your Body?






 Tummy Ache
  Headache


 Fast Heart
  Shaky


 Tired


What Worries You About School?

 Being late? 

 Too much work?

 Friends?

 Teachers?

 Something else?

What Helps You Feel Better?

 Hug
  Talk to Someone
  Break

 Deep Breaths
  Play
  Quiet Time

Do You Have Friends at School?

 Yes!
  No

Name: _____

What Would Help School Feel Easier?

 _____
  _____

How Ready Do You Feel?

1 2 3 4 5













Not Ready  → Ready!

What's One Small Step?

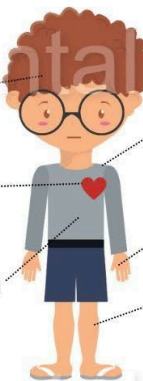
 _____

FEELINGS CHECK-IN

I am feeling:

 <input type="checkbox"/> Happy	 <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful	 <input type="checkbox"/> Scared	 <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised	 <input type="checkbox"/> Sad	 <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed
 <input type="checkbox"/> Angry	 <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated	 <input type="checkbox"/> Confused	 <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous	 <input type="checkbox"/> Confident	 <input type="checkbox"/> _____

I Feel It In My:



<input type="checkbox"/> Head	<input type="checkbox"/> Neck or Shoulders
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart	<input type="checkbox"/> Arms or Hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> Legs

The Feeling Is:

Tiny
 Medium
 Big

Some Thoughts In My Head Are:

If my feeling is causing me stress I can use the following **copng skills** to feel better:

Relaxation Skills

- Take 3 deep breaths
- Get a hug or give a hug
- Tense and relax my muscles
- Other: _____

Distraction Skills

- Count from 1 to 100
- Find a trusted person to talk to
- Watch a funny movie
- Other: _____

Movement Skills

- Take a break
- Exercise/Run/Jog
- Jump up and down
- Other: _____

Thinking Skills

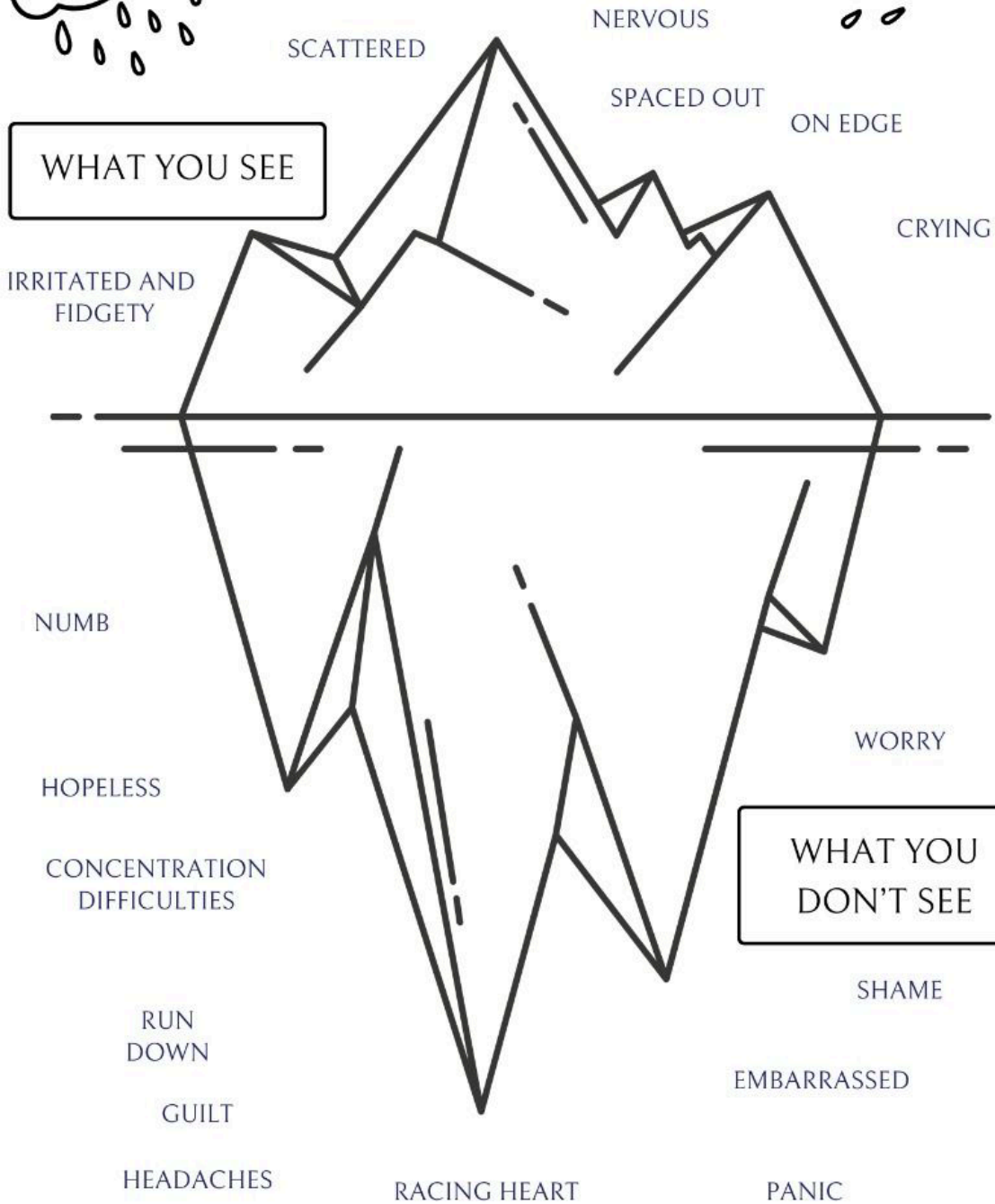
- Use encouraging self-talk
- Think of a peaceful place
- Challenge unhelpful thoughts
- Other: _____

THE ANXIETY ICEBERG



WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE





1. Notice the worry



2. Ask 'What am I worrying about?'



3. Ask 'Can I do anything about it?'



No

Yes

Let the worry go

Make a plan!

Think about something else

What, When, How?

Now

Later

Do it!

Decide 'when?'

Let the worry go

Let the worry go

Think about something else

Think about something else

Awareness of Negative Thoughts

It's easy to get caught up in a pattern of negative thinking but this cycle then affects our outlook and how we interact with others. Use this worksheet to gain awareness of your thought patterns.

	<i>Thought One</i>	<i>Thought Two</i>	<i>Thought Three</i>
What were you doing at the time of the thought?			
What were your other thoughts at the time?			
How much did you believe the negative thought on a scale of 1-5?			
How did it make you feel?			
What evidence do you have that this thought is true?			
What healthy thought can you replace this negative one with?			

Balance Your Thoughts

This Thought Balancing Worksheet is designed to help you identify and challenge negative or unhelpful thoughts and replace them with balanced ones, grounded in reality. This process can help reduce anxiety and improve mental well-being. Working on this worksheet with your therapist can provide additional insights and support, making it easier to recognize patterns in your thinking and develop strategies for change.

Fill the table below with your thoughts and reflections. We've added examples to help you.

Trigger	Automatic Thought	Evidence Supporting the Thought	Evidence Against the Thought	Balanced Thought
I was not invited to my friend's party.	"They don't like me and I'm going to lose all my friends."	I wasn't invited to the party.	This friend has invited me to other events, they might have had a limited guest list, and I have other friends who value me.	"This doesn't mean my friends don't like me. There could be many reasons for it, and I still have friends who care about me."
I received a critical comment from my boss about my recent project.	"I'm terrible at my job and I'm going to get fired."	My boss pointed out a few mistakes.	My boss also mentioned areas where I did well and I received positive feedback on other projects. One critical comment does not mean I will be fired.	"While my boss pointed out some mistakes, they also acknowledged my strengths. I can learn from this feedback and improve."

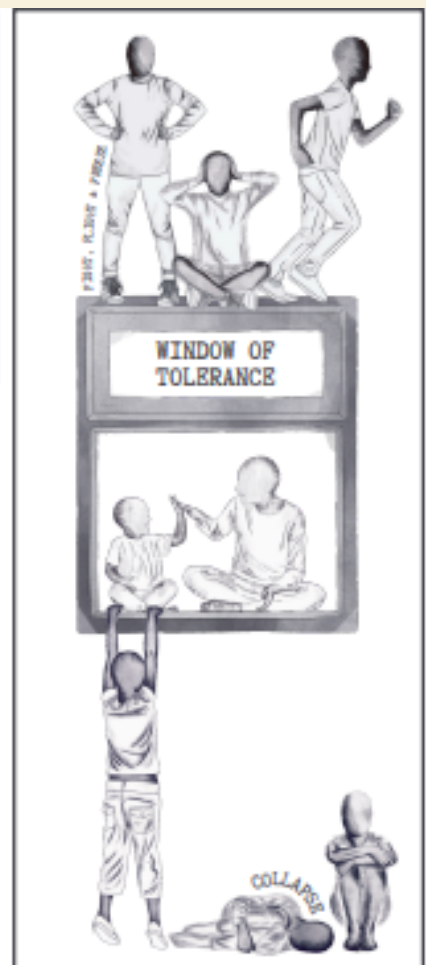


EXPLORING THE INTERNAL EXPERIENCES OF FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE AND COLLAPSE

Those of us who carry trauma, loss and extreme stress in our bodies have a narrower-than-usual window of tolerance* where we feel safe and can think clearly, learn, love and be loved.

This means that in times of stress or perceived danger we may be easily triggered outside of our window of tolerance into our fight, flight, freeze or collapse survival modes.

Due to the highly sensitised alarm system in those of us who carry trauma, we might stay in these modes for longer than they are needed and sometimes we can't move out of them.



It can be frightening for children, teens and adults to feel 'stuck' in a fight, flight, freeze or collapse survival state, especially because usually it does not feel within the individual's control.

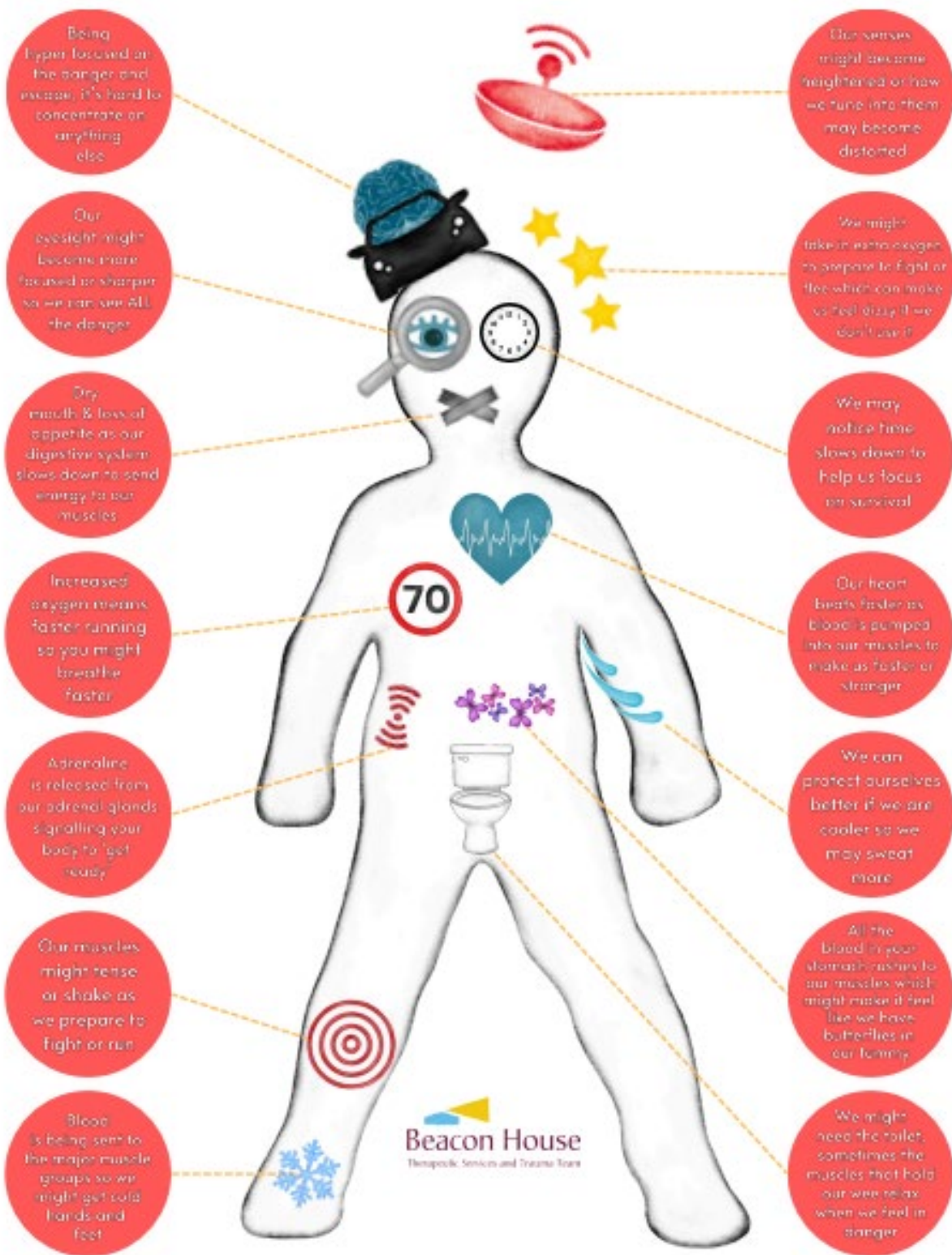
From the outside, behaviours triggered by these survival modes might look and feel disproportionate, alarming, frustrating or downright baffling!

This resource looks at what is beneath these behaviours and explores what might be happening inside the person, giving us a deeper understanding of the internal experience of others.



FIGHT, FLIGHT AND FREEZE MODE (HYPER-AROUSAL)

ON THE INSIDE WE MIGHT EXPERIENCE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:



COLLAPSE MODE (HYPO-AROUSAL)

ON THE INSIDE WE MIGHT EXPERIENCE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

Feeling like there is a huge wall between us and the rest of the world



Our senses might go off line or lose we tune into them may become distorted

Eyes might appear glassy and focusing might be hard



Our body, thoughts and feelings become disconnected or protected or locked out from physical pain

Breathing might slow right down and barely be visible



Feeling foggy and distant from the world around us

Feeling a sense of dread or a sense of doom



A dry mouth and loss of appetite as our digestive system slows down

Blood pressure drops as our heart rate slows; our body is getting ready to 'play dead'



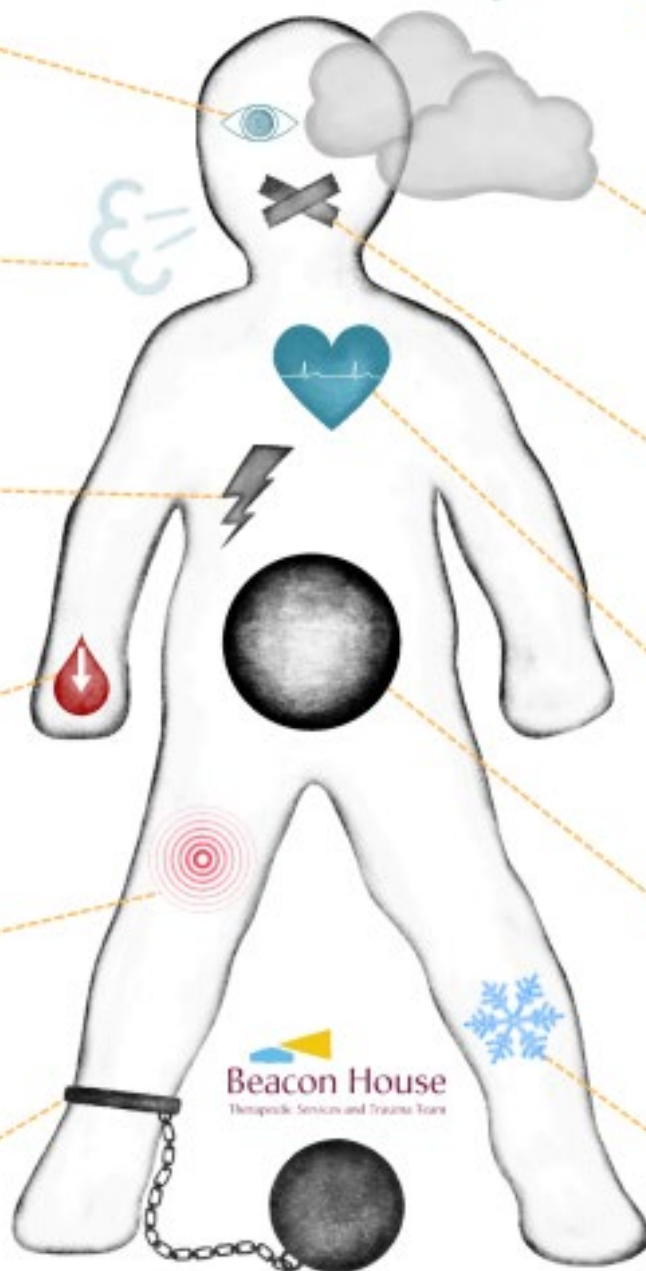
Our heart rate might slow down to help us 'play dead'

Chemicals released from our brain may numb our body from physical pain



Feeling empty or disconnected from more painful feelings

Muscles might feel heavy to keep you slow or still



Beacon House
Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team

A drop in our blood pressure might make our body feel cold

FIGHT, FLIGHT AND FREEZE MODE (HYPER-AROUSAL)

When we feel like we are in danger (even if we are not actually in danger) our nervous system mobilises into a survival response, and may swing us into a fight, flight or freeze reaction. Our nervous system becomes hyper-aroused in order to protect us from harm.

ON THE OUTSIDE WE MIGHT BE SEEN OR EXPERIENCED AS:

- Aggressive, angry, argumentative
- Controlling, inflexible
- Lying or blaming
- Unable to concentrate or finish tasks
- Rejecting of connection
- Loud, noisy, disruptive
- Keeping super-busy
- Running away, hiding, avoiding
- Not managing in free time
- Need to be first
- Baby talk, silly voices, giddy, silly
- Not interested, bored
- Trying to distract
- Scanning the room, watchful
- Not listening
- Hard to move through a task

COLLAPSE MODE (HYPO-AROUSAL)

When we feel like we're in danger (even if we are not actually in danger) and fight, flight or freeze responses can't keep us safe enough, our nervous system can swing into collapse. In collapse, we become immobilised and disconnected from the world around us so that the danger hurts us less. Collapse also allows us to 'hide' until the perceived danger passes*.

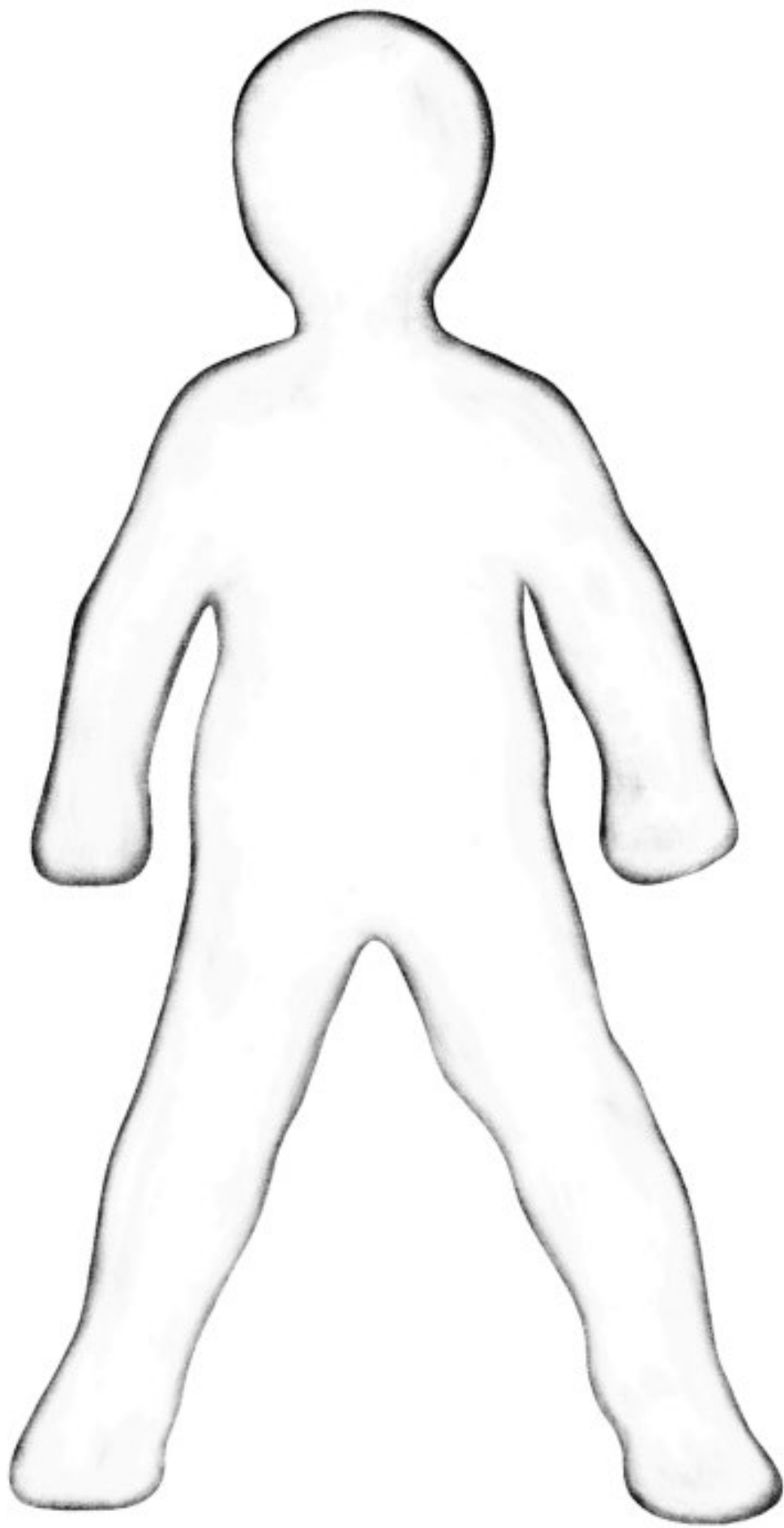
ON THE OUTSIDE WE MIGHT BE SEEN OR EXPERIENCED AS:

- Head on a desk or laying in bed
- Socially withdrawn, quiet
- Compliant
- Yes and no answers
- Passive
- Neutral expression
- Glazed eyes
- Slow movements
- Disconnected
- Silent

HYPER & HYPO AROUSAL TOGETHER

Remember: Our nervous system can move into hypo-arousal and hyper-arousal at the same time, so we may notice a mixture of the experiences above

✂️.....✂️ Cut out and stick



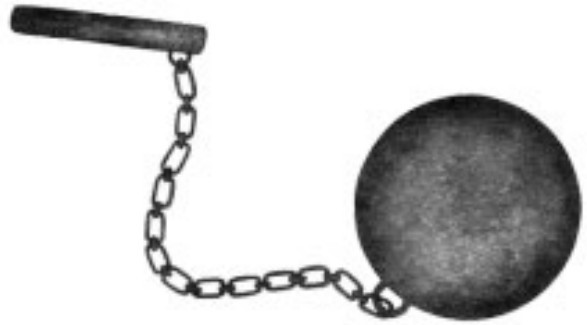
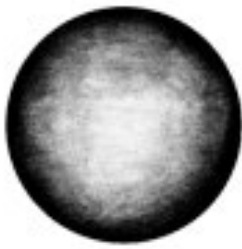
FIGHT, FLIGHT & FREEZE MODE (HYPER-AROUSAL)

✂️..... Cut out and stick✂️



COLLAPSE MODE (HYPO-AROUSAL)

✂️..... Cut out and stick✂️





Feeling Anxious About School

Sometimes
 I
 feel
 very
 anxious
 about
 going to school.

When
 I
 feel anxious,
 my
 body
 and
 thoughts
 can
 feel

uncomfortable
 or
 overwhelming.

This
 can
 make
 it
 hard
 for
 me
 to
 come in.

It's okay to
 feel
 this way.

Lots of
 children
 find
 school
 difficult
 when
 they
 feel anxious,
 and

it
 can
 get better
 with
 support.
 While
 I
 am
 at
 home,
 the

adults
 who
 care
 about
 me
 are
 helping
 me.

 They  want to  understand  what  feels  hard  and  what  might

 make  school  feel  easier  and  safer.










 I can  look at  pictures  of  my  school  to  help  me  remember

 what  it is  like  there.

 These  photos  can  help  me  feel  more  prepared.

 When  I am ready,  I can  take  small  steps  towards  coming back.

 These  steps  can  be  done  slowly,  one  at  a  time.

 I  don't have  to  do  them  on my own  —  adults  at  home

+ school will help me.

My feelings are real, and I am not in trouble.

People around me want me to feel calm, confident, and

←
supported.

2) Create a consistent morning and nighttime routine

Why Routines Are Important

For children who experience Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), uncertainty and feeling out of control can significantly increase anxiety. Routines help by creating predictability while also offering choice, which supports emotional safety and confidence.

When children are involved in shaping their routine, they are more likely to:

Feel heard and respected

Experience a greater sense of control

Engage more positively with the routine

Feel safer and calmer during transitions

Routines: Supporting Children Through Predictability & Choice

Why Are Routines Important?

For children who experience Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), uncertainty and feeling out of control can increase anxiety. A predictable routine helps by creating predictability *while also offering choice*, which supports emotional safety and confidence.

When children are involved in shaping their routine, they are more likely to...

Creating a Morning Routine - Together

- 1 Co-Create the Routine**

Talk through the steps of a calm time and talk through:

 - ✓ The routine should be collaborative, flexible, and realistic
 - ✓ The order stays predictable, but small choices are built in
 - ✓ Extra time reduces pressure and allows regulation
- 2 Use Visual Support Chosen by Your Child**
 - Create a visual checklist or timetable together.
 - Let your child choose pictures, colours, symbols, or words

My Morning Routine

 - Wake up
 - Get dressed
 - Breakfast
 - Calm activity
 - Leave for school

When children help design the visual, they are more likely to engage with it.
- 3 Use Visual Support Chosen by Your Child**

Let your child help decide the order wherever possible.

 - Wake up
 - Get dressed
 - Breakfast
 - Calm activity
 - Leave for school

Let your child tick items off once.
- 4 Use Predictable and Reassuring Language**
 - "We agreed breakfast comes next."
 - "You can choose your calm activity now."
 - "We're doing this together, one step at a time."

Helpful Reminders for Parents

- ✓ The goal is safety and confidence, not perfection
- ✓ Routines can change - review them together regularly
- ✓ Praise effort and collaboration, not just outcomes.

Remember ❤️ Involvement builds ownership, Choice reduces anxiety

Small steps are still progress • Your child is communicating a need, not being difficult.



3) Create a Worry Box to help with managing school based

How to Make a Worry Box (Self-Soothe Box)

A fun tool to help children manage worries and calm big feelings.

Josh's Worry Box

What is a Worry Box?

A Worry Box, or Self-Soothe Box, is a small box that contains comforting, calming items chosen by your child. It gives them a safe way to express worries and helps them feel supported when big emotions feel overwhelming.

The box can be used before school

- During moments of anxiety
- As part of a calming routine

Tip: Let your child name the box

5 Simple Steps

- 1 Choose the Box Together**
 - Use a shoebox, small storage box, or gift box
 - Tip:** Let your child name the box (eg. My Calm Box, My Worry Helper)
- 2 Add "Worry Items" (For Letting Feelings Out)**
 - Notebook or paper
 - Emoji cards and
 - Feelings cards
 - Emoji slips
 - Feelings cards
 - Worry slips
 - Prompts like: "Today I'm worried about..."
- 3 Add "Calm-Down Tools" (For Regulating Emotions)**

Ideas:

 - 1** Breathing cards (Smell the flower, blow the candle)
 - 2** Grounding cards (5 things I see, 4 things I feel...)
 - 3** Positive affirmation cards
- 3 Add "Self-Soothing Items"**
 - Soft or sensory item
 - a squishy, fidget
 - A small comfort toy
 - Calming scent
 - Lavender bag
 - Headphones
- 4 Create a Simple Routine**
 - 1** You can pick one worry item and one calming item.
 - 2** We'll check the worry box at a calm time.
 - 3** Be patient - small steps help!

Remember: Big worries are easier to talk about when you feel safe! ❤️
Let your child know the box is there for them, and it's okay to ask for support.

Remember: Big worries are easier to talk about when you feel safe! ❤️

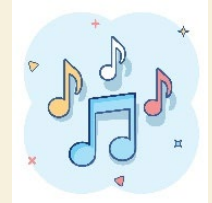
anxiety

4) Calming Techniques

Mindful Breathing Exercises/ Calming music:

Play soft, calming music or nature sounds. This can set a peaceful tone and help children relax their nervous system. A few minutes of mindful breathing can help also really help children to calm.

Please find some links below for videos which provide some lovely auditory/visual sensation. These include mindfulness exercises and deep breathing videos to support with calming children so that they are in a regulated state.



Bubble Bounce! Mindfulness for Children (Mindful Looking)

Rainbow Relaxation: Mindfulness for Children

Belly Breathing: Mindfulness for Children

DIAMOND // 30 Second Breathing Exercise. SUPER SHORT & SIMPLE!

Positive Affirmations: Begin each morning and end each day with positive affirmations or a brief moment of gratitude. Encourage children to think about something they are grateful for or share a positive thought about themselves or someone else in their life. They can always write this down. Doing this whilst calming music/videos are playing may support, please find an example below:

Relaxing Music For Stress Relief, Anxiety and Depressive States • Heal Mind, Body and Soul

Visual Relaxation Techniques: Use visual aids such as calming images or videos (e.g., ocean waves, gentle rain) projected onto a screen to create a serene atmosphere.

Please find examples below:

Autism Sleep Music Calming Diamond Jellyfish Aquarium
Soothing Sleep Remedy

Bubbles Therapy with Relaxing Music | | Autism ADHD
Sensory Therapy

Autism Calming Music a Journey to the Cosmos and
Beyond

Mellow Ocean Wave Sounds, Amazing Cala di L'oru Beach For Meditation and
Sleeping



Stretching or Movement

Breaks: Incorporate light stretching or simple movement activities to release any tension. Please see below for 'chair yoga' activities which can support children. Children can then use these poses throughout the lesson to help them move and engage!

Guided Imagery: Engage in a short, guided imagery exercise where they imagine themselves in a peaceful setting, like a quiet beach or forest.

Please find example links below:

[A Cozy Winter Day - Mindful Meditation With Hot Chocolate Breathing - For Kids! - YouTube](#)

[Guided Meditation for Kids | WATERFALL SHOWER | Mindfulness Meditation for Children](#)

[Guided Meditation for Kids | Spaceship to the Moon | Relaxation for Children](#)

Check-Ins: Conduct quick check-in where your child can share how they are feeling using the zones of regulation, helping them acknowledge their emotions. This can then establish whether a child is feeling over/energized, so that they can then think about an appropriate strategy to support their body to be at the 'just right state' ready for school.

SENIOR CHAIR YOGA POSES



The ZONES of Regulation

			
<p>Blue Zone</p> <p>Sad Bored Tired Sick</p>	<p>Green Zone</p> <p>Happy Focused Calm Proud</p>	<p>Yellow Zone</p> <p>Worried Frustrated Silly Excited</p>	<p>Red Zone</p> <p>overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified</p>

If children are in the Blue Zone:

- Star jumps
- High knees
- Jogging on the spot
- Arm circles
- Heavy marching
- Head tilts
- Simon Says

If children are in the Yellow Zone:

- Stretches
- Wall push ups
- Arm and finger squeezes (squeezing hand down each arm, and then using index finger and thumb to gently pinch up the hand to the tips of each of the fingers)
- Sensory Grounding (asking students to take a minute in silence to focus on 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch/feel, 3 things they can hear, 2 things that can smell, and 1 thing they can taste)



5) Working With School

Open and early communication with school is essential when a child begins to show signs of emotional distress around attendance. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school as soon as concerns arise, rather than waiting until difficulties escalate. Early support can prevent patterns of avoidance from becoming embedded and helps everyone work together more effectively.

The school's Attendance Lead regularly monitors and reviews attendance data to identify early signs of struggle. This proactive approach allows concerns to be addressed quickly and support to be put in place at the earliest opportunity. The Attendance Lead has created this EBSA support pack to help families better understand attendance-related anxiety, encourage open and honest conversations, and reduce stigma around attendance difficulties. The Attendance Lead works closely with the therapy team, teaching staff, SENCO, and pastoral team to ensure a joined-up approach. By sharing information, listening to family experiences, and understanding each child's individual needs, the school aims to create a supportive, flexible response that prioritises emotional wellbeing alongside attendance.

Parents are encouraged to reach out early, share observations from home, and use the tools in this pack as a starting point for discussion. Together, families and school can build a collaborative plan that supports the child to feel safe, understood, and gradually more confident in accessing education.

6) Further Support & Signposting



3. Working With School

Communication

- ✓ Arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher, SENCO, or pastoral lead.
- ✓ Share your child's completed worksheets to help identify triggers.

Co-Creating a Support Plan

Possible adjustments:

- ✓ Flexible start times
- ✓ Early exit card
- ✓ Access to a safe space
- ✓ Mentor or buddy system
- ✓ Adjustments for sensory needs

Support Plan

- ✓ Flexible starts
- ✓ Safe space
- ✓ Mentor
- ✓ Exit Card

Return-to-School Plan

A gradual reintegration may include:

- Visiting the school when quiet
- Attending for a short period daily
- Building up lesson by lesson

Keep communication consistent, open, and positive

Keep communication consistent, open and positive

Worry Box

Supporting a child with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) can feel challenging, and families should not feel they have to manage this alone. The following services and resources are available to offer additional guidance, emotional support, and practical strategies. Seeking support early can make a significant difference to both the child and the wider family.

Support Organisations

YoungMinds Parent Helpline

Offers free, confidential advice for parents and carers who are worried about their child's mental health, including school anxiety and EBSA. They can provide emotional support, practical guidance, and signposting to further services.

Local SEND / Local Offer Services

Each local authority provides a Local Offer outlining the support available for children and young people with additional needs, including emotional wellbeing, sensory support, and attendance-related difficulties.

GP / CAMHS Referral Route

If concerns around anxiety or mental health are impacting daily life, parents can speak to their GP about a referral to CAMHS. This may support assessment and therapeutic intervention where appropriate.

School Team

The school staff can provide emotional support, reasonable adjustments, and coordinated planning alongside teaching staff and the therapy team.



The following resources provide in-depth information, practical strategies, and sensory-based support for children experiencing EBSA:

YoungMinds – School Anxiety Guide

A parent-friendly guide offering insight into school-related anxiety and practical ways to support children.

[School Anxiety and Refusal | Parent Guide to Support | YoungMinds](#)

Rotherham Council – Sensory Support Pack

Practical strategies and activities to help children who experience sensory processing differences.

[Rotherham Sensory Strategies Guide V1 final](#)

North Lincolnshire Council – Sensory Toolkit

Guidance to support regulation, emotional wellbeing, and sensory needs at home and school.

[Sensory-Toolkit-Aug-2019.pdf](#)

SSE – EBSA Parent Guide

A focused guide designed to help parents understand EBSA and support gradual re-engagement with education.

[Parents/ Carers EBSA Guidance | Support Services for Education](#)

Reaching out for support is a strength, not a failure. EBSA is a response to emotional distress, not a choice or behaviour. With the right understanding, collaboration, and support in place, children can be helped to feel safer and gradually re-engage with learning.

