

Managing anxiety around education

Information for parents and carers

Contents

What is school anxiety? 1

What to do if your child can't go to school 1

If your child already has an EHC Plan 1

Getting temporary education at home..... 2

Should I home educate? 2

Where to get more help 2

Checklist for parents..... 3

SENDIASS

What is school anxiety?

- Some children feel **very anxious or upset** about going to school.
- This can be called **school anxiety** or **emotionally-based school avoidance**.
- It can happen to children with **special educational needs (SEN)**, like autism, ADHD, or anxiety.

What to do if your child can't go to school

1. Talk to your GP (Doctor)

- Tell the GP about your child's anxiety and school problems.
- Ask the GP for a **letter** for the **Local Authority (LA)** if they think your child is **not well enough to go to school**.
- You can also ask your GP to refer your child to **CAMHS** (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), but the wait might be long.

2. Speak to your child's school

Ask for a meeting with:

- The **class teacher**
- The **SENCO** (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Or a **senior teacher**

Talk about:

- what is making your child anxious,
- what support your child needs, and
- whether your child has **SEN**, even if they are doing well in class.

3. Ask for more help:

- The school can ask for help from other services, like the Education Welfare Service.
- If the school can't help enough, ask the local authority to do an EHC needs assessment. This is the first step to getting an EHC Plan (Education, Health and Care Plan).

If your child already has an EHC Plan

- Ask for an **early review** of the plan if your child is struggling.

SENDIASS

- The plan may need to:
 - be **changed**
 - include **mental health needs**
 - name a **different school**

🔑 **The Local Authority must still give your child the help in their plan even if they are not in school.**

Getting temporary education at home

If your child can't go to school for **15 days or more**, the **Local Authority** must:

- provide **suitable education**, and
- start it by the **6th day** of absence.

This education must:

- be **good quality**
- match your **child's needs**, and
- not be limited by money

If you are threatened with an Attendance Order

- An Attendance Order tells you to send your child to school.
- If this happens:
 - **Write** to the Attendance team,
 - Explain your child has **SEN** and **mental health difficulties**, and
 - Say that your child needs **support**, not punishment.

💡 **If they still push ahead, you may need legal help. You might qualify for legal aid.**

Should I home educate?

- Home education is a big decision.
- **You should not feel pressured** to do this because of problems at school or threats of court.

Where to get more help

- **GP or CAMHS** – for health and anxiety support
- **School SENCO** – for school support

SENDIASS

- **Local Authority** – for education help
- **IPSEA** – [School anxiety | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)
- **SENDIAS** – for local special needs support [Find your local IAS service](#)
- **Office of the Children’s Commissioner** – for attendance advice [DfE external document template](#)

Checklist for parents

- Talk to GP
- Ask the school for a meeting
- Keep letters, emails, and notes
- Ask for an EHC assessment if needed
- Ask for temporary education if your child is missing school
- Get support – you’re not alone