

Dear Parent/Carer,

We understand that children and young people may occasionally miss school for various reasons. Sometimes this is related to their physical health, their mental well-being, or a range of other school / family related factors.

Our primary goal is to create a safe and supportive school community where your child can thrive. To achieve this, we want to support them through a compassionate and child-centred approach; one where we understand what may make attending school more or less challenging. In doing so, we hope to not just improve attendance, but to also nurture your child's social, learning and emotional progress.

Over the past ..... weeks, we have noticed that ..... has missed some school days, and we would like to gain a better understanding of the reasons why they haven't been able to attend school. These absences are highlighted in the table we have provided for your convenience. You will find a list of possible reasons for each half or full day of absence. Please select the reason that best explains each absence and return the attached pages, so we can gain a better understanding of how we can support your child in school.

If your child is facing challenges attending school, particularly related to anxiety or emotional concerns, please reach out to us for support. We want to work together with you to create strategies that will help your child feel more at ease and confident in school. Please know that we are here to help, and we greatly value working together to foster your child's education.

Yours sincerely,



# Checklist for Attendance Tracking and Support (CATS)

Below, you will find a list of possible reasons for each half or full day of absence. Please select the reason that best explains each absence. If the reason isn't listed, choose 'other' and provide an explanation in the space provided.

## MY CHILD...

**C1** - had an appointment (e.g., a doctor's or hospital appointment).

**C2** - was ill (had a sickness, flu, covid, or was in hospital).

**C3** - travelled Independently- A) they made their way to school independently but did not arrive at school or B) they made their way to school independently but then returned home)

**C4** - was unable to attend school\* (they seemed anxious/ upset/ scared about going to school).

**\*Was your child unable to come to school due to:**

- ongoing barriers  
 a specific incident

**If so, please can you share a little more about this on page 4 under -**

**What might be contributing to your child's difficulties attending school?**

**Please tick this box if you would like us to contact you to see how we can help.**

## OUR FAMILY...

**F1** - had a personal situation (e.g., a funeral, or family member was taken to hospital).

**F2** - had other difficulties (e.g., the car broke down, or someone in the family had a medical appointment).

**F3** - had a religious holiday or cultural observance. (e.g., Hanukkah, Eid, Diwali).

## THE SCHOOL...

**S1** - was closed (public holiday/ term holidays/ teacher strike).

**S2** - sent my child home due to their behaviour (suspended or excluded from school or they were asked to leave for the remainder of the day).

**S3** - agreed that my child would not come to school\* (because the school could not take care of my child's needs/ could not keep my child safe).

\* I understand and have been able to discuss with a member of school staff why school could not take care of them and the relevant policy/law or DFE guidance that this relates to: **Yes/No**

## I OR MY PARTNER...

**P1** - gave my child the day off (to give them a rest).

**P2** - kept my child home for other reasons.

**P3** - arranged a holiday (e.g., to take a family holiday during school-time).

## OTHER

**O1** - something else (please describe in the space provided):

# Understanding Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe a situation where some children and young people find it incredibly challenging to attend school due to emotional factors, primarily feelings of fear and anxiety. It's important to note that EBSA goes beyond a simple disliking for school; it is rooted in emotional and physical distress. In some cases, this distress can become so overwhelming that your child may no longer feel able to attend school, even if they genuinely want to.

While we use the term Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) to foster a shared understanding of the challenges some children face, we fully respect that children and their families may have different ways of describing or discussing these difficulties. We understand that every child's experience is unique, and we are here to support you with the language and terminology that best fits your child's needs and comfort. Please feel free to use the terminology that feels right for your family.

## Parents /Carers Thoughts and Reflections

We believe that parents and caregivers play a crucial role in understanding and addressing EBSA. To help schools gain early insights into potential barriers to school attendance and wellbeing, we invite you to share your thoughts and reflections.

Here's a space for you to consider:

**What might be contributing to your child's difficulties attending school?**

**What strategies are you currently finding helpful at home to support your child's school attendance / alleviate distress they are experiencing?  
Share any approaches that have been helpful or any challenges you've encountered.**

**What do you think could be improved at the school level to support your child's attendance and wellbeing?**

**Please offer suggestions on what we can do at school to help your child.**