

Who to contact.....

Help is available. The sooner you seek help, the sooner your school and relevant professionals can work together to make your child happier about attending school on a regular basis

The first step is to contact your child's school.

School staff will be able to provide you with support and advice about getting your child back into school.

You may also want to contact your local GP if you are worried about any physical or mental health issues.

School staff may also want to seek further advice and support from the following services:

- Home School Link Worker
- School nurse
- Educational Psychologist
- GP
- Rowan Centre (Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Social Work
- Inclusion & Support Service

If the school decides to contact the above services they will ask for your permission first.

Additional sources of support:

Hands on Scotland contains information about school refusal. Visit their website:

www.handsonscotland.co.uk

Young Minds is a free and confidential information line for parents/carers with concerns about the mental health of a child:

Tele: 0800 018 2138

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Parentline Plus offers help and support for anyone caring for children about issues that are either big or small. The phone line is free, confidential and open 24/7

Tele: 0808 800 222

<http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk>



Educational Psychology Service



Attendance Difficulties

Information for Parents/Carers

About school refusal

Young people can sometimes find it hard to attend school. This is often called school refusal. It can happen for lots of reasons. Below are some of the signs that may indicate that your child is refusing to attend school:

- Extreme determination not to attend school (e.g. reluctance to get dressed, to leave the house or enter the school premises)
- Appearing to be anxious, agitated, tearful, having tantrums, displaying negative feelings or behaviours on the mornings of school attendance.
- Having difficulties settling to sleep on school nights.
- Often complain of sore stomach, headaches, feeling sick or general illness. These symptoms are worse the night before starting a new school week or after school holidays and are less obvious during weekends and holidays.
- A child or young person who has a genuine fear of attending school often wants to be on their own at home.
- Becoming distressed when separating from parents or carers to go to school.

Things to think about....

In trying to understand why your child does not want to attend school, ask yourself the following:

Could this be a specific fear or anxiety about a particular subject or activity that they feel they are failing in or likely to become embarrassed by?

Are they aware of not keeping up with peers in their school work?

Are they finding things difficult with friends, worried about teasing or bullying or are they often on their own at school?

Has there been significant change at home, death of a close family member or friend, a change of school, a move of house, divorce, new partner or new baby?

Are they in a good routine at home, regular bedtime, getting up in the morning?

Is there anything at home they might be worrying about?

Do you find it difficult to manage their behaviour at other times?

What can you do

Listen to your child to see if there is anything specific that is worrying them at school or at home. Be patient as they may find it difficult to talk about what is bothering them.

Try to stay calm and positive even if you are feeling angry or anxious yourself.

Try to be understanding and accept your child's explanation about why they find it hard to attend school.

Tell your child that you believe in their ability to overcome their issues and return to school.

Explain to them that the longer they are not in school the harder it will be to go back.

A firm yet supportive approach is usually the best way to ensure a return to school.

Encourage support from their friends (e.g. ask if they can walk to school together or support your child with activities outside school)

Keep a diary of your child's reluctance to attend school to see if there are any patterns.

Develop a good relationship with your child's teacher and keep in contact with your child's school. Make sure your child is aware of this.

