



# School attendance and mental wellbeing

DELEGATE TOOLKIT



**Anna Freud**  
building the  
mental wellbeing  
of the next  
generation

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## **EBSA Self Audit Tool**

The Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Self Audit Tool can be used as part of the Initial Steps within Lincolnshire's EBSA Pathway, where the focus is on early intervention & effective whole school systems. School plays a key role in the identification of children and young people who are currently experiencing or are at risk of EBSA. It is important for schools to develop effective whole school systems to support young people, be vigilant to early indicators and employ a thorough assess, plan, do and review cycle placing the child or young person at the heart of the interventions.

Schools should take a preventative measure towards EBSA, with a focus on early intervention and prevention. It is important to identify the early warning signs of EBSA. If unaddressed, the EBSA behaviours can become entrenched making it difficult to intervene once the child or young person has been out of education for some time.

The eight principles are linked to the DfE and Public Health England document: [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

The indicators listed below are *suggested* points of reflection, designed to stimulate discussion and guide plans and developments. They are not an exhaustive list. Some will be more / less pertinent or relevant for settings than others. There will inevitably be cross-over with other audit documents related to areas such as mental health, attendance or whole school inclusion.

|                 |  |       |  |
|-----------------|--|-------|--|
| Name:           |  | Role: |  |
| Name of School: |  | Date: |  |

| Principle 1 – Leadership and Management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |    |          |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There are clearly identified roles and responsibilities amongst staff, including a nominated senior member of staff who oversees EBSA policy and practice. SENCo, MH Lead and pastoral team have status within the school and work collaboratively. Senior leadership team embody and model school values from the top down |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| Emotional wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility across the continuum from development of strengths and wellbeing to targeted intervention.                                                                                                                                                                         |     |    |          |                                           |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There is a named Mental Health Lead in school and they have accessed the MH lead training.                                                                                                                                |     |    |          |                                           |
| A link Governor has been appointed to focus on mental health. They meet with the staff lead(s) at least termly and feedback to the Governing Body to support whole school developments in this area.                      |     |    |          |                                           |
| There is a member of senior staff who is responsible for overseeing attendance and non-attendance and arrangements for EBSA students. They actively work with SLT, SENCo, MH lead, wider pastoral team and link Governor. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Clear policies in place and regularly reviewed on attendance, behaviour, bullying, equality and transition which set out the responsibilities for all and the support available.                                          |     |    |          |                                           |
| Clear systems are in place for the early identification of school avoidance.                                                                                                                                              |     |    |          |                                           |

| Principle 2 – Ethos and Environment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |     |    |          |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There are clear policies and whole school ethos on attendance, relationships, bullying and transition. Full understanding is embedded that good learning and academic progress are inseparable and inextricably linked to good emotional health. Mental health is viewed as ‘everyone’s business’ and all pupils are valued; with commitment to promoting inclusivity, a sense of community and belonging for all. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| The entrance areas into the school premises and start of the day convey a sense of welcome to pupils as they arrive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |    |          |                                           |
| There are areas within school grounds that students can freely access during break and lunch that feel calming and are conducive to emotional regulation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |     |    |          |                                           |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                               | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There are dedicated, confidential spaces for mental health support to be offered when needed.                                             |     |    |          |                                           |
| Minority and different SEND groups feel equally welcome and experience an equal sense of belonging and inclusion within the school.       |     |    |          |                                           |
| Student and staff views are regularly sought on all of the above, considered and suggestions and developments are actively taken forward. |     |    |          |                                           |

| Principle 3 – Curriculum, Teaching and Learning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |    |                                           |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| Quality first teaching includes appropriate differentiation of the curriculum to empower learners with a range of needs. Every opportunity to reference, practice and support social and emotional skills are used and embedded across the wider curriculum. There are regularly timetabled and planned sessions to address specific learning objectives on topics such as resiliency. The curriculum is appropriately differentiated and accessible for all. |     |    |                                           |         |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Yes | No | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) | Outcome |
| The school follows approved RSHE curriculum which addresses issues such as mental health, bullying, gender identity and anxiety management as well as life skills such as building resiliency, coping and social skills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     |    |                                           |         |
| There is sufficient flexibility within targeted provision to ensure non-attenders have continuity of education and provision to meet needs; such as online learning platforms in place and home learning activities are produced as standard to complement standard schemes of work.                                                                                                                                                                          |     |    |                                           |         |
| Staff have been trained in how to teach emotionally difficult topics safely and sensitively.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |     |    |                                           |         |
| Available opportunities, such as assemblies and form time is fully utilised to promote welcome, belonging, social and emotional support and mental health.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |    |                                           |         |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                            | Yes | No | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) | Outcome |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| There are clear mechanisms in place for accessing additional support in school, should the need for this be identified in the course of following the RSHE curriculum. |     |    |                                           |         |
| Teaching staff routinely consider social and emotional factors when planning lessons and managing their class in line with good relational practice.                   |     |    |                                           |         |
| Staff are aware as to whom they should convey any concerns regarding EBSA.                                                                                             |     |    |                                           |         |

| <b>Principle 4 – Staff development and wellbeing</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |    |          |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Staff wellbeing is valued in policy and practice. Emotional support and stress management is in place for staff, including staff supervision. There are continuous professional development opportunities for all staff which makes clear the promotion of emotional / mental health and wellbeing |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| There are robust systems in place for staff to communicate any concerns about pupils to the designated member(s) of staff, as they arise, with a view to promoting early intervention.                                                                                                             |     |    |          |                                           |
| Staff feel confident in providing support to pupils displaying anxiety and school avoidant behaviour.                                                                                                                                                                                              |     |    |          |                                           |
| Staff regularly access advice (drop-ins, consultations, individual or group supervision) with regard to assessing and supporting students who are displaying EBSA, or who would be deemed to be in the 'at risk' category.                                                                         |     |    |          |                                           |
| There is regular and continuing professional development and training programme in place to embed whole school ethos around EBSA and the impact of interaction styles, the importance of welcome, inclusive mindsets, emotion coaching,                                                            |     |    |          |                                           |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| resilience building, being 'trauma aware' and promoting restorative practice.                                                                                               |     |    |          |                                           |
| There is designated staff whose role is to liaise and work with families (e.g. Family Support Practitioner) to help with early identification of risk and need for support. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Staff are supported to reflect on their unconscious bias and how this impacts on their interaction style / approach.                                                        |     |    |          |                                           |

| Principle 5 – Pupil Voice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |     |    |          |                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There are opportunities for students to express their views and ideas, and have them heard and embedded within the culture of the school. Pupils are able to celebrate their achievements. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to be involved in decisions and plans about their support and provision. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| There is a student council or equivalent that meets regularly and is widely considered to be accessible and good at capturing and communicating feedback from all pupils.                                                                                                                             |     |    |          |                                           |
| Pupil voice, including minority and SEND pupils, is valued and routinely and regularly obtained using inclusive methods and actively participates in the school's development plan.                                                                                                                   |     |    |          |                                           |
| When there are EBSA related concerns around a pupil, a comfortable and safe way to capture their voice is prioritised within an assess-plan-do-review cycle.                                                                                                                                          |     |    |          |                                           |
| Pupils feel that the school manages any incidences of bullying well.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |     |    |          |                                           |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                         | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| The school actively looks for and plans opportunities for pupils to build and strengthen social relationships with other pupils.    |     |    |          |                                           |
| There is active promotion of supportive literature regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health for students.                    |     |    |          |                                           |
| You have an easily accessible, confidential route for students to seek support for any mental health concerns or worries in school. |     |    |          |                                           |

| <b>Principle 6 – Identifying need and monitoring impact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     |    |          |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| There are clear systems in place for the early identification of anxiety and potential for EBSA. There is a nominated member of staff who has responsibility to investigate and act on concerns.                                                                                 |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| There are robust systems to ensure any staff concerns related to pupil anxiety and attendance are flagged up and responded to quickly.                                                                                                                                           |     |    |          |                                           |
| Once a potential EBSA concern has been flagged up, there are effective systems for eliciting the views of the pupil, the views of their parent/carer and the views of any other relevant parties (teacher/friends/ Head of Year etc) as part of the assess-plan-do-review cycle. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Staff are trained in eliciting the views of anxious pupils and their parents, and then using these to create an assessment overview and accompanying EBSA Support Plan.                                                                                                          |     |    |          |                                           |
| EBSA Support Plans are routinely, regularly and robustly reviewed and built upon.                                                                                                                                                                                                |     |    |          |                                           |



| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Numerical data regarding factors such as patterns within pupil attendance, bullying incidences, attainment, progress or wellbeing scores, are gathered and used to shape policy, practice and staff training needs.                                                |     |    |          |                                           |
| Protocol is in place to ensure staff are aware of students that have been identified as having a mental health need, and have guidance in knowing how to support them in class accordingly.                                                                        |     |    |          |                                           |
| Proactive liaison and transition planning in place with other settings to ensure identification of students requiring additional support prior to joining your school. Ensuring continuation of support already in place prior to transitioning to avoid any gaps. |     |    |          |                                           |
| There are robust systems in place for recognising and addressing literacy and language difficulties and the central role they play in enabling curriculum access for pupils.                                                                                       |     |    |          |                                           |

| Principle 7 – Working with parents/carers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     |    |          |                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Parent/carers are seen as partners in working with school and other agencies to resolve challenges. There is recognition of the importance of listening to and working with parent/carers, to develop mutual understanding and trust. Information shared with parents and carers is accessible |     |    |          |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| Parent/carers are invited to welcoming face to face school induction meetings, and given more than one opportunity to ask questions (and method for doing so) or confidentially share any concerns before their child arrives at school.                                                       |     |    |          |                                           |

| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                      | Yes | No | Evidence | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Parent/carers know who to contact in school and how, to discuss any worries about their child, their attendance or willingness to attend.                                                        |     |    |          |                                           |
| The school provides information on resiliency building, problem solving, anxiety management and SEMH at parents' meetings/evenings or during other events that parents can attend.               |     |    |          |                                           |
| The school facilitates opportunities for parent/carers/families to socialise and network, with specific consideration given to those of pupils with additional needs.                            |     |    |          |                                           |
| The school shares information in a range of formats to enable accessibility for a diverse range of parental learning styles.                                                                     |     |    |          |                                           |
| The school makes SEMH offers from external providers and methods for accessing them clear to parents.                                                                                            |     |    |          |                                           |
| Where there are attendance concerns for a pupil, parents are fully supported and enabled to share their stories/ideas/thoughts with staff in a way that feels safe and non-blaming.              |     |    |          |                                           |
| There is a procedure in place for staff to maintain regular contact with parent/carers of students who are displaying more entrenched EBSA behaviours, with the time for the staff to follow it. |     |    |          |                                           |
| Staff are trained and available to offer support to parent/carers whose children are struggling to separate from them at morning drop off.                                                       |     |    |          |                                           |
| Factors such as parental illness or difficult home circumstances are facilitated, recorded and used in a safe and appropriate way to ensure suitable support is given to students and families.  |     |    |          |                                           |

| <b>Principle 8 – Targeted support and identification of specialist pathways</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |     |    |  |                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--|-------------------------------------------|
| There is openness to work with external agencies where appropriate. There is a provision map of school-based interventions & approaches available within an assess, plan, do, review cycle. All staff are aware of strategies and programmes in place and of how to work with them to support pupils. |     |    |  |                                           |
| Indicators:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No |  | Action or follow up (Who, what & by when) |
| There is a comprehensive provision map in school with clear routes into each intervention offer (based upon an assess-plan-do-review cycle).                                                                                                                                                          |     |    |  |                                           |
| There is an overview of any gaps in the school's SEMH provision offer with a plan for how to address them.                                                                                                                                                                                            |     |    |  |                                           |
| There are appointed and trained emotional literacy support assistants, or equivalent, who work with individuals or groups to address skills such as anxiety management or resiliency building.                                                                                                        |     |    |  |                                           |
| The school routinely gathers and reviews evidence of progress made via the implementation of actions /interventions in school and uses this information to plan next steps (within the assess-plan-do-review cycle).                                                                                  |     |    |  |                                           |
| There is staff within school who have good knowledge of the local offer from external agencies and how and when to access support from them.                                                                                                                                                          |     |    |  |                                           |



Assess

# Function of non-attendance



**Function 1:** Avoidance of school-based stimuli that provoke negative emotions e.g. anxiety or depression

**Function 2:** Avoidance of aversive social or evaluative situations in school e.g. bullying or social anxiety

**Function 3:** Pursuit of attention from significant others at home e.g. parent/carer (including separation anxiety)

**Function 4:** Pursuit of tangible reinforcement or rewards outside of school e.g. watching television or shopping

### 3. School Attendance Difficulties Rating Scale – pupil version

Name

Date of birth

Year group

School

Date

Completed with

Young people sometimes have different reasons for not going to school. Some feel uncomfortable at school, some have trouble with other people, some want to be with their family, and some prefer to do things more fun outside of school.

This form asks questions about why you sometimes don't go to school.

For each question, pick one number that describes you best for the last few days. Answer all the questions. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

Tick the number that best fits the way you feel.

|                                                                                                                                                          | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. How often do you have uncomfortable feelings about going to school because you are afraid of something in school (e.g. tests, fire alarm, a teacher)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                                                                           | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. How often do you stay away from school because it is hard to speak with the other kids at school?                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. How often do you feel you would rather be with your family than go to school?                                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. When you are not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how often do you leave the house to do something fun?          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. How often do you stay away from school because you will have uncomfortable feelings (e.g. sad or worried) if you go?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. How often do you stay away from school because you feel embarrassed in front of other people at school?                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. How often do you think about your parents/carers or other family members when in school?                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. When you are not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how often do you talk to or see people other than your family? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. How often do you feel worse at school (e.g. scared, nervous, or sad) compared to how you feel at home with friends?    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. How often do you stay away from school because you do not have many friends there?                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. How much would you rather be with your mum/dad/family than go to school?                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                                                                                                           | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12. When you are not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how much do you enjoy doing different things (e.g. being with friends, going out shopping)?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. How often do you have uncomfortable feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) when you think about school on Saturday and Sunday?             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. How often do you stay away from certain places in school (e.g. corridors or places where certain people are) where you would have to talk to someone? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. How much would you rather be taught by your family at home than by your teachers at school?                                                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. How often do you refuse to go to school because you want to have fun outside of school?                                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. If you had fewer uncomfortable feelings (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) about school, how much easier would it be for you to go to school?                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. If it were easier for you to make new friends, how much easier would it be for you to go to school?                                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. How much easier would it be easier for you to go to school if your family went with you?                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. How much easier would it be for you to go to school if you could do more things you like to do after school (e.g. being with friends)?                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |





|                                                                                                                                  | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 21. How much more do you have uncomfortable feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) compared to other people your age? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. How often do you stay away from people at school compared to other pupils your age?                                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. How much more than most people your age would you like to be at home with your mum/dad/family?                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. How much more than most people your age would you rather be doing fun things outside school?                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Adapted from Kearney and Silverman's SRAS-R

## Results

|              | Pupil Responses: |     |     |     | Parent Responses: |     |     |     |
|--------------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|
|              | 1.               | 2.  | 3.  | 4.  | 1.                | 2.  | 3.  | 4.  |
|              | 5.               | 6.  | 7.  | 8.  | 5.                | 6.  | 7.  | 8.  |
|              | 9.               | 10. | 11. | 12. | 9.                | 10. | 11. | 12. |
|              | 13.              | 14. | 15. | 16. | 13.               | 14. | 15. | 16. |
|              | 17.              | 18. | 19. | 20. | 17.               | 18. | 19. | 20. |
|              | 21.              | 22. | 23. | 24. | 21.               | 22. | 23. | 24. |
| <b>Total</b> |                  |     |     |     |                   |     |     |     |
| <b>Mean</b>  |                  |     |     |     |                   |     |     |     |
| <b>Rank</b>  |                  |     |     |     |                   |     |     |     |

#### 4. School Attendance Difficulties Rating Scale – parent version

Pupil's name

Pupil's date of birth

Pupil's year group

Completed by

Relationship to pupil

Date

Young people sometimes have different reasons for not going to school. Some feel uncomfortable at school, some have trouble with other people, some want to be with their family, and some prefer to do things more fun outside of school.

This form asks questions about why your child sometimes doesn't want to go to school. Please answer all the questions below without discussing them with your child (because this could affect the responses they give on their own version of the questionnaire).

For each question, tick one number that you think describes your child best for the last few days.

|                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Never</b>          |                       |                       | <b>Half<br/>the<br/>time</b> |                       |                       | <b>Always</b>         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>0</b>              | <b>1</b>              | <b>2</b>              | <b>3</b>                     | <b>4</b>              | <b>5</b>              | <b>6</b>              |
| 1. How often does your child have uncomfortable feelings about going to school because they are afraid of something in school (e.g. tests, fire alarm, a teacher)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                                                                                         | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. How often does your son/daughter stay away from school because it is hard for them to speak to other students?                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. How often does your son/daughter feel they would rather be with you or another family member than go to school?                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. When your son/daughter is not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how often do they leave the house to do something fun?          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. How often does your son/daughter stay away from school because they will feel uncomfortable (e.g. sad or worried) if they go?        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. How often does your son/daughter stay away from school because they feel embarrassed in front of other people at school?             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. How often does your son/daughter think about you or other family members when in school?                                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. When your son/daughter is not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how often do they talk to or see people other than family?      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. How often does your son/daughter feel worse at school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) compared to how they feel at home or with friends? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. How often does your son/daughter stay away from school because they do not have many friends there?                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                                                                                                                            | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. How much would your son/daughter rather be with you or other family members than go to school?                                                                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. When your son/daughter is not in school during the week (Mon to Fri) how much do they enjoy doing different things (e.g. being with friends, going out)?               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. How often does your son/daughter have uncomfortable feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) when they think about school on Sat and Sun?                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. How often does your son/daughter stay away from certain places in school (e.g. corridors or places where certain people are) where they would have to talk to someone? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. How much would your son/daughter rather be taught by you or your partner at home than by their teachers at school?                                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. How often does your son/daughter refuse to go to school because they want to have fun outside of school?                                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. If your son/daughter had fewer uncomfortable feelings (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) about school how much easier would it be easier for them to go to school?            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. If it were easier for your son/daughter to make new friends, would it be easier for them to go to school?                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                                                                                                            | Never<br>0            | 1                     | 2                     | Half<br>the<br>time<br>3 | 4                     | 5                     | Always<br>6           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 19. How much easier would it be for your son/daughter to go to school if you or your partner went with them?                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. How much easier would it be for your son/daughter to go to school if they could do more things they like to do after school (e.g. being with friends)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. How much more does your son/daughter have uncomfortable feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) compared to other people their age?          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. How often does your son/daughter stay away from people at school compared to other pupils their age?                                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. How much more than most people their age would your son/daughter like to be at home with you or your family?                                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. How much more than most people their age would your son/daughter rather be doing fun things outside school?                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Adapted from Kearney and Silverman's SRAS-R

**Results: Record parental responses on pupil questionnaire sheet**



## How to score the School Attendance Difficulties Assessment Scales

Record the rating given for each question in the table at the end of the pupil version. Add up the scores for each column and find the (mean) average by dividing the total by the number of questions (this will be 6 if all questions have been answered).

### The columns represent the 4 functions in order i.e.

**Column 1:** Avoidance of school-based stimuli that provoke negative emotions e.g. anxiety or depression

**Column 2:** Avoidance of aversive social or evaluative situations in school e.g. bullying or social anxiety

**Column 3:** Pursuit of attention from significant others at home e.g. parent (including separation anxiety)

**Column 4:** Pursuit of tangible reinforcement or rewards outside of school e.g. watching television or shopping

The (mean) average scores generated allow you to see which of the functions are more or less relevant for the pupil in question. They can be ranked in order from highest to lowest, with the higher scores meaning they are more likely to be a function contributing to that pupil's school attendance difficulties. Comparisons can also be made between pupil and parent/carer responses.

For further support with interpreting any assessment data and creating evidence-based hypotheses, please contact your Quadrant SEND Inclusion & Psychology team.

# EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE GUIDANCE

## Appendix D

### Card Sort: Function of School Avoidance

This card sort activity, based on a School Refusal Assessment Scale developed by Kearney (2002), has been devised by Sheffield EPS as a tool to support staff to develop a greater understanding of a young person's school avoidance. The 24 statements are colour-coded by the function of behaviour identified by Kearney and Silverman (1990). By asking a pupil to sort the statements or by talking about each one, mentors may find that using the cards can support an understanding of the function of the school avoidance behaviour.

©Lancashire County Council



× EBSA°

**Blue, Function 1:** To avoid something or situations that elicits negative feelings or high levels of stress or anxiety (e.g. fear of the toilets; the noise in the playground; lots of people moving all together in the corridors between classes, tests/ exams)



× EBSA°

**Red, Function 2:** To escape difficult social situations (e.g. feeling left out at playtime, reading out loud in class or other public speaking/group task, working as part of a group)



× EBSA°

**Green, Function 3:** To get attention from or spend more time with significant others at home (e.g. change in family dynamic, concerned about the well-being of parent)



× EBSA°

**Yellow, Function 4:** To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating (e.g. watch tv, go shopping, play computer games, hang out with friends).



### How the statements could be used with a pupil:

- Cut up the statements
- Ask the pupil to sort the statements into three groups, shown on the white cards: A bit like me, most like me and least like me
- Using the key below, consider if any patterns are noticeable and whether some functions are more prevalent than others
- If the pupil is comfortable, discuss the statements to help build a richer picture

Consider together how this information can help to plan the next steps







**EBSA**



**I have bad feelings about going to school because I'm afraid of something related to school (e.g. tests, school bus, teacher, fire alarm)**



**EBSA**



**I stay away from school because it is hard to speak with the other kids at school**



**EBSA**



**I would rather be with my parent(s) than go to school**



**EBSA**



**When I am not in school during the week (Monday to Friday). I leave the house and do something fun**



**EBSA**



**I stay away from school because I will feel sad or depressed if I go.**



**EBSA**



**I stay away from school because I feel embarrassed in front of other people at school**



**EBSA**



**I think about my parent(s) or family when in school**



**EBSA**



**When I am not in school during the week (Monday to Friday). I talk to or see other people (other than my family)**





**EBSA**

**I feel worse at school  
(e.g. scared, nervous, sad)  
compared to how I feel at  
home with friends**



**EBSA**

**I stay away from school  
because I do not have many  
friends there**



**EBSA**

**I would rather be with my  
parent(s) than go to school**



**EBSA**

**When I am not in school during the  
week (Monday to Friday). I enjoy  
doing different things (e.g. being  
with friends, going places)**



**EBSA**

**I have bad feelings about  
school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad)  
when I think about school  
on Saturday or Sunday**



**EBSA**

**I stay away from places  
in school (e.g. hallways, places  
where certain groups of people  
are) where I would have to talk  
to someone**



**EBSA**

**I would rather be taught by  
my parents at home than by  
my teacher at school**



**EBSA**

**I stay away from school  
because I want to have fun  
outside of school**





**EBSA**



**If I had less bad feelings  
(e.g. scared, nervous, sad)  
about school, it would be easier  
for me to go to school**



**EBSA**



**If it were easier for me to make  
new friends, it would be easier for  
me to go to school**



**EBSA**



**It would be easier for me  
to go to school if my parents  
went with me**



**EBSA**



**It would be easier for me to  
go to school if I could do more  
things I like to do more things  
I like to do after school hours  
(e.g. being with friends)**



**EBSA**



**I have bad feelings about  
school (e.g. scared, nervous,  
sad) compared to other kids  
of my age**



**EBSA**



**I often stay away from people  
in school compared to other  
kids of my age**



**EBSA**



**I would like to be home  
with my parents more than  
other kids my age would**



**EBSA**



**I would rather be doing fun  
things outside of school more  
than most kids of my age**





# Most like me



# A bit like me



# Least like me



|                                                              |               |             |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>CYP Name:</b>                                             | <b>D.O.B:</b> | <b>Yr.:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
| <b>Name of Person Completing this activity with the CYP:</b> |               |             |              |

### Guidance

This card sorting activity has been created to help gain the CYP's view of possible EBSA 'risk' and 'protective' factors which have been included in the corresponding checklist. Some of the statements have been reworded to make them more accessible and positive.

The activity should be carried out by an adult that the CYP has a positive and secure relationship with. It is important that enough time has been protected to complete this activity. It is possible that discussing some of these sensitive areas could lead the CYP to become upset, so there needs to be freedom to extend the session if required.

The CYP should be told that the aim of the activity is to help staff explore if there are any areas that need support, but also to identify positives. Category headings, 'not true, sometimes true and often true', have been included, but these can be adapted to meet individual needs/situations. These headings should be placed in front of the CYP and discussed prior to beginning the activity. The adult should then pass the CYP each card and read it to them/explain its meaning. The CYP should then be asked to place each one under the heading they feel is most appropriate.

It is important that it is not just viewed as an activity to be ticked off; if there are any areas that need exploring further, this should take place. Staff should also ask questions to gain richer information e.g. if it asks about friends/teachers then ask the CYP which teacher/friend they are thinking of or ask why they have placed a particular card under a specific heading. The table included can be used to mark the CYP's responses during the activity and note down any comments/discussion that takes place.

Once completed the information should be considered to identify areas of need/strength and the most appropriate support. The CYP should also be asked if they have any ideas what might make things better/easier e.g. if for 'I feel safe and secure in school' they responded with 'not true' then ask them if there is anything that makes them feel safe/anything adults can do to make them feel safer. It is important that any views are shared sensitively with parents/carers, so the support agreed is consistent across contexts, and outcomes can be worked towards collaboratively.



| Level      | Card No | Risk Factors                                       | Category Placement |                |            | Additional Exploration/Comments |
|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|---------------------------------|
|            |         |                                                    | Not True           | Sometimes True | Often True |                                 |
| Individual | 1       | I find it easy to understand my feelings           |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 2       | I find it easy to talk to others about my feelings |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 3       | I know how other people are feeling                |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 4       | I think I will do well in school                   |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 5       | I think the work I do in school is good            |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 6       | I have a lot of friends                            |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 7       | I like being around other students/children        |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 8       | I like talking to other students/children          |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 9       | I feel ok when I have to leave my parents/carers   |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 10      | I feel good about myself                           |                    |                |            |                                 |
|            | 11      | I know my family are ok when I am in school        |                    |                |            |                                 |

|               |           |                                           |  |  |  |  |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|               | <b>12</b> | My parents/carers do too much for me      |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Family</b> | <b>13</b> | I spend a lot of time with my family      |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>14</b> | I can talk to my family                   |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>15</b> | My family do activities together          |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>16</b> | My family get on well                     |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>17</b> | There is something/somebody I have lost   |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>18</b> | My family do not argue                    |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>19</b> | My parents/carers give me freedom         |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>20</b> | There have been some changes in my family |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>21</b> | My parents/cares need help                |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>22</b> | I see my parents/carers as much as I want |  |  |  |  |
|               | <b>23</b> | My parents/carers are calm                |  |  |  |  |

|        |    |                                              |  |  |  |  |
|--------|----|----------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| School | 24 | My classrooms are organised and quiet        |  |  |  |  |
|        | 25 | I know what to expect in school              |  |  |  |  |
|        | 26 | I feel safe and secure in school             |  |  |  |  |
|        | 27 | My teacher is fair                           |  |  |  |  |
|        | 28 | My teacher is kind and calm                  |  |  |  |  |
|        | 29 | I get along well with my friends             |  |  |  |  |
|        | 30 | Other students/children like me              |  |  |  |  |
|        | 31 | There are some children who are unkind to me |  |  |  |  |
|        | 32 | I find learning easy                         |  |  |  |  |
|        | 33 | I like my teacher(s)                         |  |  |  |  |
|        | 34 | I like all activities in school              |  |  |  |  |



**Not  
True**



**Sometimes  
True**



**Often  
True**



I find it easy to understand my feelings



1

I find it easy to talk to others about my feelings



2

I know how other people are feeling



3

I think I will do well in school



4

I think the work I do in school is good



5

I have a lot of friends



6

I like being around other students/children



7

I like talking to other students/children



8

I feel ok when I have to leave my parents/carers



9

I feel good about myself



10

I know my family are ok when I am in school



11

My parents/carers do too much for me



12

I spend a lot of time with my family



13

I can talk to my family



14

My family do activities together



15

My family get on well



16

There is something/somebody I have lost



17

My family do not argue



18

My parents/carers give me freedom



19

There have been some changes in my family



20

My parents/carers need help



21

I see my parents/carers as much as I want



22

My parents/carers are calm



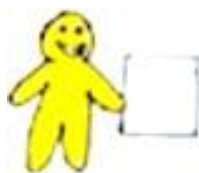
23

My classrooms are organised



24

I know what to expect in school



25

I feel safe and secure in school



26

My teacher is fair



27

My teacher is kind and calm



28

I get on well with my friends



29

Other students/children like me



30

There are some students/children who are unkind to me



31

I find learning easy



32

I like my teacher(s)



33

I like all activities in school



34



Assess

# Mapping and narrowing

## Sort It Game !

*The faces can mean different things, but generally refer to 'gut feeling' (e.g. no problem to big problem, no worries to lots of worries) without too much time for thinking or discussion while sorting. The ☹ means that the student does not want or 'need' to discuss it – not appropriate for subjects but possibly so for some more sensitive 'Aspects of Life' cards.*

- 1. Give the pupil the 'face' cards*
- 2. Ask them what they think they mean (correct if necessary – using age appropriate terminology if possible)*
- 3. Place the 'word' cards upside down – randomly*
- 4. Explain how to 'play' the game*
- 5. Model the procedure – you choose a card – turn it the right way and then quickly decide which pile (relating to the face) you think it goes with*
- 6. Start – encourage limited thinking / deciding time (so it is a 'gut' reaction)*
- 7. Ask them what they thought of the game*



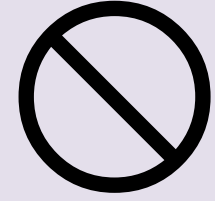
**No problem**



**Sometimes  
a problem**



**Big  
Problem**



**Nothing to  
do with me**

|                      |                         |               |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| English              | Maths                   | Science       |
| Art                  | PE                      | DT            |
| Music                | ICT                     | Circle Time   |
| Talking              | Friends                 | Writing       |
| Rules<br>at home     | Rules<br>at school      | Rows/fights   |
| Getting to<br>school | Being good at<br>things | The<br>Future |

|                |                            |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Stealing       | The Past                   | Food                             |
| Anger          | Love                       | Family                           |
| Bullying       | Worries                    | Being liked by<br>other children |
| Little brother | Being liked by<br>teachers | Looking nice                     |
| Lies           | My bedroom                 | Changes                          |
| Being late     | Being in class             | Noise                            |



|         |                      |             |
|---------|----------------------|-------------|
| Losing  | Breakfast            | Lunch time? |
| Reading | Brother or<br>sister | ?           |
| ?       | ?                    |             |
|         |                      |             |
|         |                      |             |

Reading

English

Maths

Science

Art

PE

Circle Time

Talking

ICT

Rules  
at home

Rules  
at school

Rows/fights

Lunch time

Brother or  
sister

Noise



# EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE GUIDANCE

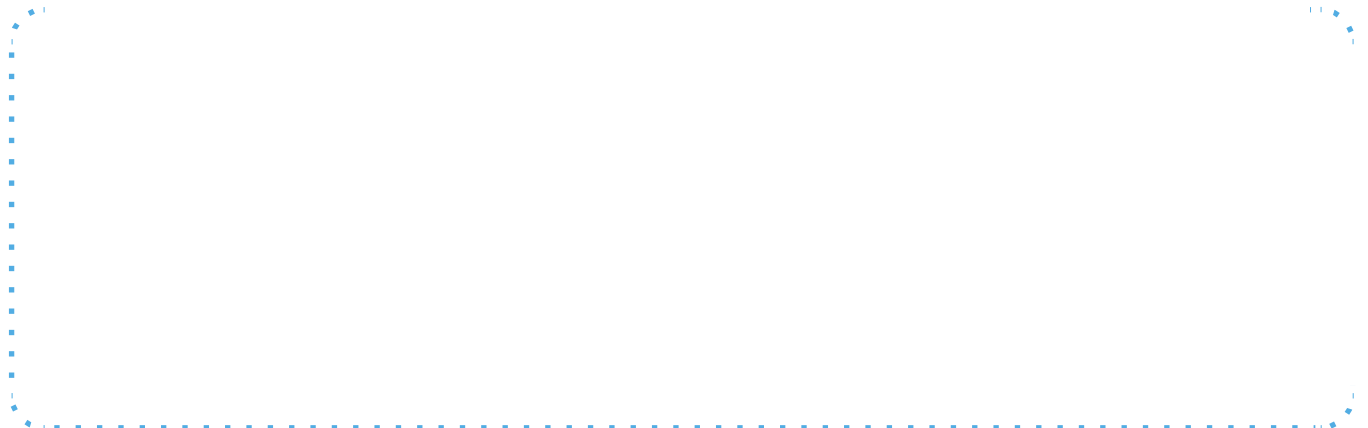
## PRIMARY

### Pupil version

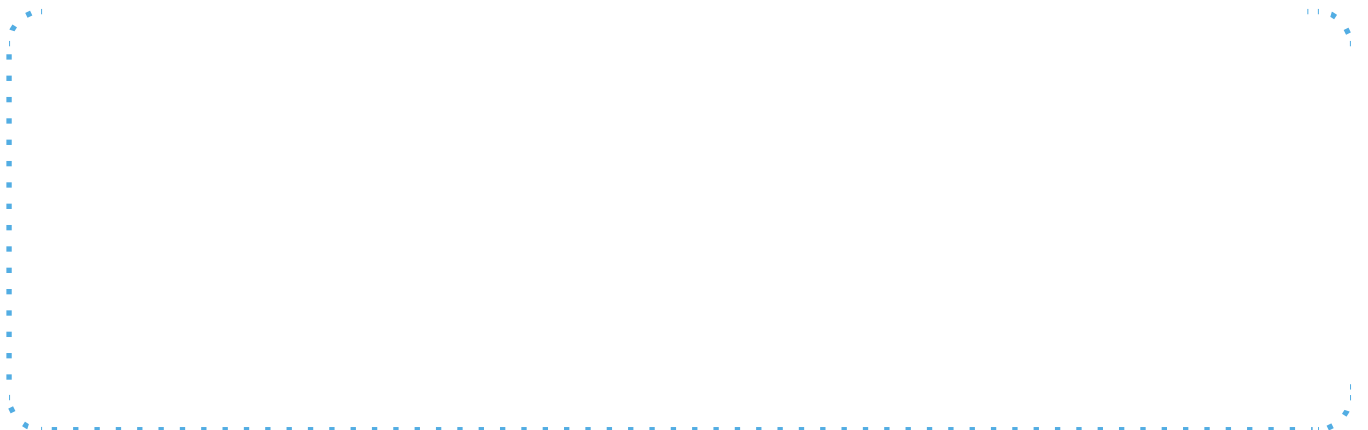
## Mapping the Landscape of Your School

### 1. The Physical Environment

- Look carefully at the map of your school
- Use the highlighter pens to mark how the areas on the map make you feel.  
 Green = I feel calm and relaxed in this space  
 Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space  
 Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious
- For the areas that you have coloured red, what makes you feel unsafe?



- What might the school do to help you feel safer in your 'red' areas?



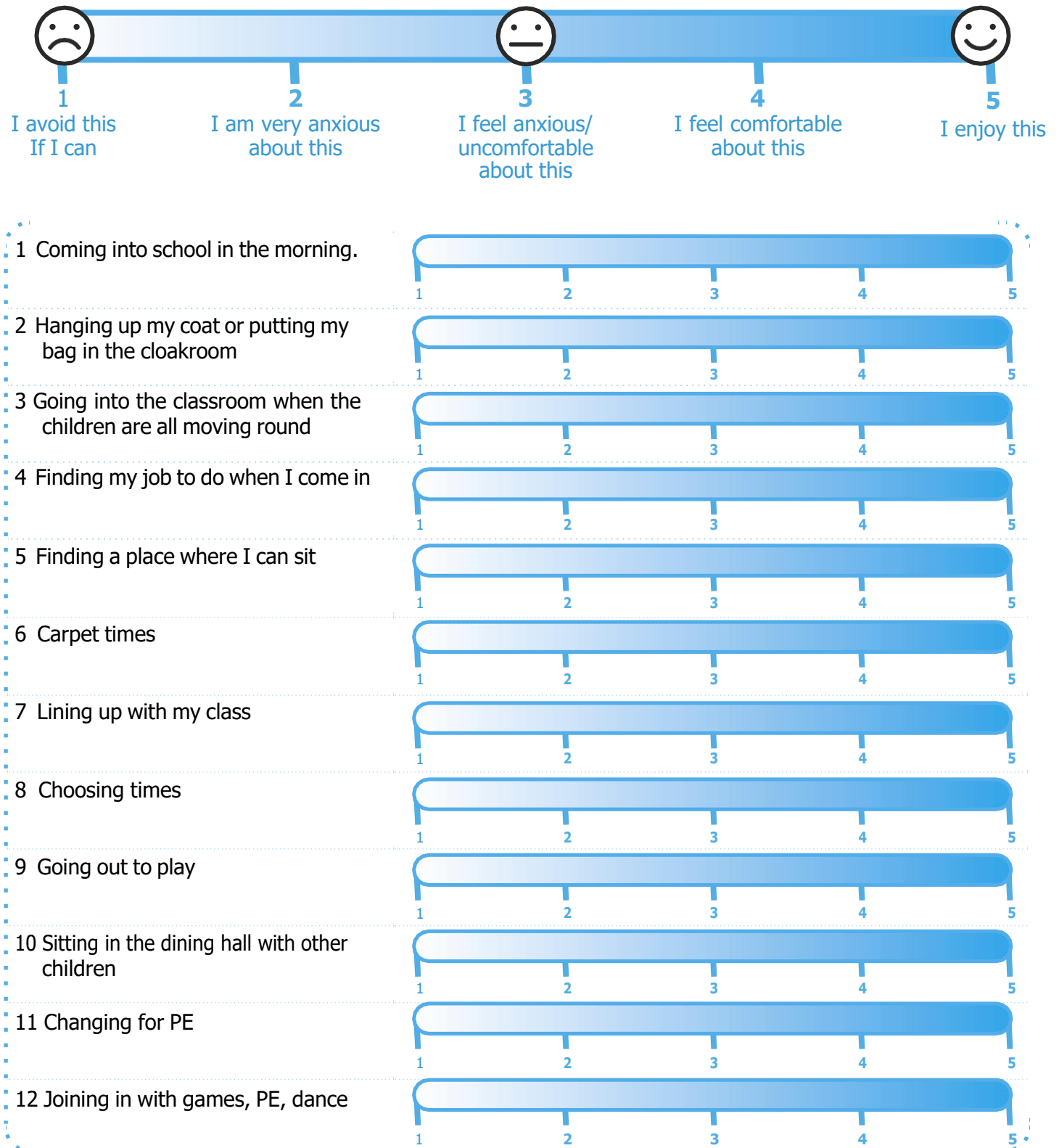
Thank you for colouring the map.





## 2. The Social Environment

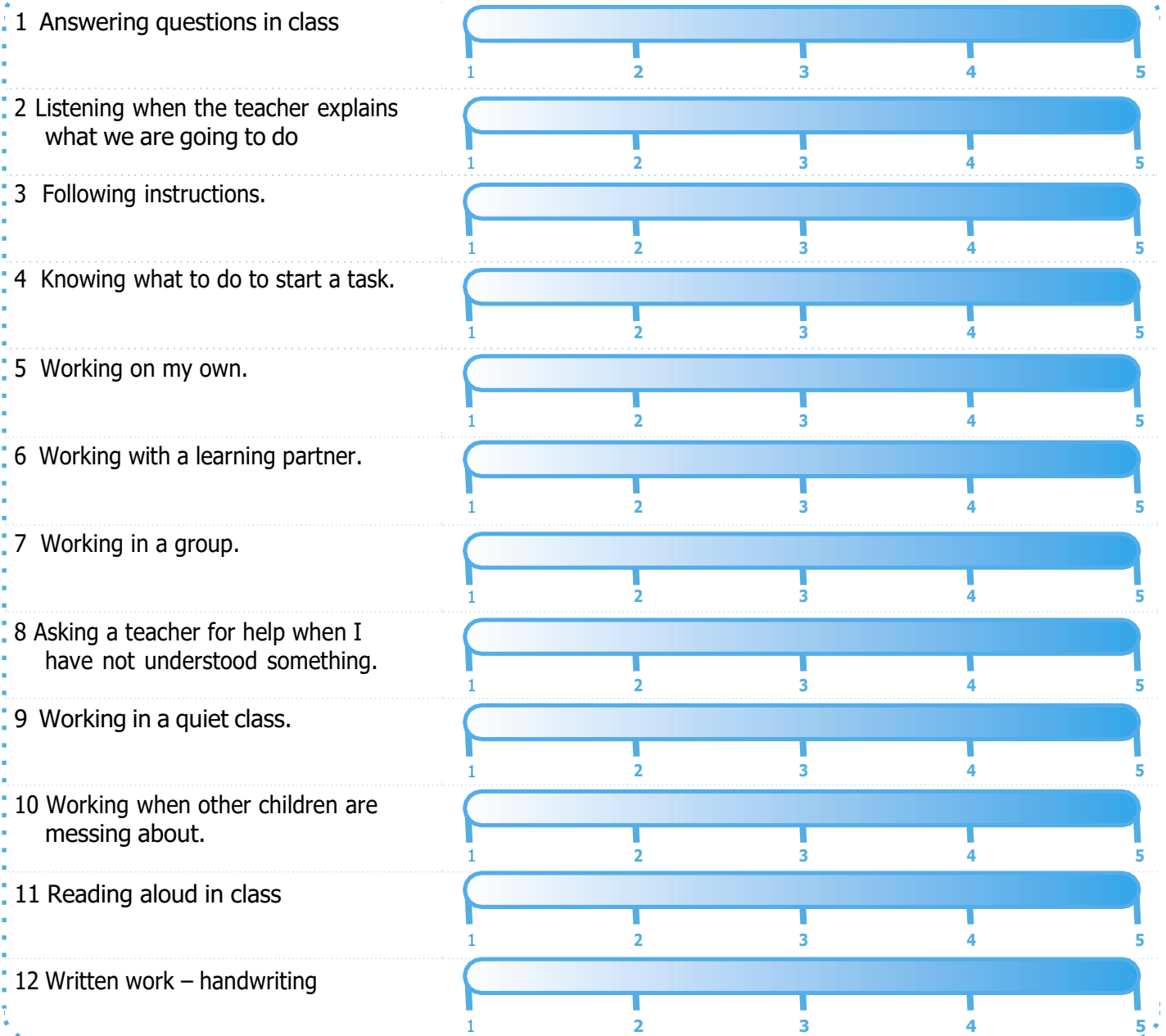
During the school day children work with their class and talk to other children and adults. Sometimes this can be fun but sometimes we can feel anxious about being with other people. What things that you do with other people make you happy or upset you?





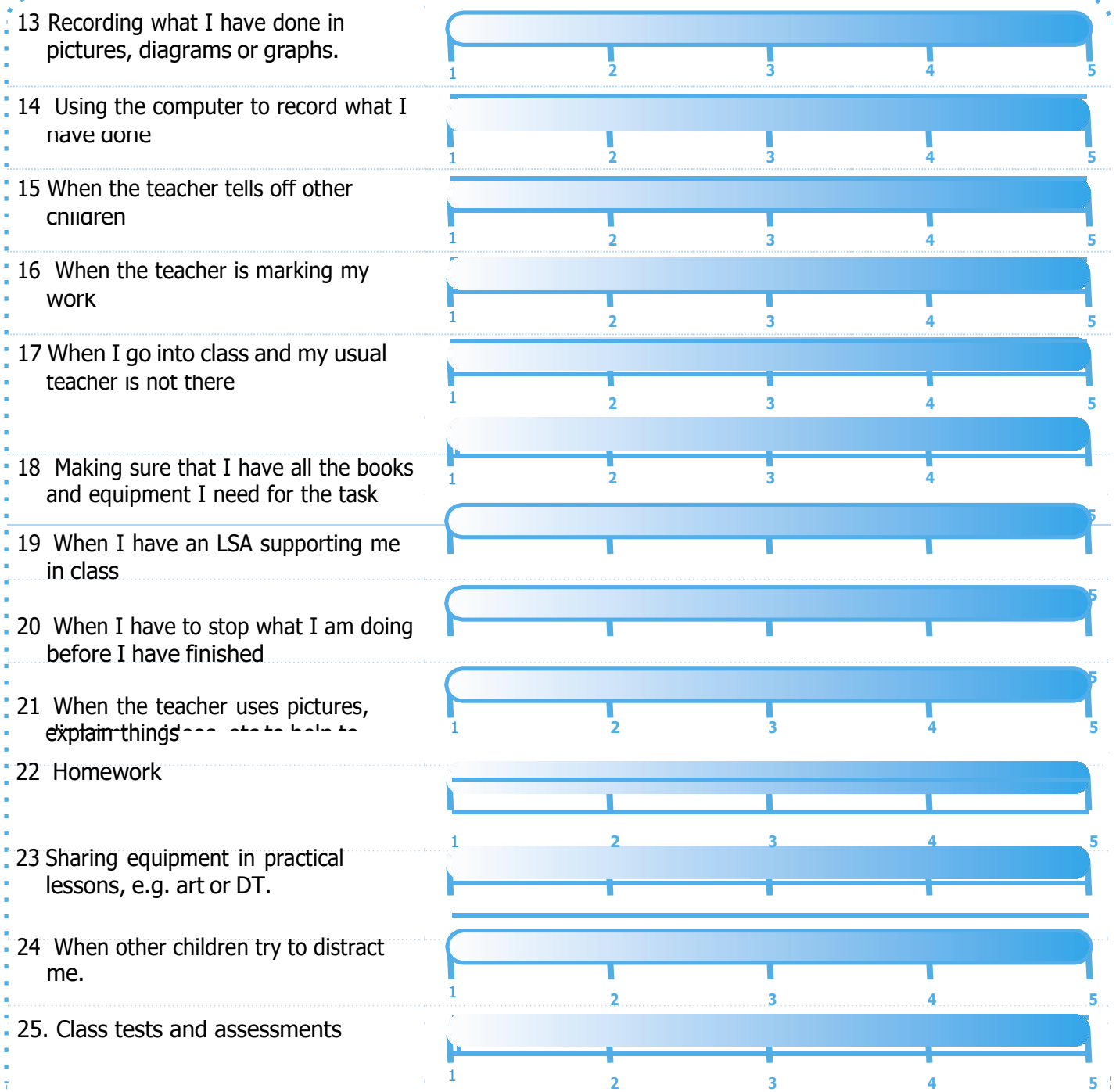
## Working in class

Classes involve different ways of working and some we will find more comfortable than others. Use the 5 point rating scale to indicate how you feel about different things that happen in classes.





## Working in class continued



Look at your rating about what happens in class. Can you describe your ideal class/lesson.





### 3. The Learning Environment

#### Subject Preferences

Many different subjects are taught in school and some we find easier and more interesting than others. Rate the subjects on the list on a scale of 1 – 5.



e.g. If you really enjoy maths ...

| List of subjects | Rating |
|------------------|--------|
| Maths            | 5      |

My subject ratings are ....

| Subject    | Rating | Subject        | Rating |
|------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| Science    |        | Art            |        |
| ICT        |        | DT             |        |
| Reading    |        | Geography      |        |
| PE/Games   |        | French         |        |
| Drama      |        | Spanish        |        |
| Topic work |        | Other language |        |
| RE         |        | Dance          |        |
| Maths      |        | Music          |        |







# EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE GUIDANCE

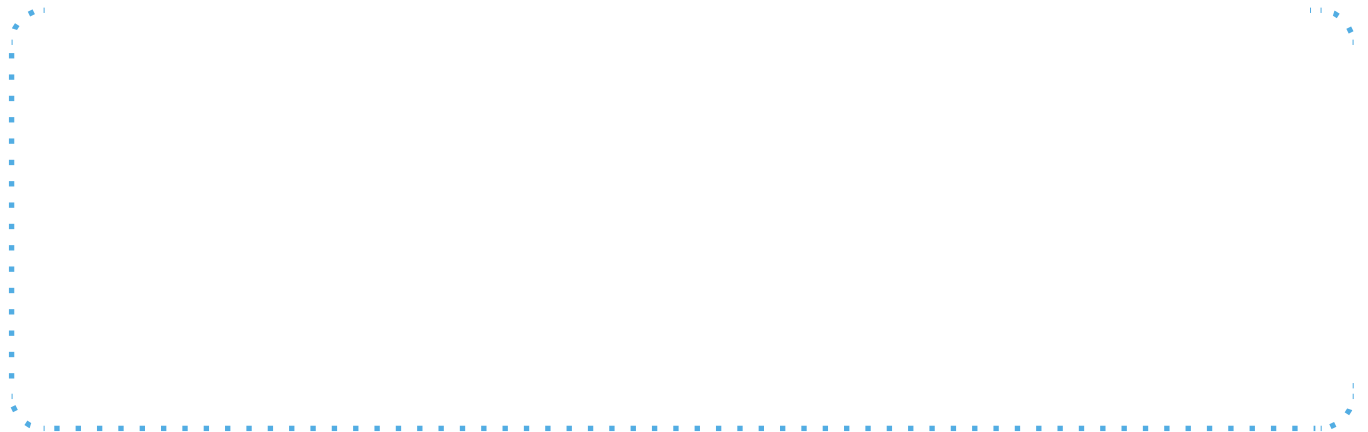
## SECONDARY

### Student version

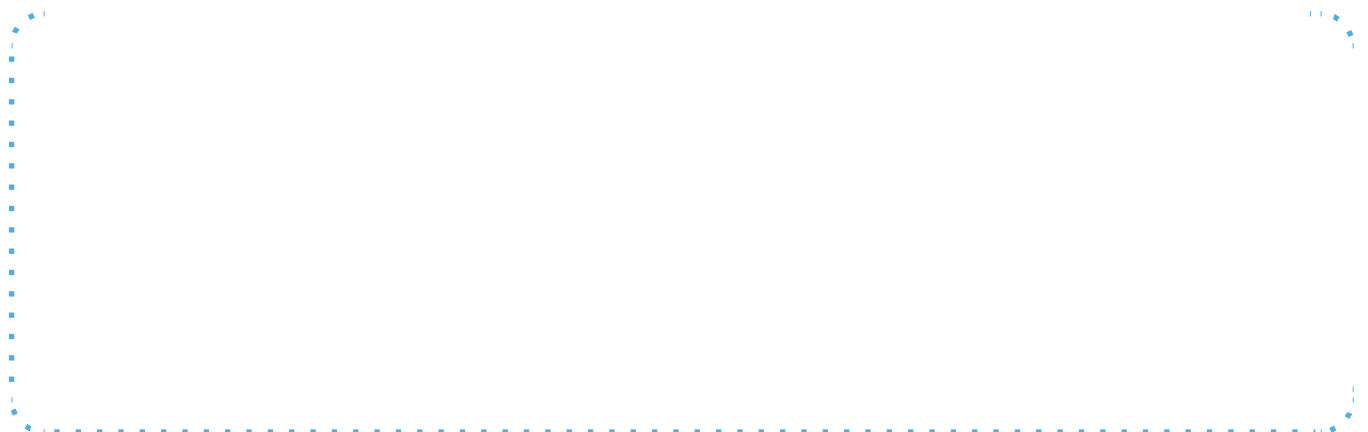
## Mapping the Landscape of Your School

### 1. The Physical Environment

- Look carefully at the map of your school
- Use the highlighter pens to mark how the areas on the map make you feel.  
 Green = I feel calm and relaxed in this space  
 Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space  
 Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious
- For the areas that you have coloured red, are there any circumstances, e.g. time of day, which make you feel more safe?



- What might the school do to help you feel safer in your 'red' areas?



Thank you for colouring the map.





## 2. The Social Environment

During the school day we are expected to work with and talk to both adults and other students. Sometimes these social situations can be pleasant but at other times they may cause us anxiety. Some social situations are described below. Mark on the rating scale to show how you feel about them, e.g.



1 Greeting other students in the tutor group in the morning.



2 Walking down corridors at less changeover time.



3 Lining up to go into the classroom before a lesson.



4 In class, if there is no teacher in the room.



5 Waiting to go into the canteen for lunch.



6 Buying food in the canteen.



7 Sitting in the canteen



8 Break times when I have to go out with the other students



9 Changing for PE



10 Taking part in PE, games



11 Talking to subject teachers



12 Talking to support staff/ staff in RP





## Working in class continued



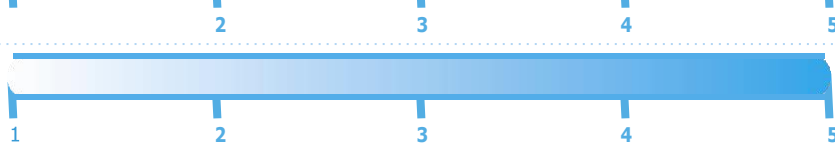
13 Getting to school and home from school:



14 Talking to other students in my tutor group



15 Talking to classmates



For the situations that you find most difficult – please write down what would make them easier for you.

### What could make a difference....

| Situation | Idea |
|-----------|------|
| •         |      |
| •         |      |
| •         |      |
| •         |      |
| •         |      |





### 3. The Learning Environment

#### Subject Preferences

Many different subjects are taught in school and some we find easier and more interesting than others. Rate the subjects on the list on a scale of 1 – 5.



e.g. If you really enjoy maths ...

| List of subjects | Rating |
|------------------|--------|
| Maths            | 5      |

My subject ratings are ....

| Subject    | Rating | Subject        | Rating |
|------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| Science    |        | Art            |        |
| ICT        |        | DT             |        |
| Reading    |        | Geography      |        |
| PE/Games   |        | French         |        |
| Drama      |        | Spanish        |        |
| Topic work |        | Other language |        |
| RE         |        | Dance          |        |
| Maths      |        | Music          |        |

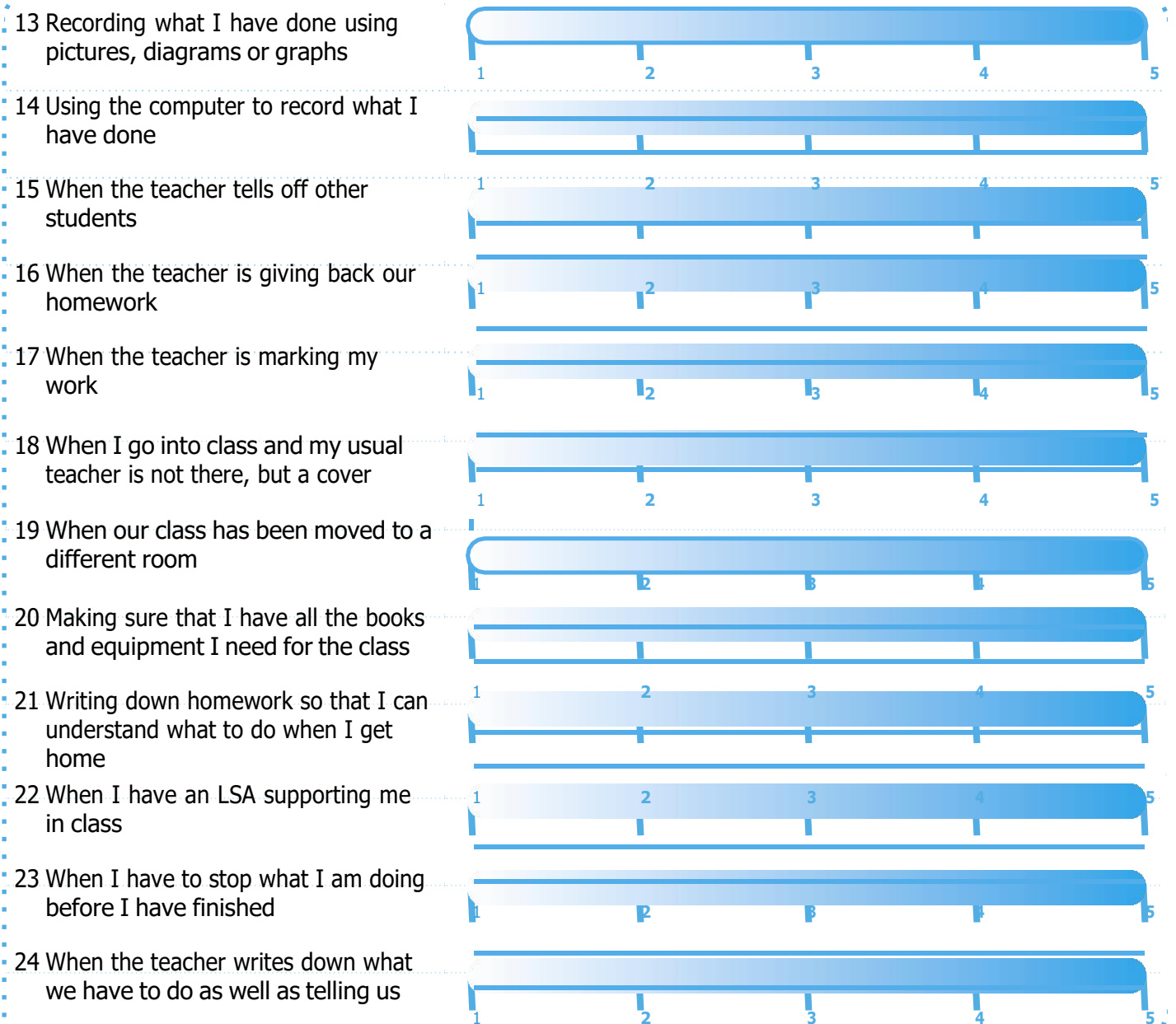




Classes involve different ways of working and some we will find more comfortable than others. Use the 5 point rating scale to indicate how you feel about different things that happen in classes.

|                                                                              | 1                        | 2                               | 3                                              | 4                                | 5            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
|                                                                              |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
|                                                                              | I avoid this<br>If I can | I am very anxious<br>about this | I feel anxious/<br>uncomfortable<br>about this | I feel comfortable<br>about this | I enjoy this |
| 1 Answering questions in class                                               |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 2 Listening when the teacher explains what we are going to do in the lesson. |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 3 Following instructions.                                                    |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 4 knowing what to do to start a task.                                        |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 5 Working on my own.                                                         |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 6 Working with a learning partner.                                           |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 7 Working in a group.                                                        |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 8 Asking a teacher for help when I have not understood something.            |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 9 Working in a quiet class                                                   |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 10 Working when other students are messing about.                            |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 11 Reading aloud in class.                                                   |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |
| 12 Written work – handwriting.                                               |                          |                                 |                                                |                                  |              |







|                                                                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 25. When the teacher uses pictures, diagrams, videos, etc to help to explain things. |  |
| 26 Homework.                                                                         |  |
| 27 Sharing equipment in practical lessons, e.g. art or DT.                           |  |
| 28 When other students try to distract me.                                           |  |
| 29 When the teacher introduces a new topic I know little or nothing about            |  |
| 30 Class tests and assessments                                                       |  |

Look at your rating about what happens in class. Can you describe your ideal class/lesson.



### Guidance

These card sorting activities have been created to help gain the CYP's views about their educational experience and current situation.

The activities should be carried out by an adult that the CYP has a positive and secure relationship with. It is important that enough time has been protected to complete these activities. It is possible that discussing some of these sensitive areas could lead the CYP to become upset, so there needs to be freedom to extend the session if required.

The CYP should be told that the aim of the activities e.g. it is to help staff explore if there are any areas that need support, but also to identify positives. Category headings have been included, but these can be adapted to meet individual needs/situations. These headings should be placed in front of the CYP and discussed prior to beginning the activities. The adult should then pass the CYP each card and read it to them/explain its meaning. The CYP should then be asked to place each one under the heading they feel is most appropriate.

It is important that it is not just viewed as an activity to be ticked off; if there are any areas that need exploring further, this should take place. Staff should also ask questions to gain richer information e.g. if it asks about friends/teachers then ask the CYP which teacher/friend they are thinking of or ask why they have placed a particular card under a specific heading. The record forms included can be used to mark the CYP's responses during the activity and note down any comments/discussion that takes place.

Once completed the information should be considered to identify areas of need/strength and the most appropriate support. The CYP should also be asked if they have any ideas what might make things better/easier e.g. if they place 'maths' under angry, ask if there is anything that would make maths move to happy. It is important that any views are shared sensitively with parents/carers, so the support agreed is consistent across contexts, and outcomes can be worked towards collaboratively.





Happy



Sad



Angry



Easy

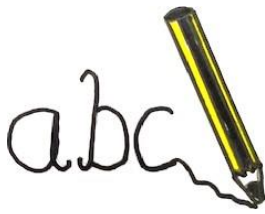


OK

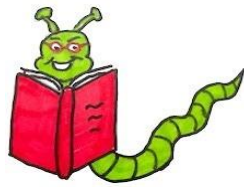


Hard





Spelling



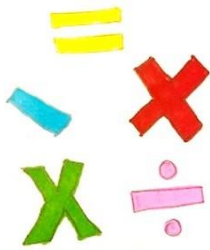
Reading



Writing



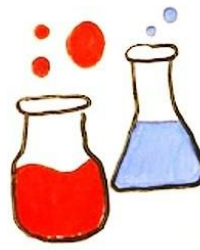
Phonics



Maths



English



Science



P.E.



History



Geography



IT



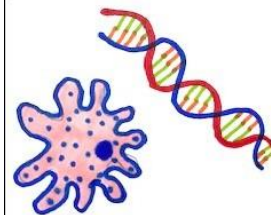
Art



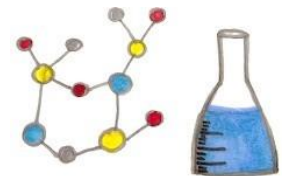
Music



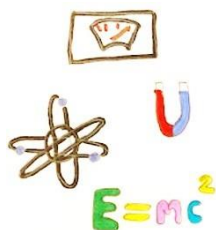
Languages



Biology



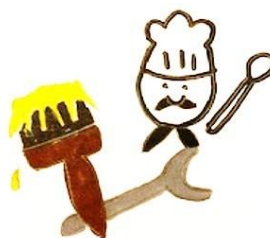
Chemistry



Physics



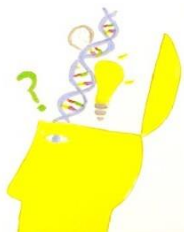
Drama



Technology



PSHE



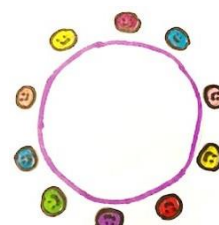
Ethics and  
Philosophy



Interventions



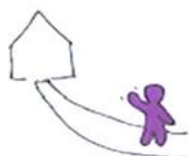
Assembly



Form Time



School



Home



Breakfast Club



After-School  
Club



Friends



Teacher(s)



Talking



Reading out  
loud



Answering  
Questions



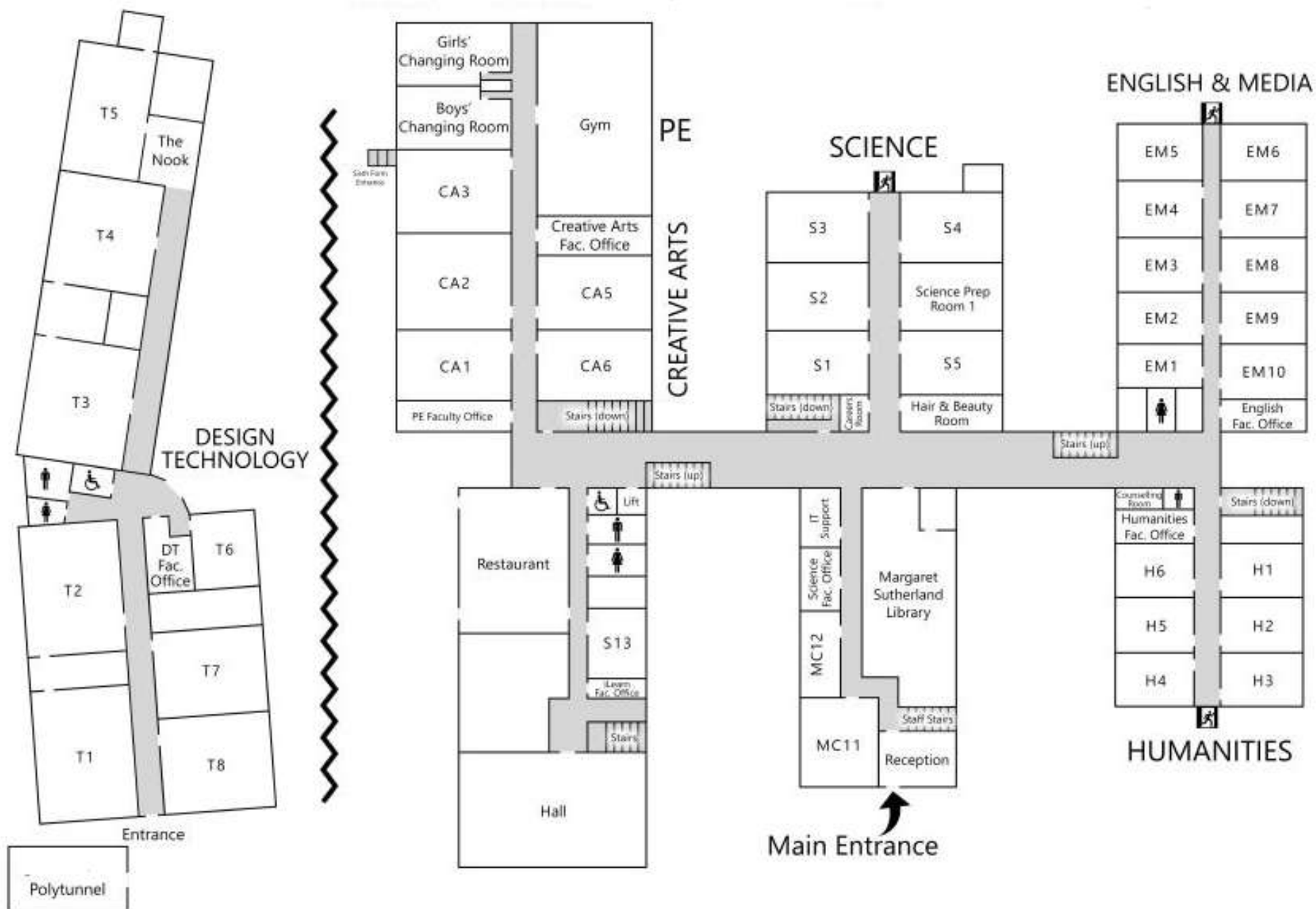
Free time

|                                                              |               |             |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>CYP Name:</b>                                             | <b>D.O.B:</b> | <b>Yr.:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
| <b>Name of Person Completing this Activity with the CYP:</b> |               |             |              |

| Happy | Sad | Angry |
|-------|-----|-------|
|       |     |       |

**Additional Comments/Exploration**

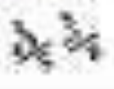


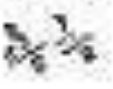


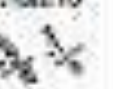


| Reg       | 1         | 2          | Interval    | 3           | 4           | PLP        | Lunch     | 5         | 6         |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 8.55-9.05 | 9.05-9.55 | 9.55-10.45 | 10.45-11.00 | 11.00-11.50 | 11.50-12.40 | 12.40-1.05 | 1.05-1.50 | 1.50-2.40 | 2.40-3.30 |

|        |                                                                                                   |                                                                                            |                                                                                          |                                                                                               |                                                                                                  |                                                                                             |                                                                                              |                                                                                                |                                                                                                   |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday | Registration<br> | Maths<br> | Art<br> | Interval<br> | Computing<br> | R.E.<br> | Lunch<br> | English<br> | Enterprise<br> |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|         |                                                                                                   |                                                                                              |                                                                                            |                                                                                               |                                                                                             |                                                                                                  |                                                                                              |                                                                                                |                                                                                                  |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday | Registration<br> | English<br> | Maths<br> | Interval<br> | P.E.<br> | Exp. Arts<br> | Lunch<br> | Project<br> | Technical<br> |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|           |                                                                                                   |                                                                                            |                                                                                           |                                                                                               |                                                                                            |                                                                                                |                                                                                              |                                                                                                 |                                                                                             |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday | Registration<br> | Maths<br> | R.E.<br> | Interval<br> | Art<br> | English<br> | Lunch<br> | Soc. Sub<br> | P.E.<br> |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|          |                                                                                                    |                                                                                              |                                                                                              |                                                                                                |                                                                                                 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                  |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday | Registration<br> | P.S.E.<br> | French<br> | Interval<br> | Science<br> | Maths<br> | Lunch<br> | English<br> | Swimming<br> |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Reg       | 1         | 2          | Interval    | 3           | 4           | Lunch      | 5         | 6         |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 8.55-9.05 | 9.05-9.55 | 9.55-10.45 | 10.45-11.00 | 11.00-11.50 | 11.50-12.40 | 12.40-1.20 | 1.20-2.10 | 2.10-3.00 |

|        |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                |                                                                                                |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday | Registration<br> | Home Ec<br> | Home Ec<br> | Interval<br> | Maths<br> | English<br> | Lunch<br> | Activities<br> | Activities<br> |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



Assess

# Interventions

## Interventions based on the functional model

Support plans and interventions should be based on the outcomes of robust assessments, and consistent with the functional model. Interventions should be agreed as part of action planning.

### Function 1: Avoiding things in school that lead to negative emotions (e.g. anxiety)

Interventions should include teaching pupils, in an age-appropriate way, about the nature of anxiety (psycho-education), how it affects people generally and how it affects them specifically. This could include:

- Recognising and describing the signals of anxiety e.g. drawings on a body diagram, feelings vocabulary, discussing anxiety in story books, keeping a 'feelings diary'
- Learning about the impact of adrenalin and the stress response
- Identifying the thoughts that accompany anxious/worried feelings and consider which might be helpful or unhelpful thoughts in terms of leading to anxiety (cognitive behavioural approaches)

Pupils need to know that avoiding their feared situation ultimately makes their anxiety feel worse the next time they approach that situation. They may need to be supported through a small-step programme of gradual re-exposure to school or the aspects of school which cause them anxiety (desensitisation).

Pupils need to be taught techniques for managing their anxiety, such as:

- deep breathing (practise at calm times, little and often)
- progressive muscle relaxation
- distraction e.g. singing, counting backwards, looking at the details of an object/picture
- positive self-talk (to encourage more helpful/realistic thinking)

Parents/carers (and teachers) also need to be given information so that they can support the pupil at home/in the classroom.

Pupils should be allocated a key adult, with whom they have a positive relationship, and have access to a 'safe place' in school.

In addition to strategies that provide immediate relief, it is important for children and young people to learn how to disperse anxiety that builds up through the day or week. They should be supported to find ways of unwinding that they can easily and regularly incorporate in to their everyday life and timetable, for example:

- Physical exercise
- Relaxing activities

Also consider general wellbeing in relation to eating, sleeping etc.

Seek further advice from your school's link Educational Psychologist or Inclusion Partner, where necessary.





## **Function 2: Avoiding difficult social situations, evaluations or judgements in school**

As above, interventions should include teaching about anxiety and how to manage it. Pupils may also need to be taught specific social skills and given opportunities to practice coping skills in real-life situations, starting small and building up to those which are most challenging for them.

If their anxiety and social difficulties are linked to neurological diversity (such as Autism Spectrum Disorder), they may need more specialised interventions. Seek further advice from your school's link Educational Psychologist or Inclusion Partner, where necessary.

## **Function 3: Gaining attention from significant others at home**

Intervention may include work with parents/carers, supporting them to develop skills and techniques to:

- respond to the behaviours which communicate stress/distress or physical/somatic complaints
- establish morning routines
- use problem-solving techniques
- establish positive and individual time to spend with the child outside school hours
- limit the attention the child receives when they do not attend school during school hours
- establish reward systems for when the pupil attends school

It may be appropriate to seek further support/advice from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in these cases, as well as from your school's link Educational Psychologist or Inclusion Partner.

## EBSA Interventions

### Whole School Approaches

School plays a key role in the identification of children and young people who are currently experiencing or are at risk of EBSA. It is important for schools to develop effective whole school systems to take preventative measures towards EBSA, with a focus on early intervention and prevention. This is a list of some activities and interventions schools can implement to promote resilience, belongingness, emotional literacy skills and secure attachments.

To be effective, whole school approaches, such as those below, must be in place across the school. This means all pupils, staff (including non-teaching staff), management and the wider school community must understand what this means, how they should do this and have received the appropriate and ongoing training and development.

- ✓ **EBSA Risk Screening Tool** can be utilised to identify and maintain robust oversight of children and young people who are vulnerable. It can be used to share with SENCo's, EBSA and Mental Health leads and pastoral leads, allowing them to make assessments of underpinning needs and put appropriate adjustments or support and interventions in place at the point they first arise.
- ✓ **EBSA Setting Self Audit Tool** can be used to think about how your school meets the needs of children and young people who are at risk of developing EBSA at the whole system level to reduce the likelihood of EBSA developing or escalating. The tool should be used as part of whole school development planning and revisited at regular points to monitor the ongoing developments.
- ✓ **Sensory Issues** can play a large role in school avoidance. Further resources, strategies, training and advice can be accessed by contacting the Working Together Team. Resources such as a sensory audit tool should be considered as a useful way of ensuring that your school environment meets needs commonly associated with school avoidance.
- ✓ **PACE Model** is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that helps a child or young person to feel safe. It helps to promote secure attachments and enables a child or young person to reflect on their thoughts and behaviours without being judged. Supporting a child or young person's self-awareness, emotional intelligence and resilience through effectively de-escalating conflict and increasing a child or young person feeling understood. The principals of PACE are:
  - Playfulness:
  - Acceptance:
  - Curiosity:
  - Empathy:

- ✓ **Restorative Practice** is an approach that offers a framework to build upon existing good practice. It provides settings with a range of practices which promote mutually respectful relationships to address behaviour, conflict, bullying and absences and builds community cohesion. There is a wealth of evidence that shows how the use of restorative approaches alongside Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), helps to develop more resilient and self-regulating learners, thus creating positive learning environments.

Many children and young people who experience EBSA have experienced bullying or a breakdown of relationships with peers or teachers. A restorative school is one which takes a restorative approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right.

- ✓ **THRIVE Framework** is an integrated, person centred, and needs led approach to supporting children and young people's social and emotional development. Their whole school approach to wellbeing has evidence that supports its ability to improve attendance, behaviour and attainment.

The Framework is needs-led with the emphasis placed on prevention and promotion of mental health and wellbeing through a multi-agency holistic focus that empowers children and their families through their active involvement in decision making. The Framework also recognises fluctuating needs and the importance of early intervention and getting the right support at the right time that enables the development of robust resilience.

- ✓ **Emotional Literacy** is a term used to describe skills that underpin emotional regulation, including recognising emotional states, understanding and labelling emotions, being able to express our emotional experiences to others and regulating our bodily responses to emotions.

PSHE sessions should focus on these elements of emotional literacy, but could be extended into ordinarily available provision for children who may need more targeted support. Investing in training for staff to lead on emotional literacy skills may have a positive impact for children and young people at risk of becoming EBSA as it focusses on the management of the uncomfortable feelings that elicit avoidance behaviour. ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) intervention was designed to build the capacity of schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils from within their own resources. This is achieved by training teaching assistants to develop and deliver individualised support programmes to meet the emotional needs of children and teenagers in their care. It recognises that children and young people learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

- ✓ **Trauma informed practice** is a strength-based framework. It focuses on effective responses to the impact of trauma on children and young people through consistent and predictable strategies that emphasise the importance of relating to the experiences of others. It aims to increase practitioners' awareness of how trauma can negatively impact on individuals and communities, and their ability to feel safe or develop trusting relationships. Trauma informed practice acknowledges the need to see beyond an child or young person's presenting behaviours and to ask, 'What does this person need?' rather than 'What is wrong with this person?'.
  
- ✓ **Emotional Coaching** is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience. It uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically.

## **Universal and Targeted Approaches**

The interventions that could be used will greatly depend on the specific needs of the child or young person and the nature of the issues identified through the phases of the EBSA Pathway. Any provision that is put in place should not be considered a long-term solution but a bridge towards eventual reintegration. Continued assessments to ensure appropriate provision is in place is key. While not an exhaustive list, here are some potential interventions or adjustments:

### ➤ **Checking and doing the basics:**

For example:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating healthfully
- Exercising
- Going on walks
- Connecting with people the CYP loves and/or trusts, including trusted adults at school.

### ➤ **Interventions and adjustments:**

For example:

- Targeted interventions on key areas of difficulty
- Revision of instructional practices
- Revision of how the information is presented and delivered
- Differentiated learning approaches
- Adjusted expectations in line with emotional needs
- Allowing a child to start a few minutes earlier or later than their class
- Change of classes / form group
- Appropriate positioning within the class to reduce the impact of sensory needs
- Allowing a child to sit with a child they have an established relationship with
- Phased return starting with favourite / least challenging lesson or time of the day, starting small and building up; for example 15 minutes if a whole lesson is too much
- Not taking part in an activity or lesson which has been identified as particularly stressful until the child is more able to cope (through intervention or support)
- Quality first teaching (differentiated learning, extra check-ins with pupil)
- Safe spaces for time out when a child is overwhelmed. Also for start of day so don't have to wait outside.
- Adjustments for child to avoid trigger points: such as ability to leave lesson 5 minutes early (with teacher aware so don't have to draw attention to themselves), ability to go into classroom as soon as arrive to avoid lining up outside, canteen pass to avoid queue, time out card, toilet pass, late pass.
- Medical card with agreed adjustments to show cover teachers to avoid having to explain themselves

- All staff aware of adjustments for consistency and to avoid negative challenge
- Lunch time clubs away from the busy playground
- Named adults in school for children to talk to about their worries
- Social inclusion provision such as buddying, peer mentoring and structured play
- Option for students not attending to come in at unstructured times to meet with friends in private space to maintain friendship links.
- Friendly emails sent from teaching staff/form tutor to maintain links and let the student know they are being thought of, missed and not in any trouble for being absent
- Reduce expectations of amount of work or subjects being studied
- After school tour of school to familiarise students with the school building
- A booklet of photos of the school and all key areas and members of staff shared with the student
- Student invited in the day before term starts to see new timetable, meet with pastoral staff and familiarise themselves with the building and their classroom/s
- Timetable changes shared in advance
- Student not asked to read aloud or contribute in front of class; let them volunteer / put their hand up
- Regular check ins to review goals, support and adaptations. Also as part of 1-1 mentoring
- Notebook for student to write down worries as they occur to then be discussed with key adult at agreed time or post-its so that when the worry is shared and addressed the student can 'throw the worry away'
- Use of resources such as noise cancelling headphones or fidget toys
- Targeted learning interventions (for example, literacy small group work)
- Social skills intervention groups
- Nurture groups or ELSA intervention
- Specific sessions on anxiety management/relaxation techniques
- Key adult to develop a relationship with the child and scaffold their access to challenging situations
- Adjusted timetable to support access to social activities to build up friendships and sense of belonging
- Using a discrete part of the school (for example, learning support base or other) for the child to access direct teaching
- Sending work home with detailed explanation of activities and expectations for completion
- Using google classroom or similar to deliver the above where there is appropriate technology available at home and the child can access it. Allows student to hear teacher explanations and familiarise themselves with the noise of the classroom again. Build up from no expectation to have video or microphone on

- Lesson resources published daily on sharepoint pages so students can still access when absent
  - Child encouraged to pop into school for a few minutes to return completed work and collect marked work to maintain links with school
  - Homework set via an app so students can still see and complete when absent
  - 'Face-to-face' online teaching sessions individually or in small groups
  - Meeting the child at home to teach or provide emotional support
- **Reduced Timetables** should only every be considered as part of a time-limited phased return to full-time school provision and if it is in the best interests of the child or young person. Any longer-term arrangements relating to reduced hours can only be considered due to recognised medical needs. A reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from the parent/carers.

A reduced timetable **will not** resolve the EBSA itself. There must be clear planned steps towards reintegration that are based on what the child or young person finds difficult. Not just a reduction in the number of hours in school.

In relation to children or young people experiencing EBSA, a reduced timetable *might* be useful as a period of rest and recovery from significant anxiety. However, it should only be put in place as part of a wider strategy of support, with appropriate assessment and planning continuing to take place to understand what is contributing to their anxiety and their EBSA. It *might* also be useful as a reasonable adjustment, allowing the child or young person to avoid lessons or elements of the school day they find particularly challenging. Again, during this time, it is crucial to continue developing an understanding of the further support and provision that needs to be in place to enable the child or young person to reintegrate into school, or long term adjustments.

- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** is a type of therapy focused on identifying and adjusting negative patterns of thought and behaviour. Low-intensity CBT is delivered over a shorter duration or in a less intense form than traditional CBT, such as short sessions with a knowledgeable Emotional Literacy Support Assistant or school counsellor. For children and young people with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), this could involve identifying negative or distorted beliefs about school, themselves and the 'world' and learning strategies to manage these thoughts. Beliefs are powerful at shaping perception and action, constructing emotions, and seeking support at school.
- **Graded Exposure:** gradually exposes the individual to the situation they fear in a controlled and safe way. For EBSA, this could mean initially just visiting the school grounds when it's quiet, then slowly building up to spending short, then longer periods at school until they can

manage a full day. It relies on the process of habituation to gradually develop tolerance of increasingly challenging situations.

Habituation is a very simple and universal form of learning. It is when your central nervous system reduces its response to a stimulus over time. In everyday terms you might think of it as 'becoming accustomed' to a situation or a stimulus. For example, you jump into a swimming pool, and it feels freezing at first but after a couple of minutes you stop noticing. Or, you are working in a room full of people and at first you can hear everything others are saying but over time you manage to 'tune it out'.

When designing a graded exposure plan, it is aiming for the initial fear/emotional response to a situation to habituate in a similar way to the simple sensory examples above. We want the child or young person to experience the relief of their intense feelings diminishing and, over time, for them to 'become accustomed' to reasonable levels of anxiety or sensory stimulation.

Habituation can occur naturally through repeated exposure to a situation or stimulus.

However, it is important to know that some factors impact on the likelihood of it occurring:

- Changing the stimulus - if the duration or intensity of the stimulus or situation changes then you may get a recurrence of the original response. For example, where there has been some initial success, we might be tempted to ask the child to stay longer than the agreed 10 minutes or to come to the playground after being in the classroom. This may reduce the likelihood of habituation occurring and leave the child in a heightened state of anxiety at the end of the exposure. It is important therefore not to change the agreed step.
- Duration – if a stimulus or situation is not experienced for a long period of time then you may see a full-strength reaction when it is encountered again. For example, we may have successfully habituated a child or young person to 'talk in front of the class' and then this does not occur for several weeks so the next time they are asked they experience a spike in anxiety. It is important therefore to regularly work on target situations that the child or young person experiences. Also – we should be mindful that graded exposure plans that have been successful may need to be repeated following extended absences, such as following the school holidays.
- Frequency - the more frequently a stimulus or situation is experienced the quicker habituation will be. This is important when planning your reintegration. Working daily on a smaller target is more likely to affect rapid change than less frequent exposure schedules.
- Intensity – if a stimulus is very intense and leads to an extreme emotional response then it is possible that habituation will not occur (just think of an alarm – we don't habituate to noises like that as they are too intense, uncomfortable, and frightening). Understanding the situations or contexts in which the child or young



person experiences the most anxiety is essential to building a plan which allows habituation to occur at the lower stages before tackling situations that might require more active management for habituation to occur or which might require continued avoidance in the short term (see a 'psychological safety').

A good graded-exposure plan should work systematically from situations or contexts that are lower intensity (that is, provoke the least emotional response) to those which are higher in intensity. This maximises the likelihood that habituation will occur. An avoidance hierarchy is an emotion-based ranking of situations, contexts, or places that a child or young person finds challenging and should be used as a basis for graded exposure planning.

It is important to understand that reintegration and graded exposure require a child or young person to experience small levels of discomfort before habituation occurs. Their avoidance behaviours are protecting them from unwanted and sometimes scary emotions and feelings. We must be mindful of this and ensure that we are asking something that we believe to be manageable. However, also crucially, we must ensure that we have addressed any underlying needs or issues before considering exposure. For example, if bullying was an underlying issue we would need to ensure the bullying had been addressed and some reparation work undertaken before working towards attending. We must only ask children and young people to do what we believe to be **safe** and **adequately supported** for their own safety and well-being. In addition to concerns about safety, exposure to a very intense stimulus will not lead to habituation and will undermine the success of a reintegration plan.

- **Social Skills Teaching:** involves teaching children and young people the necessary social skills to interact appropriately with their peers and teachers. It can use role-play, social stories, and other interactive methods to help the child understand and practise these skills. For EBSA, this could help reduce social anxiety and improve school relationships.
- **Emotion construction and regulation strategies interventions:** aim to teach children and young people how to understand the construction of their emotions and manage them effectively. For instance, using categorisation techniques can help analyse how sensations are labelled in terms of affect. The way one distinguishes between feeling anxious and feeling excited is strongly influenced by the specific emotion words used, which in turn profoundly shapes both action and perception. This process generates new emotion concepts, making the emotional experience less threatening and more adaptive.

Importantly, children are not limited to using conventional emotion words; they can also create their own to describe unique feelings. For example, a child might coin the term 'chipless' to express the specific disappointment they feel when they've eaten all their chips.

Our brains generate emotional experiences by making predictions based on past experiences. Within this framework, the categorisation of emotions is a vital tool. It provides us with the language, or "emotion words," to describe various emotional states, thereby enabling more effective emotional construction and understanding. This process is known as "emotional granularity," a term rooted in scientific literature (Barrett, 2017<sup>1</sup>). It involves discerning between not just basic emotions like "happy," "sad," or "angry," but also more nuanced ones like "elated," "content," "gloomy," and "melancholic."

For example, a child who initially describes their emotion broadly as feeling "bad" could, with the help of emotional categorisation, more accurately identify their feeling as "sad," "frustrated," "anxious," or "lonely."

Recognising and accurately labelling these diverse emotional states creates a conceptual framework that our brains use to predict and inform our responses to future emotional situations. This leads to more effective emotion regulation, as we become better equipped to understand both what we're feeling and why; therefore, we can respond more appropriately.

This perspective fundamentally shifts our approach to emotion regulation. If emotions are constructed based on past experiences and the labels we've learnt to apply, it implies that modifying our conceptual understanding can influence how we construct and experience emotions in the future. Therefore, teaching children to categorise their emotions, or even to create their own emotion words, can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing their emotional understanding and regulation.

- **Stress management techniques:** can involve a range of strategies to help manage stress, such as relaxation techniques, mindfulness, exercise, or time management strategies. For EBSA, this could mean helping the child or young person learn how to manage their stress and reduce feeling overwhelmed and make school feel more manageable.
- **Peer support or buddy systems:** involves pairing the child or young person with a peer who can provide support and help them navigate school. This could provide company during breaks, help explain school routines, or offer emotional support. For EBSA, having a supportive peer at school can make the environment seem less threatening and more supportive.

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<sup>1</sup> Barrett, L. F. (2017). How emotions are made: The secret life of the brain. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

- **Anxiety management tools:** may be needed where a situation is too significant for habituation to occur rapidly. Actively teaching children and young people techniques that can help to dissipate the thoughts and feelings associated with anxiety is helpful. Such techniques can increase the likelihood that habituation occurs and can also help them the child or young person feel that they have some control over their responses. Part of reintegration planning can ensure time is allocated to teaching anxiety management techniques. Then, once the child or young person is ready to increase their exposure to more challenging situations, they will have strategies already in place that they can employ. It is important to consider developmental levels as well as the capacity to put such strategies in place in the moment. It may be that as part of the reintegration plan the child or young person is accompanied by an adult who is able to co-regulate (that is to step them through the strategies that they need to employ) to increase the likelihood of habituation occurring.

**Physical and sensory interventions:**

For example:

- Adapting the physical environment, e.g., the number of movements needed to leave the classroom; place of sitting in the classroom.
- Sensory audit for classrooms.

**Family and home support interventions:**

These interventions involve working with the child or young person's family to create a supportive home environment. For example:

- Parenting support or training.
- Home-school communication strategies.

## Emotionally-Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Interventions Sheet

Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Initial actions that may resolve specific issues/barriers |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓                                                         | <b>Personalised support/intervention</b>                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                           | Address and resolve any bullying or friendship issues that may be taking place (a restorative justice approach may be appropriate)                                                |
|                                                           | Ask class/subject teacher(s) to make any specific and simple reasonable adjustments, for example changing the seating plan or modifying homework expectations                     |
|                                                           | Agree a change or set of changes in the routine around school with parents/carers (for example, an exact plan for 'drop-off' or public transport in the morning might be helpful) |

| Class-based differentiation and strategies for teachers and support staff to support Quality First Teaching |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓                                                                                                           | <b>Personalised support/intervention</b>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                             | All of the pupil's class teachers and support staff made aware of pupil's circumstances and relevant aspects of the plan                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                             | Advised differentiation and personalised strategies (some of which may be specific to SEN) listed in a central place which is easily accessible to each class teacher and teaching assistant and/or provided in a one-page profile |

| Wrap-around support and pupil self-care resources |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓                                                 | <b>Personalised support/intervention</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                   | Safe space(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                   | Buddy/peer support system                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                   | Seating plan for each subject/teacher                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                   | Colour-coded/visual timetable including all parts of the school day (not only lessons); this might include the step-by-step school journey and required equipment, as well as before/after school provision and break time arrangements/options               |
|                                                   | 'Circle of adults' personal reference (features names and photographs of key staff that the pupil can check in with)                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                   | Special responsibilities/jobs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                   | 'What if' prompts personal reference (what to do in anxiety-provoking situations, e.g. 're-set activities')                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                   | Signal card, to show a teacher/support staff if they are feeling overwhelmed (important for the pupil and staff to know what will happen when they use this – i.e. what response the pupil can expect from adults and what adults can expect the pupil to do) |
|                                                   | Support and protective factors that the family can put in place to strengthen the pupil's resilience and coping skills, at home and within the community; for example this could include specific plans for Sunday evenings and Monday mornings               |
|                                                   | Clubs before/after school and/or during break times                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                   | Break time arrangements, including places they can access, activity options and adult support/supervision available                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                   | Assembly arrangements (e.g. allowing the pupil to sit where they feel most comfortable)                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                   | Plan for school trips (e.g. consider having the pupil in the 'teacher's group' or having parents accompany the group)                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                   | Exam access arrangements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                   | Apps, e.g. Kooth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                   | Early leave card (e.g. 5 minutes) for lessons or going home                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                   | Reward system/contingency contracting (e.g. a token economy to positively reinforce                                                                                                                                                                           |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | particular efforts or behaviours; this can be implemented jointly between home and school)                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|  | Time out card                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|  | 'Soft landings' on entry to school, e.g. starting a little later, or going to a specific room/adult before starting lessons or allowing the parent/carer to accompany their child into school, gradually phased out with the use of transitional objects (e.g. blanket, toy, photo) |
|  | Time-limited personalised timetable with attendance in some lessons, with a plan for a phased increase in lesson attendance (may include late start / early finish); this may also include a range of other features, for example scheduled check-in times with a key adult         |

**Scheduled interventions, one-to-one/small group, provided to the pupil and/or their parents by school staff or an external agency**

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ | <b>Personalised support/intervention</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|   | Family work; this could include a request for direct family support from the Bromley Children Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|   | Therapeutic support provided by a counsellor or play therapist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|   | Psycho-education CBT-influenced program around anxiety, using a recommended program such as 'Starving the Anxiety Gremlin' or 'The Humonculi Approach' (for pupils with autism)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|   | Circle of Friends (sharing worries with a selected peer group and providing opportunities to problem-solve together)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|   | Taught mindfulness, relaxation, deep breathing and visualisation sessions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|   | Peer mentoring sessions (young people providing this should have some training, with a member of staff overseeing this provision)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|   | Catch-up or pre-teaching sessions for subjects in the curriculum that may have been missed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|   | Taught social communication skills sessions, e.g. 'Talkabout'                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|   | Mentoring (semi-structured) sessions with a key adult, which could include solution-focused management of the intervention plan that involves goal-setting, CBT-influenced exercises (e.g. thoughts-feelings-behaviours and phased/graduated exposure activities), practising coping skills in anxiety-provoking situations and planning/reviewing self-help techniques, e.g. journaling and the 'Share It-Shelve It-Shout It' approach (share the worry, shelve the worry for later or a 'shout'/alternative physical release) |

**Referral to the Local Authority to request additional advice, assessment and/or possible access to alternative provision**

|   |                                                                                                                                                            |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ | <b>Personalised support/intervention</b>                                                                                                                   |
|   | Request a Funded Inclusion Plan: <a href="mailto:FIP@bromley.gov.uk">FIP@bromley.gov.uk</a>                                                                |
|   | Request an EHC needs assessment: <a href="https://ehc-hub.bromley.gov.uk/">https://ehc-hub.bromley.gov.uk/</a>                                             |
|   | Request advice and a possible gateway to short-term alternative provision if necessary: <a href="mailto:gateway@bromley.gov.uk">gateway@bromley.gov.uk</a> |