

Understanding EBSNA

(Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance)

A Supportive Guide for Families

What is EBSNA?

EBSNA occurs when a child struggles to attend school due to emotional distress, like anxiety or stress. Unlike truancy, these children want to attend, but overwhelming feelings make it feel impossible.

Key Features

- ✓ Emotional distress linked to school
- ✓ Not truancy – driven by anxiety
- ✓ Avoidance as a coping strategy
- ✓ Often develops gradually with complex causes

Common Signs & Causes

- Emotional distress: anxiety, panic, sadness
- Physical symptoms: headaches, stomach aches
- Avoidance behaviours: refusal to get ready or leave home
- Causes include child-specific factors (e.g., anxiety, autism), school environment, and family dynamics

How Families Can Help

- Stay calm and supportive
- Seek advice from GP or Educational Psychologist
- Work with school on a gradual reintegration plan
- Celebrate small steps and progress
- Focus on resilience and coping strategies

What We Do at Meadow Pathways

We create safe, nurturing environments, develop personalised support plans, and work with families to help children build confidence and thrive.

