TACKLING SCHOOL REFUSAL

What is school refusal?

School refusal is, the refusal by a child to go to school. When children completely refuse to go to school, extreme fear and anxiety often a big reason why.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Refusal to go to school in the morning
- Leaving or running away from school during the school day
- Tantrums and outbursts, especially in the morning
- Threats to harm themselves if they've made to go to school
- Physical symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, panic attacks and diarrhoea
- Extreme clinginess: not wanting to be alone in a room
- Sleep disturbances

What to do if your child is refusing school?

Tackle it early
The longer anxiety about school persists, the deeper it becomes. Seek professional help, such as counselling, through the GP.

1

Talk to your child
Speak to your child, listen to their fears and respect their feelings. Identify the problem.

2

Speak to the school
Talk to your child's school as soon as possible. Parents and teachers need to work together to support the child. There may be things the school can do to help, like mentoring or agree flexible start times.

3

Be mindful of your own emotions
Although it can be hard, children are like sponges and will soak up how you are feeling. Be mindful of your own anxiety.

4

Maintain a routine
Maintain a good routine for your child such as bedtime, sleep and meal time routine. You can also prepare for school the night before so your child knows what to expect.

5

Motivate your child
Some children respond well to sticker charts depending on their age. You can motivate your child by showing the positive things about going to school.

6

Delayed goodbyes
Do not delay goodbyes, as this can make it harder for your child.

7

Getting help

SENDIASS
Contact your local **SENDIASS** to get advice and information on school refusal.

Local offer
Visit your Local Authorities local offer online to find out more about how to tackle school refusal.