



SCHOOL REFUSAL VS SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Understanding the difference between school refusal and school avoidance is important so your child can get the **right support**.



SCHOOL REFUSAL

School refusal is when a child consistently refuses to go to school, often due to emotional distress at home or before they even leave for school.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Occurs at or before the school day begins
- ✓ Usually linked to anxiety, stress or a specific trigger
- ✓ Emotional distress is often high in the mornings
- ✓ May improve once the child is at school
- ✓ Can be linked to family dynamics or changes at home
- ✓ Child may not voice worries clearly



WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE:

Crying, tantrums, refusing to get dressed, saying they feel sick, clinging to parents, panic in the morning.



SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

School avoidance is when a child tries to avoid or escape school due to overwhelming worry, fear or anxiety about something related to school.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Occurs after arriving at school or during the day
- ✓ Often linked to difficulties or worries at school
- ✓ Emotional distress builds during the day
- ✓ May use different excuses to leave school
- ✓ Linked to anxiety, bullying, academic pressure, friendship issues or feeling overwhelmed
- ✓ Child is usually aware of their worries



WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE:

Asking to go to the toilet repeatedly, feeling unwell at school, wanting to go home, avoiding certain lessons or people.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Let your child talk about how they feel, without criticism. Validate their feelings.



STAY CALM AND REASSURING

Your calm helps your child feel safe. Reassure them you're there to help.



CREATE ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE

Consistent routines provide a sense of security and reduce anxiety over time.



WORK TOGETHER WITH SCHOOL

Share information, create a plan and work as a team to support your child.



BUILD CONFIDENCE GRADUALLY

Small, achievable steps can help your child feel more in control.



FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

Praise efforts and progress. Remind your child of their strengths and achievements.



WHEN TO SEEK EXTRA HELP

- ✓ Seek professional support if:
- ✓ Your child's anxiety is impacting daily life
- ✓ Absence from school is frequent or increasing
- ✓ Your child shows signs of low mood, panic or self-harm
- ✓ You feel overwhelmed or unsure how to help.

You are not alone – help is available.



We're Here to Help

HH Training Network offers assessments, resources and ongoing support for children and families.



Email: g@hhtrainingnetwork.com



Website: hhtrainingnetwork.com

