

Helping your child with school refusal

If your child is refusing to go to school at all, read our tips and advice on how you can support them and work with us.

Validate their experience

Ask them what it is about school that makes them not want to go. Listen to and validate their experience of finding these things difficult, stay as calm as you can and take your child's worries seriously.

Try to keep calm

Don't shout, tell them off, or physically force them to go to school. Even though the situation may feel stressful, this is likely to increase their anxiety.

Speak to your child's tutor

Speak to your child's tutor as soon as possible. Have they noticed any changes in their behaviour, or in their friendship group or class? Tackling the problem early can be helpful, as the longer your child is out of school, the harder it can be to go back.

Work with their tutor/Head of Year to identify triggers

Ask their teacher(s) or Head of Year if there are particular moments when they seem to struggle. For example, it might be during lesson changeovers, break-times, particular subjects, the journey to school or through the whole day. This can help you identify triggers.

Keep in contact with their teachers

Keep in regular contact with key members of staff. Work with them to make changes that will help.

Keep track of days your child doesn't want to go to school

Make a log of the days when your child doesn't want to go to school. This will give you a better sense of when and how often they feel like this, and can also help you raise it with us.

Be consistent

Be consistent with the strategies you try to help them get back to school. Let your child get used to them and remember that it might take a while for something to work. Changing between lots of strategies quickly can be confusing, so only move on when you've tried something for a while without it helping.

Praise your child for small steps they have taken

Try to stick to the same routine and praise your child for every small step they take. This could be getting out of bed at the right time, eating breakfast, washing and brushing their teeth, getting dressed and eventually leaving the house.

If things are difficult and have already been going on for a while...

Contact your child's Head of Year, or the Attendance Welfare Support Co-ordinator.

There are plenty of early help support mechanisms we can put in place such as a reduced timetable, with the aim of building back up when it feels manageable for your child.

Discuss the possibility of changing tutor group or tutors if your child thinks this would help.

Request a home visit from the school, where a staff member can check-in, show your child the school cares about them and discuss strategies for moving forward.

Think about small, achievable targets your child can work towards.

**If you are struggling to get your child into school,
please call Sarah Wrightson, Attendance Welfare Support Co-Ordinator
on 01392 204082 or email swrightson@iscaexeter.co.uk**