

I need extra help, where do I go?

- School staff, i.e class teacher, year head or principal
- GP, if you have concerns about your child/ teenager's mental health
- For support on managing behaviour please contact the Tusla Family Support Service
- An onward referral may be required to Educational Welfare Service, Psychology and/or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)



List of Local Services:

- Child and Adolescent Mental/Health service (CAMHS)
- Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
- Loughrea Family Resource Centre
- Tusla: Social Work, Educational Welfare Service and Prevention
- Partnership and Family Support Programme (Family Support, & Meitheal)
- Youth Work Ireland Galway
- Involve Youth Service
- Primary Community and Continuing Care Psychology
- GRETB Youth Advocates

Galway Rural Development acknowledges support from the following organisations:



Loughrea Family & Community Resource Centre



An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



School Refusal



What is it?

Refusal to go to school may happen at any age but typically occurs in children aged 5-7 years and in those 11-14 years.

Generally, the young person refuses to attend school and experiences significant distress about the idea of attending school.

This brochure has been designed as an awareness raising resource to raise understanding around the issue of school refusal in the general school going population.

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What can cause School Refusal?

The following factors **can** be involved in school refusal;

- Transition periods, such as moving to a new school, returning to school after a long absence, moving house or entering/exiting primary school.
- School factors such as workload, academic pressures, fear of failure, unmet learning needs, difficulties with organisation.
- Interpersonal Conflict (with peers, school staff, siblings or parents).
- Parents separating, having marital problems, or having frequent arguments.
- Traumatic events, such as family illness, grief or domestic abuse.
- Anxiety about social situations or activities, such as sports days, speaking in front of the class or school based assessments.
- Anxiety around being separated from parents or carers.
- Attention seeking from a parent or caregiver.
- Rewards gained from staying at home, such as spending time with a parent, watching TV or playing video games.

Be on the look out for:

- Illness such as stomach ache or head-aches particularly on Sunday nights or Monday mornings.
- Tearfulness or distress when talking/thinking about school.
- Young person consistently seeking to come home from school for differing reasons.
- Excessive worry or fear about school or school related activities.
- Sleeping difficulties and fatigue.
- Change of mood, negativity towards school, subjects or teachers.
- Lack of engagement with school activities, outings, trips.
- Poor sense of school belonging.

What can you as a parent/ guardian do to help?

- Establish and maintain good routines for bedtime, getting up, breakfast, getting organised i.e. uniform, school bag and equipment.
- Speak calmly with the young person. Let them know that you understand and want to help them find a solution.
- Encourage relationships and communication outside of school with peers, this builds the sense of belonging with school.
- Don't ask leading questions, instead of asking "are you worried?", ask, "How are you feeling?"
- Praise them for making the effort to go to school.
- Model positive coping and positive thinking.
- Be consistent and present a united front.
- Don't allow home to be more enjoyable than school during times of absence from school.

