



LOUTH SCHOOL AVOIDANCE RESOURCE PACK

Information for Schools and Parents/Guardians

A collaboration between the National Educational Psychological Service, Louth HSE Primary Care Psychology Service, Tusla Education Support Service (TESS), Louth Children's Disability Network Team, Louth Child and Family Support Networks & Louth CAMHS

This Resource Pack is based on current knowledge in this area.

It is intended as a guide only. Not all the suggestions here will apply to any one student or situation.

August 2023 Revised Version



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational Psychological Service

tess

Seirbhís Tacaíochta
Oideachais Tusla

Tusla Education Support Service

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Children's
Disability
Network
Team

HE



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES



Child and Family
Support Network



Preamble

School Avoidance is a challenge that confronts all schools at both Primary and Post-Primary levels. Early recognition and intervention are key to prompt resolution. Where the issue persists or becomes complex, schools often seek the advice and support of outside agencies. However, navigating the system (for example knowing who to contact and when) can pose its own set of challenges.

To this end, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Tusla Education Support Service (TESS), HSE Primary Care Psychology, Louth Child and Family Support Networks (CFSNs), the Louth Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and North Louth Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) have been working together to support a more co-ordinated approach to service delivery for children and young people experiencing school avoidance. This document is intended to provide guidance to schools and families as to how to manage school avoidance and the relevant services that may be of assistance. The suggestions and strategies outlined in this pack are not exhaustive.

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the work of our colleagues in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (DCAP) Waterford and NEPS Waterford from whose document "School Refusal, Good Practice Guide for Schools" and our colleagues in NEPS Roscommon from whose document "Roscommon School Avoidance Resource Pack" we have borrowed heavily. We would also like to acknowledge the material utilised from the Fingal CYPSC and Meath CYPSC school avoidance documents.

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Section 1: Introduction

What is school Avoidance?

Literature in relation to this topic often refers to the term “school refusal”. This terminology is problematic as it implies that the young person has control over their school non-attendance. It over-simplifies the issue and fails to recognise the range of environmental factors that have an influence on a young person. Throughout this pack, the term “School Avoidance” is used. On the advice of professionals who work with young people experiencing school avoidance, we have included a section specific to Autistic children and young people.

School Avoidance is pervasive and exacts a heavy toll on students, families and schools if left unaddressed.

School avoidance may happen at any age but most typically occurs in children 5-7 years of age and in young people 11-14 years of age. Generally, the child/young person experiences significant distress about the idea of attending school. It differs from truancy in that the child/young person is staying at home with the knowledge of the family and despite their efforts to encourage and enforce attendance.

Reasons for School Avoidance

There are lots of reasons why a child/young person might experience difficulties attending school, and pinpointing the cause can be difficult. Often there are a number of factors that contribute to school avoidance or non-attendance. It is important to understand and address underlying issues when supporting a child/young person to return to school or attend consistently. These reasons include:

- Anxiety
- Neurodiversity and Autism
- Social and peer related issues
- Learning and curriculum issues
- Contextual factors in the physical environment
- Starting school or points of transition
- Stressful life events

Bullying can also be a cause or factor related to school avoidance. Bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour among school-aged children involving a real or perceived power imbalance that is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Bullying can include threats, intimidation, and/or attacking someone physically or verbally.

Impact of School Avoidance

School avoidance is a significant difficulty affecting many students, families and schools. It is a serious issue that is best managed early. Long absences mean that children/young people miss out on important parts of the curriculum. It also impacts significantly on the social and emotional development of children and young people. Early identification of a potential difficulty is a key factor in addressing problems in this area. At this stage, there are strategies and interventions that schools and parents/guardians can adopt.



Section 2. Explaining School Avoidance

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Figure 1. Possible causes for School Avoidance

Family

Poor Parental Mental Health
(Christogoirgos & Glannakopolous. 2014)
Addiction/Substance Misuse
(Casas-Gil & Navarro-Guzman. 2002)
Parenting Style
(Reid. 2015)
Family Transitions
(Learnsheffield.co.uk, 2022)

Community

Anti-social Behaviour
(Johnson et al. 2016)
Criminality
(Soba. 2018)
Wealth & Social Status
(Luthar. 2003)
Increased Pressure to Achieve Academically
(Vatterott. 2019)

School

Lack of Knowledge of EBSA
(Jones et al. 2019)
Failure to Review Attendance Early
(Tusla. 2015)
Bullying
(Ochi et al. 2020)
Transitions
(Smith. 2017)

Individual

Confidence/self-esteem Relationship with
peers/staff
(Havik & Ingul. 2021)
Poor Emotional Literacy
(Finning et al. 2019)
Lack of Coping Skills
(O'Malley. 2015)
Mental Health Diagnosis
(Kawar et al. 2022)

Factors that reduce the risk of school avoidance

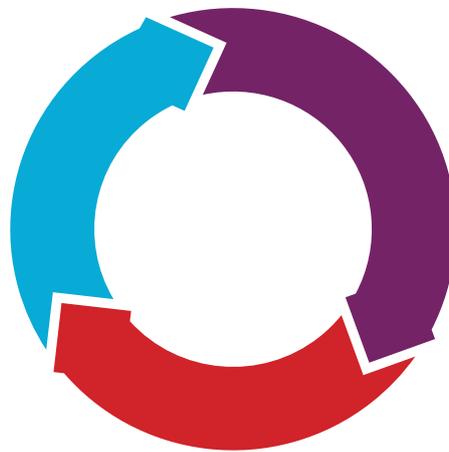
- Secure relationship between child/young person and parents/guardians (whether united or separated).
- Co-parenting - sharing tasks, being consistent, clear and firm.
- Understanding of anxiety and factors that maintain it.
- High levels of support and low levels of stress.
- Child/young person's easy temperament, good coping skills and an ability to make friends.
- School having the resources and knowledge necessary to provide a supportive environment for the student.
- Cooperation between those involved in supporting the student.
- The child/young person's sense of belonging in school.

How Does School Avoidance Come About?

The following diagrams illustrate the cycles of thoughts and feelings that can lead to a student initially refusing to attend school and continuing to refuse to attend.

Behaviours

Refusal to get ready for school, refusal to attend school, leave the house. etc ...
Avoidance of school related situations and people, crying, hiding, tantrums.



Thoughts

Mammy is sick and might go to hospital if I'm not here I'm safe at home. I don't have to worry about not being able to do the work. No-one can laugh at me when I'm at home.

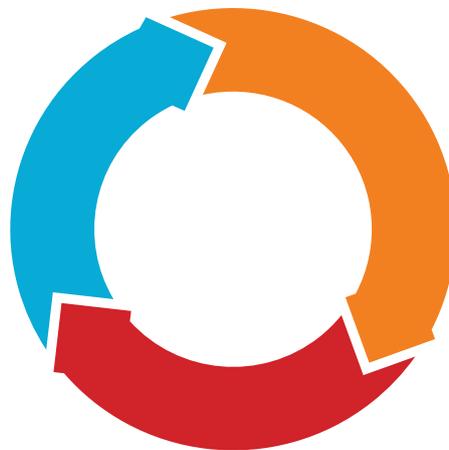
Feelings

Anxiety, fear, embarrassment, inferiority, depression, uncertainty, insecurity, isolation.

When School Avoidance Starts

Behaviours

Refusal to get ready for school, refusal to attend school, leave the house. etc ...
Avoidance of school related situations and people, crying, hiding, tantrums.



Thoughts

Everyone will be asking me questions about why I haven't been to school. I won't know the work because I've missed so much. My friends won't want to mix with me anymore.

Feelings

Anxiety, fear, embarrassment, inferiority, depression, uncertainty, insecurity, isolation.

Reproduced from "School Avoidance - Good Practice Guide for School, 2015."

<https://www.education.ie/en/SchoolsColleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Guidelines-Handouts-and-Tips/SchoolAvoidance/School-Avoidance.pdf>

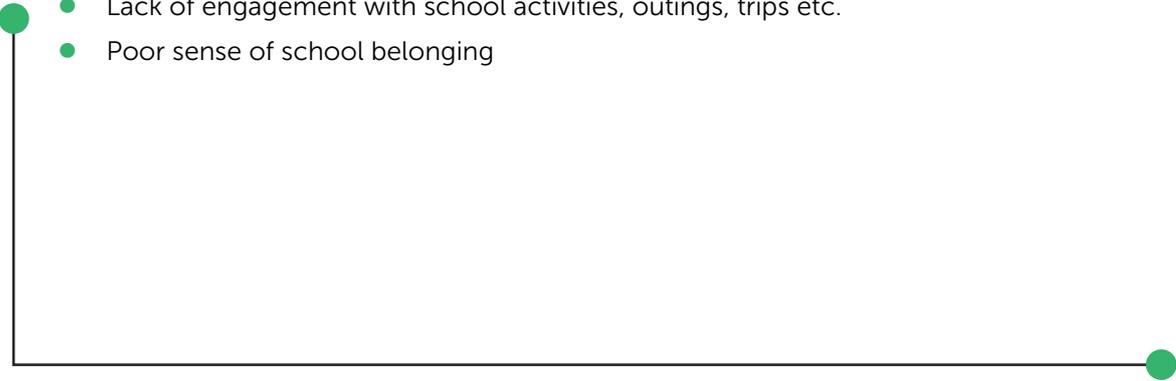
Section 3: Information for Parents/ Guardians on Possible Precursors to School Avoidance

Be on the lookout for:

- Frequent tearfulness/ distress/ pains in tummy or headaches on Sunday nights or Monday mornings.
- Bedwetting or signs of distress/upset on Sunday nights at the thoughts of going back to school on Monday morning.
- Child/young person showing distress or saying they feel sick when faced with returning to school after a break (e.g. long weekend or school holidays).
- A pattern of the child/young person frequently asking the teacher to ring his/her parent/guardian from school/wanting to go home/saying that they are feeling sick.
- Child/young person displaying challenging behaviour/having tantrums at the mention of going to school, or before school in the morning. This may be more common in children who have just started school (i.e. junior infants), but should normally settle after a few weeks in school.
- Prolonged difficulties (anxieties) for a child/young person when mixing with others (e.g. going outside to play with other children in the neighbourhood; going to after school activities, parties etc.). Again, some students may experience such worries/difficulties, particularly if they are not exposed to this before attending school, but tend to settle after a short while.
- Pre-occupation with being organised for school – overly perfectionistic.
- A family stressor (e.g. parental/guardian separation or bereavement) can trigger some anxious behaviours/ feelings about leaving home, or leaving a parent/guardian in order to attend school. This is normal. Providing the child/young person with a calm listening ear, and letting them know that you understand, but that they still need to attend school can help them to get through a difficult period.

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Adolescents may also show the following behaviours:

- Worry or fear related to school
 - Sleeping difficulties and fatigue
 - Change of mood, negativity towards school, subjects or teachers
 - Increased self-consciousness
 - Lack of engagement with school activities, outings, trips etc.
 - Poor sense of school belonging
- 

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

- Speak calmly with your child. Let them know that you understand.
- Encourage them to talk to you about how they feel.
- Be reassuring.
- Once you have reassured them and helped them to take some slow deep breaths, be persistent and make every effort to bring the child/young person to school. This is the right thing to do.
- Give the child/young person some positive self-statements such as: "I can do this", "I went to school yesterday and it was fine".
- Praise them for making the effort to go to school.
- Model positive coping and positive thinking - use examples from your own life.
- Be consistent and present a united front.
- Encourage relationships and communication outside of school.
- Establish and maintain good routines for bedtime, getting up, breakfast, and organisation of the uniform, school bag and equipment.
- Listen but do not reinforce their fear/anxiety. Make statements such as "I know that you feel, we will work on it together, I will help you".
- Don't ask leading questions, for example ask, "How are you feeling?" rather than "are you worried?"





Section 4: Signs that may be observed in school

Many students are occasionally reluctant to go to school or have some anxiety about activities like participation in P.E. It is normal for students to miss some days of school during the year on account of illness etc. School avoidance is a more persistent problem that might be characterised by some of the following signs:

- Frequent complaints of illness before or during school, such as stomach aches, headaches, dizziness or fatigue (These problems often quickly fade if the child/young person is allowed to stay home).
- Difficulty attending school after weekends or holidays.
- Long, unexplained absences from school.
- Periodic absences or missed classes for which no explanation is given.
- Frequent lateness to school or an adolescent who misses the bus every day.
- Frequent requests to leave school and return home.



Section 5: What can be helpful for all students in school?

Early support for children and young people displaying some of the initial signs of school avoidance is essential. There are occasions whereby school avoidance can develop in a sudden manner, with no apparent warning signs. School based programmes and interventions can assist when there are early warning signs and may aid in preventing school avoidance.

School Based Programmes and Interventions

Home-School Collaboration

The promotion of a positive relationship between home and school is essential in ensuring that, when difficulties occur, there can be a quick, collaborative response. Communication channels between parents/guardians and the school should be promoted and used to share relevant information about a student's social, emotional and educational development. This open communication system ensures that where concerns

arise, they can be dealt with efficiently. Parents/guardians may sometimes feel as though it is hard to connect with their child/young person in terms of how they are getting on in school. Some ways in which parents/guardians can get involved are listed below:

- Checking in around homework
- Taking an interest in any projects which may have to be completed
- Attending school events such as parent-teacher meetings, fundraising events or school performances
- Keeping communication active with the child/young person's class teacher/year head in the form of a communication notebook or through 1:1 face to face meetings
- Being invited in to help in the class with making resources, career days or assisting on school tours
- Supporting the child/young person to attend after-school activities.

It is important that parents/guardians receive consistent information and advice in terms of encouraging regular school attendance and initial steps to take should a decrease in attendance be noted.

General Screening

It can be difficult to keep track of a large number of students within the school. However, in order to ensure that students do not "fall through the net", it is recommended that regular screening in the areas of reading, writing, spelling, numeracy and behaviour (including social skills) is undertaken.

For Primary Schools

Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support

- [Guidelines for Teachers¹](#)
- [Resource Pack for Teachers²](#)

Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support

For Post Primary Schools

A Continuum of Support for Post Primary Schools

- [Guidelines for Teachers³](#)
- [Resource Pack for Teachers⁴](#)

These resources provide guidance to schools and teachers on screening and planning interventions for students with learning, emotional and social needs.



1 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/40642/674c98d5e72d48b7975f60895b4e8c9a.pdf#page=null>
2 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/40645/20f442fa414940f894506ed717d7f635.pdf#page=null>
3 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/40653/cc3a4af942a24fe0870cc8d79d92dbf2.pdf#page=null>
4 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/40658/f896b4d014464ad1b9241e91c5405370.pdf#page=null>

Attendance

Monitoring attendance is in itself a crucial preventative and intervention measure in terms of identifying students who may indicate early warning signs of reluctant attendance or school avoidance. This is an area that all schools are obliged to adhere to and it is important that this information is utilised effectively.

Areas which may need checking include:

- Medical issues – to ensure there are no underlying physical or emotional reasons for the child/young person avoiding school.
- Social needs – checking in with the child/young person’s friends, or lack thereof and gaining a greater understanding of the child/young person’s social circle.
- Learning needs – is the child/young person having difficulty in particular subjects, or overall?
- Environmental factors – is there something in the environment causing distress for the child/young person?

Assessing the above areas can lead to a more in-depth, focused intervention being put in place which is tailored to the individual needs of the child/young person. The Continuum of Support documents should be used by schools to gather information and develop an appropriate support plans.

School Based Programmes/Curriculum

There are a number of school-based programmes and interventions which can support the creation and/or implementation of a plan for avoidance child/young person who is reluctant to attend or is presenting with school avoidant behaviour. These include:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Student Support Teams
- Stay Safe Programme
- Social Skills Programmes
- The School’s Code of Behaviour (including incentive programmes to encourage positive behaviour such as regular attendance)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Friends for Life Programme
- Teaching Mindfulness to all students
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023
- Whole school Wellbeing Initiative (e.g. Check and Connect)

DEIS schools may be able to avail of further supports including breakfast clubs, homework clubs or afterschool clubs.

When needs are identified- Post-Screening

Children/young people who, as a result of the regular screening process, are identified as having needs should have a plan implemented in a timely manner to ensure that difficulties do not escalate and become exacerbated.

The School and Parent Checklist (**Appendix A**) is a useful resource to help in this process. Schools are encouraged to gather relevant background information, plan, evaluate the plan as well as gather information on specific relevant interventions and resources available to them.



Section 6. Involvement of Outside Agencies and Support Services

Sometimes, additional support from outside agencies may be required. A timely referral for such supports is important. Where there are difficulties with attendance, and all other school-based interventions have been utilised TESS, should be notified and a referral should be made. NEPS should also be consulted in this regard. A child/young person may be referred to HSE Primary Care Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and/or other agencies depending on their particular needs. Where there is uncertainty as to which service is most appropriate and where there are unmet needs for a child/young person a request can be made directly to the [Meitheal⁵](#) process through the Child and Family Support Network Team. A referral should be made to Child Protection Social Work (Tusla) if it is deemed that there is a child protection and/or welfare concern.

⁵ <https://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/guidance-documents/>

Section 7: What can schools do when a child/young person is presenting with school avoidance behaviour?

Individual Interventions

When a child/young person is identified as having difficulty attending school, it is imperative to implement supportive interventions as soon as possible. It is essential that a potential difficulty for the student is picked up early through the preventative measures listed on the previous page, and that when reluctant attendance or school avoidance behaviour begins, help is provided immediately to prevent reluctant attendance or school avoidance becoming entrenched. If a child/young person is out of school for a period of time, it is harder to return to the routine of school. The following process is advised:

1. The school should alert the parent/guardians to the fact that there are concerns about school attendance.
2. A helpful next step is to organise a meeting between school, parents/guardians and child/young person to identify and discuss the issues. The Guidance Counsellor, Home School Liaison Officer or Special Education Teacher (SET) are often best placed to take on the role of key support for the student and family. Reluctant attendance and/or school avoidance is not always due to anxiety and a full understanding of the family and child/young person's context should be sought by school.
3. This meeting should act as a supportive way of problem-solving the barriers that are causing the child/young person to miss school and a key objective of this meeting is to identify what might be causing the school avoidance behaviour e.g. anxiety or specific barriers about returning to school. A screening of the risk factors which may underlie the issues with attendance should be carried out with the family and relevant school staff to help identify what has prompted the school avoidance behaviour (**Appendix B⁶, C⁷, D⁸ and E**). Once the possible reason/s for the issues with attendance is understood it will be easier to build supportive interventions around this. A sample of the School and Parental checklist is included in **Appendix A**.
4. Learning or social-emotional needs may be identified and the school along with the family should seek to address these needs with interventions e.g. additional SET support, social skills programme or a buddy within school.
5. A plan for re-entry to school should be agreed and recorded with the child/young person, their parents/guardians and the school. A gradual return plan may be required for students who are experiencing severe anxiety or depression. An example of this type of plan is included in the **Appendices F and G**. The main focus of this plan is a gradual working up of the amount of hours that the child/young person spends in the school environment. This plan should be agreed and signed up to by all relevant parties. There is further guidance available from [Circular 0047/2021⁹](https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f49bd-0047-2021/)

6 <https://schoolavoidance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SRAS-interactive-pdf-004.pdf>

7 <https://schoolavoidance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/sras-child-version.pdf>

8 https://www.3seducational.com/uploads/1/0/0/4/100460442/how_to_score_the_school_refusal_assessment_scale.pdf

9 <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f49bd-0047-2021/>

6. If the child/young person is not yet attending for full days, time at home should be structured as if they were in school (e.g. uniform on, no TV or internet, working on the subjects as indicated on the time table) with class work being given to the child/young person to work on at home.
7. At this stage the relevant school personnel may wish to discuss the concerns with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) (this will not be an open case yet). A request for NEPS consultation may also be sought at this point, with parental consent, if deemed necessary. If the child/young person is only coming in for part of the day Reduced School Day Team in TESS should be involved (See link) SEE also FAQ for young people <http://www.childrensrights.ie>
8. Teachers and school staff should be made aware of the plan and briefed on anxiety related issues if present e.g. talking aloud in class, leaving the classroom unhindered, if necessary with the use of break cards. Staff should be advised not to quiz the child/young person on absences or question why the student has not been in class.
9. The child/young person should be helped to identify the staff members with whom he or she feels safest and who can greet the child/young person returning to school and be the support for the child/young person throughout the return process. Regular and set check in times with that staff member can be useful for the child/young person to discuss their difficulties and build a rapport with the staff member.
10. Any additional support strategies agreed at the return to school meeting should be implemented as soon as the child/young person begins the return to school, for example SET support designed for social-emotional skills development/programmes or additional support to catch up on missed work.
11. There may be a peer that can be identified as a buddy or mentor for the return plan. This peer could be asked to meet with the child/young person returning on their first day to help to re-integrate them in school life. If the child/young person has missed school time, a return to social activities can be daunting and a peer may be best placed to help with this. This peer can help ensure the child/young person is included in a group for lunches, is briefed on class work and remains close to them as a support over the return to school period. With the child/young person's consent, it may also be helpful to brief peers on the return to school and urge them to be supportive with no questioning as to why the child/young person has been absent, whilst avoiding over-dramatising the situation
12. If possible, a quiet area of the school should be designated and the child/young person can be allowed use this as a relaxation/chill room; this will encourage the child/young person to stay in the school rather than leave when their anxiety is high. A designated staff member may be necessary to help calm the child/young person if they need a break from the classroom for a short period of time. "Request a break" cards may be a useful strategy to trial with the student. This will allow them to leave the classroom without significant disruption. If they are in possession of these cards and are in the hallways during class time they can show this card without being unduly questioned.
13. Regular phone contact between parents/guardians and school staff is recommended in order to maintain the return to school plan. A teacher (possibly the identified staff member) should be allocated as the contact person for the parent/guardian.
14. A record of attendance and time spent in school should be kept by the school.
15. A review date for the return plan should be set 10 school days from the initial plan being made and all steps implemented over this period. A record of intervention should be kept in case of referral onwards. A checklist of these steps is found in **Appendix I** and if an onward referral to services is made the checklist should be submitted also so that all involved can see what has already been carried out.



In the case where a child/young person has special educational needs and is presenting with school avoidance behaviour, the following is important to have in place to facilitate a smooth transition:

1. All teachers, SNAs and other staff members working with the child/young person have been briefed about anxiety related issues (e.g. reading aloud in class), social difficulties (e.g. difficulties with peer relationships), learning needs (e.g. dyslexia), or particular home circumstances (e.g. family bereavement).
2. Where the child/young person's learning needs have been identified, the child/young person may need to be prioritised for a consultation with a NEPS Psychologist. Requests for the involvement of a NEPS Psychologist are made through the Principal.
3. A suitably resourced and planned Student Support Plan is implemented.
4. Review of school based anxiety management programmes where available, providing the child/young person with the opportunity to learn about anxiety and how best to manage and cope.



Section 8: What if this is not working or the plan has not progressed?

- A review meeting with parents/guardians and school should be set within 10 school days to discuss progress. Discuss barriers that have impeded progress and possible solutions to these. Identify the areas of the plan that have worked and look at what it is about these supports that have proved helpful. Brainstorm other supports which may help. Where a concern has been identified, the school may contact the EWO for advice and guidance prior to submitting a referral.
- All supports currently in place should be reviewed and if additional supports are needed they should be identified and implemented as soon as possible. This may include a request for consultation with NEPS.
- Linking in with local youth/community agencies to provide supports can be beneficial in supporting a child/young person. Youth/community agencies can provide personal and social development programmes that compliment a child/young person's formal, academic or vocational education and training.
- It may be helpful to request that the case be considered for the Meitheal process. The Tusla led National Practice Model Meitheal ([Appendix K¹⁰](#)) identifies the strengths and needs of the child/young person and family and if necessary co-ordinates services to develop an agreed action plan and review process of same. The aim is for the identified unmet needs of the child/young person to be met by the parents/guardians supported by the various agencies if required. If an initial Meitheal meeting is required, this can be arranged by contacting the local Child and Family Support Network Coordinator (CFSN). Regular reviews will take place with the child/young person, parents/guardians and professionals to monitor and support the implementation of the Meitheal Action Plan.
- If no significant progress has been made a referral can be made to the HSE Primary Care Clinical Psychology service (if behavioural or mild-moderate mental health needs are present) or via the GP to CAMHS (if moderate to severe mental health issues are present). If a child/young person presents with traits associated with autism a referral to Primary Care ([Non-complex¹¹](#)) or CDNT ([Complex¹²](#)) may be appropriate ([See appendix L¹³](#))
- A referral should be made to TUSLA Child Protection Social Worker if it is deemed that there are child protection and/or welfare concerns

10 https://issuu.com/tusla1/docs/meath_emotionally_based_school_avoidance_pack_fina/s/21634006

11 <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/ho/louth/therapy/>

12 <https://www2.hse.ie/services/disability/childrens-services/services/find-a-cdnt/>

13 https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/Childrens_Services_Referral_Form.pdf

Section 9: Helping Parents/ Guardians Support the Child/Young Person to go back to School

These tips are in checklist form in **Appendix I and J** of the resource pack.

- Reassure and encourage. If possible, try to have your child/young person remember a time that they did not want to do something and when it turned out okay how they felt afterwards. Tell them you are proud of them for being brave and trying to return.
- Problem-solve by asking questions – try to understand the reasons why your child/young person is reluctant to attend or avoiding school? Try not to ask leading questions like “are you worried” – try to ask open questions like “how do you feel”. Avoid “why” questions.
- Encourage your child/young person to find things they can enjoy about the school day (e.g., chatting with friends, PE, Art class, lunch time or going home).
- Have the parent/guardian who is better at encouraging attendance bring the child/young person to school.
- Get a lift from other parents and include a class friend to accompany the child/young person if that would make going to school easier.
- Try to have a teacher or friend whom the child/young person likes, to meet them at the school to help ease the transition in the morning. in deliberate self-harm, suicide threats
- Work through ways to help your child/young person cope with any aspects of school they are feeling worried or scared about. Look at pros and cons of each suggestion. Decide which is most likely to work and give it a go.
- During school time, make life boring for your child/young person at home; no screen time, no laptop, no T.V. These activities are more fun than being at school. Making home a fun place to be makes school less attractive.
- If not attending school (or attending on reduced days), your child/young person should continue to get up at the same time and get into their school uniform as usual. They should sit at the kitchen table or somewhere boring and complete some school work. All devices should be removed, this includes access to Wi-Fi, phones, screens and gadgets.
- Try not to interact with your child/young person while they are at home and try to keep to a school timetable. Attention from parents/guardians can be rewarding so make a conscious effort not to visit friends, go shopping or to do enjoyable activities with the child.
- Continue and maintain good routines for getting up, going to bed, eating well, homework completion and fitting in some rest and relaxation so they have a secure framework to work around.
- Respect your child/young person’s feelings. The message should be “I know you are having a difficult time, I will help you through it”.

- To increase the child/young person's sense of self-efficacy, try to include more choice in their schedule. For example, ask "do you want to wear your red jumper or your blue jumper" or "do you want to bring lunch with you or buy it there".
- Emphasise and reward partial successes.
- Deal constructively with family concerns and request support for parenting issues, perhaps with the assistance of a health professional such as a psychologist or family support worker.
- If your child/young person has questions regarding school, school attendance, rights and responsibilities, please refer to www.childrensrights.ie to assist.
- Normalise fears and worries, promote coping strategies and highlight the importance of education.
- Model coping strategies. Keep calm in front of the child/young person.
- Encourage contact with and engage in activities with friends outside of school.



Section 10: School Avoidance and Autism

Some autistic children and young people experience school avoidance. For these students, anxiety issues can contribute to their difficulties at school in a way that can totally overwhelm them leading to a flight or fight response. The factors which influence the levels of anxiety in children and young people with autism are multiple and often complex, with each child experiencing a set of challenges unique to them. These challenges can be associated with difficulties such as sensory overload, social demands and academic expectations.

Autistic children and young people need teachers and school staff who:

- Know their distinct thinking and learning style
- Are calm and reassuring, especially when the child/young person is confused or experiencing sensory overload
- Manage the other students so that the child feels safe and can concentrate
- Know when the child needs a break or time alone (a card system and identified safe places to go can be very useful here).
- Prepare the child/young person for transitions and changes in the daily schedule (visual timetables)
- Endeavour to understand the child's perspective, experiences and motivators
- Help the child/ young person cope with challenges, pacing and mistakes in a way that emphasises progress and success.

Useful Resources:

- Middletown Centre for Autism. The Centre designs and delivers training programmes cognisant of the needs of parents/guardians and carers, Education Professionals and those who traverse these groupings [Middletown Centre for Autism](https://www.middletownautism.com/)¹⁴

For further detailed information on School Avoidance and Autism please see: ([Research Bulletin no. 32](#)¹⁵)

- These courses are delivered to teachers in conjunction with training offered by the National Council for Special Education www.ncse.ie
- Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- [Aslam](https://www.asiam.ie/)¹⁶ is an Irish based association whose website provides a range of resources for young people with ASD and their parents and guardian teachers.

¹⁴ <https://www.middletownautism.com/>

¹⁵ <https://www.middletownautism.com/files/uploads/ca636534cba436f811576e4c8b128e39.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://asiam.ie/>

Section 11: Louth School Avoidance Pathway

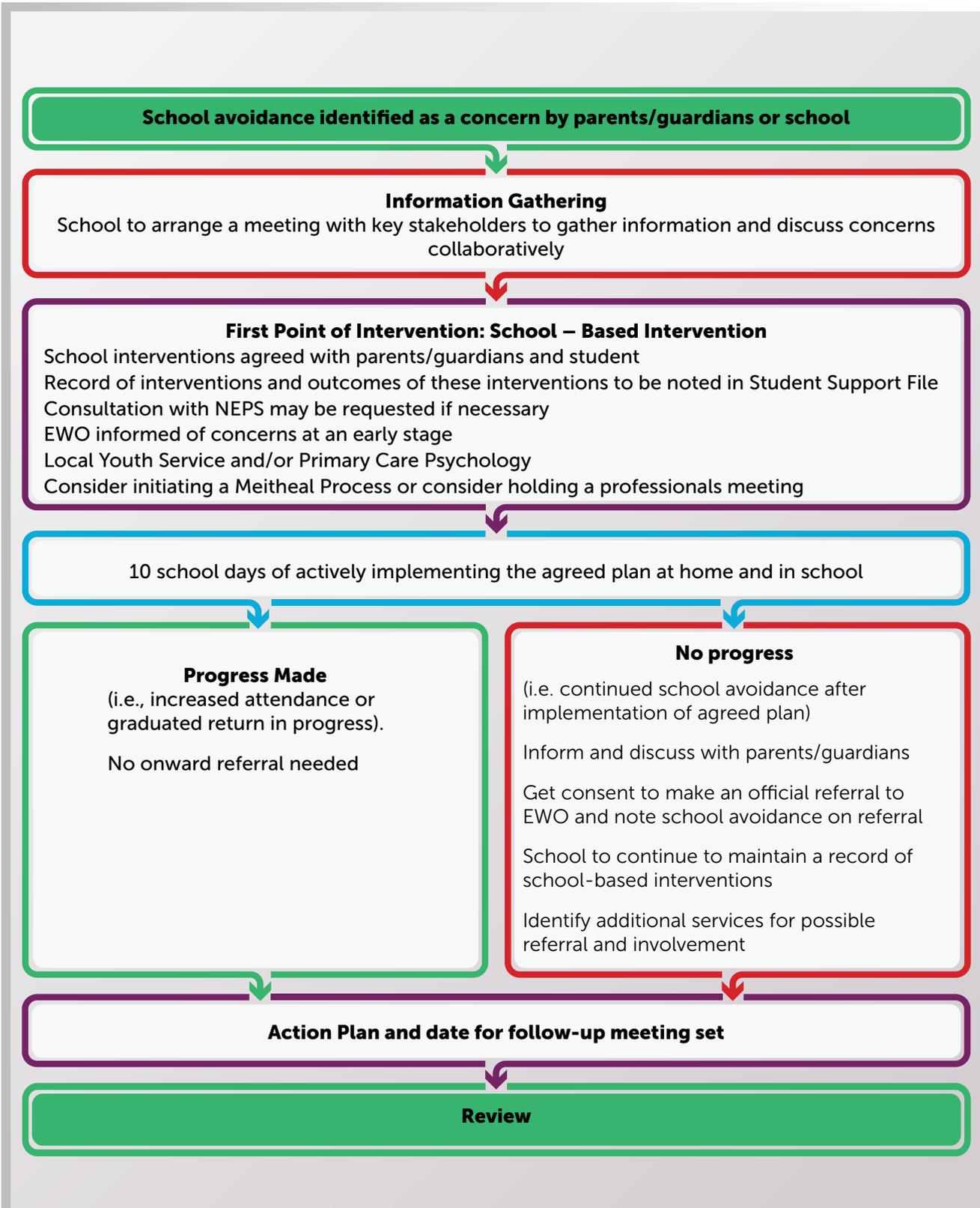
This pathway was developed by services working with children and young people who are experiencing difficulties attending school for various reasons. It is hoped that this pathway and resource pack will provide a guide for schools and parents/guardians on ways to manage reluctant attendance and/or school avoidance behaviour and the relevant services that may be of assistance.

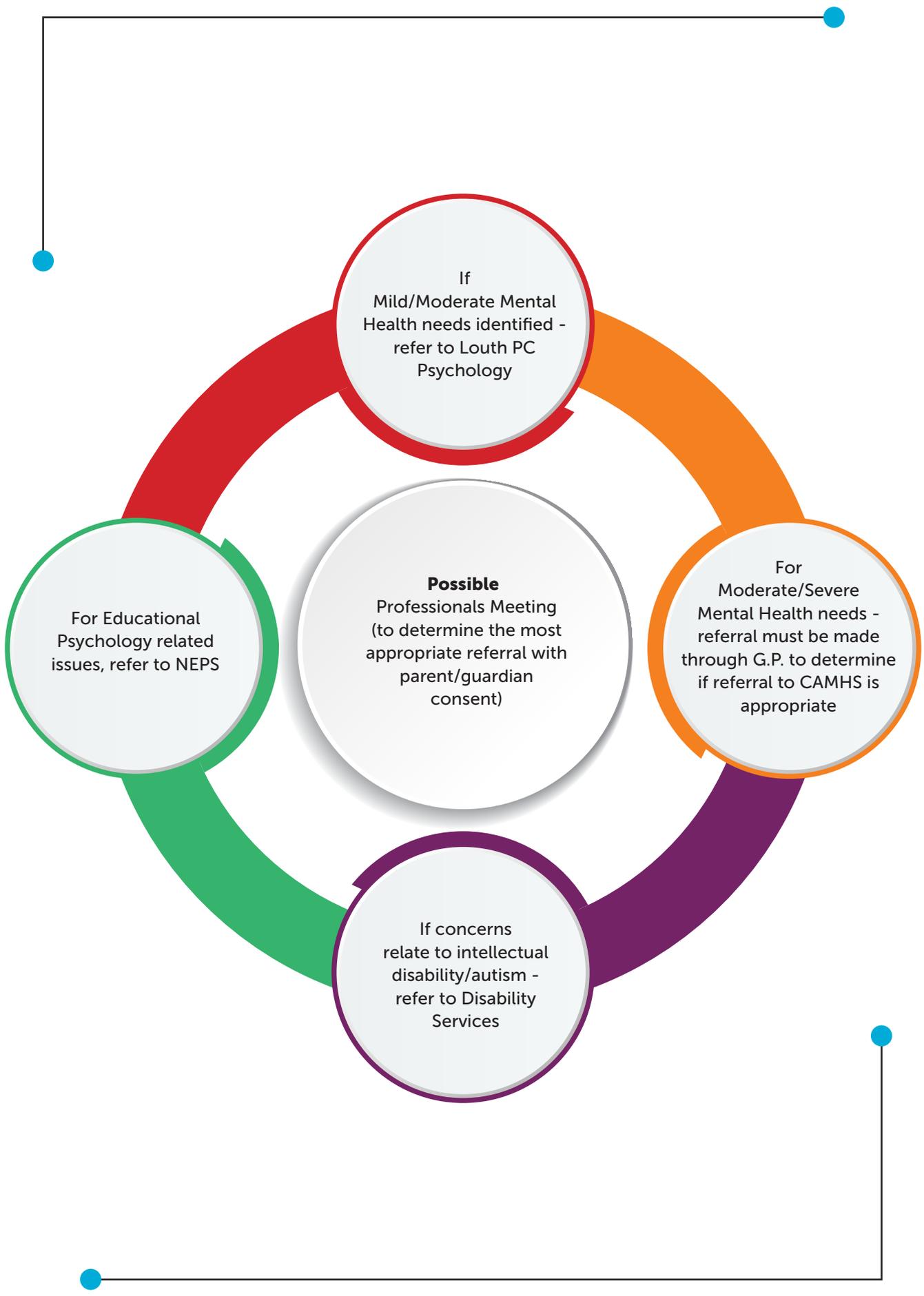
School avoidance behaviour often causes high levels of distress for families and can be very difficult for schools to manage. Early intervention, clear planning and good communication between schools, families and professionals is key. When a difficulty attending school becomes entrenched, it is often much harder to work with, than if it is identified early and intervention plans are put in place.

The pathway recognises the importance of early intervention and the key role that the school has in identifying and intervening in this issue. The pathway guides families and schools on how to progress with early intervention and what to do if this intervention is not working and additional support from external agencies/services is required.



School Avoidance Pathway





If
Mild/Moderate Mental
Health needs identified -
refer to Louth PC
Psychology

Possible
Professionals Meeting
(to determine the most
appropriate referral with
parent/guardian
consent)

For
Moderate/Severe
Mental Health needs -
referral must be made
through G.P. to determine
if referral to CAMHS is
appropriate

If concerns
relate to intellectual
disability/autism -
refer to Disability
Services

For Educational
Psychology related
issues, refer to NEPS

APPENDICES

28



Appendix A: School & Parent Checklist

BESD Continuum of Support Learning Environmental Checklist | NBSS

A high number of yes responses indicate a greater risk				
Name of Child/Young Person:				
Date:	YES	NO	N/A	Comments
Attendance				
Reluctance to leave the house in the mornings				
Late for school				
Absent for part or whole days				
Environmental				
Significant life events (e.g.: moving house/school, separation of parent/guardians/ family members, additions to the family, death of a pet). Please specify.				
Child/young person living in more than one home/temporary accommodation				
Parental/guardian involvement with education (e.g. homework, parent-teacher meetings, good communication with school)				
Practical/financial challenges in getting to school				
Learning Needs				
Inabilities to problem solve				
Organisational difficulties				
Homework not done/incomplete on a regular basis				
Difficulties working under pressure/ processing difficulties.				
Specific learning difficulty. Please specify.				
Not achieving learning potential.				
Avoidance of particular school activities/ subjects.				
Social				
Bullying				
Fallen out with friends/difficulties with peer relationships.				
Social communication difficulties.				
Not independent for age.				
Struggles during unstructured times				
Lack of active engagement in social and leisure outlets				
Emotional Well Being				

Often appears tired.				
Often appears to be lacking in interest/ motivation.				
Demonstrates low self esteem				
Shy, quiet or passive				
Appears worried or anxious				
Displays behaviours that challenge				
Lack of involvement in school life.				
Physical well being				
Had a serious illness or have a medical condition				
Complained of sickness or headaches				
Had rapid weight gain or loss				
Changes in eating habits				
Completed by: (please include school, parent/guardian, and child/young person's name as appropriate.)	<p>_____ (school representative)</p> <p>_____ (Parent/Guardian)</p> <p>_____ (Child/young person)</p>			

Appendix B: School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (P) Parent¹⁷

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please select the answer that best fits the following questions:

- 1.** How often does your child have bad feelings about going to school because he/she is afraid of something related to school (for example, tests, school bus, teacher, fire alarm)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 2.** How often does your child stay away from school because it is hard for him/her to speak with the other kids at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 3.** How often does your child feel he/she would rather be with you or your spouse than go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 4.** When your child is not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often does he/she leave the house and do something fun?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 5.** How often does your child stay away from school because he/she will feel sad or depressed if he/she goes?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 6.** How often does your child stay away from school because he/she feels embarrassed in front of other people at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

17 <https://schoolavoidance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SRAS-interactive-pdf-004.pdf>

7. How often does your child think about you or your spouse or family when in school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

8. When your child is not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often does he/she talk to or see other people (other than his/her family)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

9. How often does your child feel worse at school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) compared to how he/she feels at home with friends?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

10. How often does your child stay away from school because he/she does not have many friends there?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

11. How much would your child rather be with his/her family than go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

12. When your child is not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how much does he/she enjoy doing different things (for example, being with friends, going places)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

13. How often does your child have bad feelings about school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) when he/she thinks about school on Saturday and Sunday?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

14. How often does your child stay away from certain places in school (e.g., hallways, places where certain groups of people are) where he/she would have to talk to someone?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

15. How much would your child rather be taught by you or your spouse at home than by his/her teacher at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

16. How often does your child refuse to go to school because he/she wants to have fun outside of school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

17. If your child had less bad feelings (for example, scared, nervous, sad) about school, would it be easier for him/her to go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

18. If it were easier for your child to make new friends, would it be easier for him/her to go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

19. Would it be easier for your child to go to school if you or your spouse went with him/her?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

20. Would it be easier for your child to go to school if he/she could do more things he/she likes to do after school hours (for example, being with friends)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

21. How much more does your child have bad feelings about school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) compared to other kids his/her age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

22. How often does your child stay away from people at school compared to other kids his/her age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

23. Would your child like to be home with you or your spouse more than other kids his/her age would?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

24. Would your child rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids his/her age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

Do not write below this line

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____

9. _____ 10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____

13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____ 16. _____

17. _____ 18. _____ 19. _____ 20. _____

21. _____ 22. _____ 23. _____ 24. _____

Total Score = _____

Mean Score = _____

Relative Ranking = _____

Appendix C: School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (C) Child ¹⁸

Children sometimes have different reasons for not going to school. Some children feel badly at school, some have trouble with other people, some just want to be with their family, and others like to do things that are more fun outside of school.

This form asks questions about why you don't want to go to school. For each question, pick one number that describes you best for the last few days. After you answer one question, go on to the next. Don't skip any questions.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just pick the number that best fits the way you feel about going to school. Select the number.

Here is an example of how it works. Try it. Select the number that describes you *best*.

Example:

How often do you like to go shopping?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (C)

Name: _____

Age: _____ Date: _____

Please select the answer that best fits the following questions:

- 1.** How often do you have bad feelings about going to school because you are afraid of something related to school (for example, tests, school bus, teacher, fire alarm)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 2.** How often do you stay away from school because it is hard to speak with the other kids at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

- 3.** How often do you feel you would rather be with your parent/guardians than go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

18 <https://schoolavoidance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/sras-child-version.pdf>

4. When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often do you leave the house and do something fun?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

5. How often do you stay away from school because you will feel sad or depressed if you go?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

6. How often do you stay away from school because you feel embarrassed in front of other people at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

7. How often do you think about your parent/guardians or family when in school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

8. When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often do you talk to or see other people (other than your family)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

9. How often do you feel worse at school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) compared to how you feel at home with friends?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

10. How often do you stay away from school because you do not have many friends there?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

11. How much would you rather be with your family than go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

12. When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how much do you enjoy doing different things (for example, being with friends, going places)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

13. How often do you have bad feelings about school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) when you think about school on Saturday and Sunday?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

14. How often do you stay away from certain places in school (e.g., hallways, places where certain groups of people are) where you would have to talk to someone?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

15. How much would you rather be taught by your parent/guardians at home than by your teacher at school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

16. How often do you refuse to go to school because you want to have fun outside of school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

17. If you had less bad feelings (for example, scared, nervous, sad) about school, would it be easier for you to go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

18. If it were easier for you to make new friends, would it be easier for you to go to school?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

19. Would it be easier for you to go to school if your parent/guardians went with you?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

20. Would it be easier for you to go to school if you could do more things you like to do after school hours (for example, being with friends)?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

21. How much more do you have bad feelings about school (for example, scared, nervous, or sad) compared to other kids your age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

22. How often do you stay away from people at school compared to other kids your age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

23. Would you like to be home with your parent/guardians more than other kids your age would?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

24. Would you rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids your age?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

Do not write below this line _____

- 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
- 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____
- 9. _____ 10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____
- 13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____ 16. _____
- 17. _____ 18. _____ 19. _____ 20. _____
- 21. _____ 22. _____ 23. _____ 24. _____

Total Score = _____

Mean Score = _____

Relative Ranking = _____

Appendix D: Scoring and interpretation of the SRAS-R

Scoring the SRAS-R is based on a 0-6 scale, with each question being scored as follows based on participant response:

- 0 points: 0, meaning 'never'
- 1 point: 1, meaning 'seldom'
- 2 points: 2, meaning 'sometimes'
- 3 points: 3, meaning 'half the time'
- 4 points: 4, meaning 'usually'
- 5 points: 5, meaning 'almost always'
- 6 points: 6, meaning 'always'

Each item in the question set contributes to a different function which may be contributing to the child's school refusal behaviour. Total scores may be computed by adding the scores of each of four functions on both the parent/guardian and child versions. These function scores are each divided by 6 (the number of scores in each set). Parent/guardian and child function scores are then summed and divided by 2 to determine the mean function score. The function with the highest mean score is considered the primary cause of the child's school avoidance. The function divisions are as follows:

- Function one ('avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity'): items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21
- Function two ('escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations'): items 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, and 22
- Function three ('attention seeking'): items 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23
- Function four ('tangible rewards'): items 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, and 24

Scores within 0.50 points of one another are considered equivalent.

Appendix E: Parental Interview Questions based on results of SRAS-R

Parental Interview (Based on results of SRAS-R)	
Follow Up Questions – Avoidance of activities that provoke a sense of general negative affectivity	
How often does your child avoid school specifically because he/she is generally distressed or upset about school?	
Is your child upset about school more than most children his/her age?	
What school-related objects/ situations does he/she avoid (bus, particular class, teacher, transition between classes, playground etc.)	
Has your child told you of recent negative life events, or have you noticed that he/she has suddenly changed their behaviour in any way?	
Has your child expressed to you or have you noticed any specific emotions or physical symptoms about going to school? What are they?	
What is your child's level of anxiety upon entering school or in the morning before school, and how do others respond?	
Does your child's anxiety primarily occur at home, in the car, on the way to school, on the school playground immediately before the start of school, or during the day at school?	

Follow Up Questions – **ESCAPE** from aversive social and/or evaluative situations

<p>How often does your child avoid school specifically because he/she wants to escape social and/or evaluative situations at school?</p>	
<p>Does your child try to avoid or escape these situations more than most children his/her age?</p>	
<p>What specific social or evaluative situations does he/she stay away from (especially writing or speaking before others, meeting new people, interacting with peers, tests, group situations etc.?)</p>	
<p>Has your child told you of recent negative social or, or have you noticed he/she has suddenly changed his/her social behaviour in any way?</p>	
<p>Has your child expressed to you or have you noticed any specific emotions or physical symptoms about interacting in social or evaluative situations? What are they?</p>	
<p>What is your child's level of anxiety upon entering school or in the morning before school, and how do others respond?</p>	
<p>Does your child's anxiety primarily occur at home, in the car, on the way to school, in the playground immediately before the start of school, or during the day at school?</p>	
<p>Do these problems occur primarily in all social or evaluative situations or primarily in those situations related to school?</p>	

Follow Up Questions – **ATTENTION** from significant others

<p>How often does your child avoid school specifically because she/he wants to get attention from you or a significant other?</p>	
<p>Does your child show this attention-seeking behaviour more than most children her/his age?</p>	
<p>What specific behaviours does your child do to get attention from you (especially clinging, reassurance-seeking, refusal to move, tantrums, telephone calls, or texting, protests, verbal demands for attention, guilt-inducing behaviour, or running away from school to get to you)?</p>	
<p>Has your child told you of recent negative life events, or have you noticed he/she has suddenly changed his/her behaviour to you in any way?</p>	
<p>Has your child expressed to you or have you noticed any specific emotions or physical symptoms about interacting with you or being away from you? What are they?</p>	
<p>Describe behaviours of concern upon entering school or in the morning before school, and how do others respond?</p>	
<p>Describe your child's behaviours of concern at home, in the car on the way to school, in the playground immediately before the start of school, or during the day at school?</p>	
<p>Is your child willing to go to school if you accompanied him/her?</p>	
<p>Do these problems occur in most daily situations or primarily is school-related situations?</p>	

Follow Up Questions – TANGIBLE REINFORCEMENT from outside school

<p>How often does your child avoid school specifically because he/she wants to pursue tangible rewards from some source outside of school?</p>	
<p>Does your child pursue tangible rewards outside of school more than most children his/her age?</p>	
<p>What specific things does he/she leave school to pursue (especially spending time with friends, substance use, watching T.V. or playing videogames at home, sleeping etc.)?</p>	
<p>Has your child told you of recent negative life or school events, or have you noticed he/she has suddenly changed his/her behaviour to you in any way?</p>	
<p>Has your child expressed to you or have you noticed any specific emotions he/she has about being in or leaving school? What are they?</p>	
<p>Describe your child's behaviours of concern upon entering school or in the morning before school, and how do others respond?</p>	
<p>Does your child's attendance problems occur primarily in the morning or during the school day? At what point does your child leave school during the day?</p>	
<p>Would your child be willing to attend school if incentives were provided for attendance?</p>	
<p>Does your child's pursuit of tangible rewards occur in many daily situations or primarily when school is in session?</p>	

Does your child avoid school for a combination of reasons that we discussed? If so, which reasons are most prominent?

Appendix F: SAMPLE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN – Primary School

Name of Student:	Date:
Tuesday	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA/identified teacher meets the student and they go to the library until break to look at the timetable for the day and start work from individual plan.	
Student meets 2 peers at break time who take them somewhere quiet to play/engage in nonthreatening activities.	
Student goes with 2 peers to class.	
At lunchtime, student goes with 2 peers into the playground (if ready). If not, they go somewhere quiet to play.	
After lunch, student goes to class or the library with SNA.	
Wednesday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA meets the student and they go to the library until break.	
Student goes with 2 peers into playground to play.	
Student goes with peers to class.	
Student goes out to play with 2 peers at lunchtime.	
After lunch, student attends class.	
Thursday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA meets the student and they go to the library until break.	
Student goes to meet friends in the playground (if ready).	
Student attends class as normal.	
Friday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA meets the student and they go to the library for half an hour and then to class.	
Student attends playground and class as normal.	
Monday:	
Student arrives in school at normal start time.	
SNA meets the student and they go to the library for half an hour and then to class.	
Student attends playground and class as normal.	

Signed: _____

Profession/Role: _____

Signed: _____

Profession/Role: _____

Appendix G: SAMPLE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - Post Primary

<u>Name of Student:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
Tuesday	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class) Meet designated teacher (e.g. SET teacher/Guidance Counsellor) at main office	
Attend SET support (individual or small group)	
Student meets 2 identified peers at break time and has access to quieter room/ environment where possible (e.g. library/computer room)	
Student goes with 2 peers to class.	
Student goes home at lunch time and continues school work at home	
Wednesday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA /identified teacher meets the student and they go to SET support	
Student meets 1-2 identified peers for break	
Student goes with peers to class.	
Student goes with peers at lunchtime.	
Student attends SET support if available after lunch	
Student meets peer before last two classes and attends with peers	
Thursday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA /identified teacher meets the student and they go to SET support	
Student meets 1-2 identified peers for break	
Student goes with peers to class.	
Student meets peers at lunch or has access to quiet environment	
Student attends class as normal for afternoon classes	
Friday:	
Arrive in school at 9.30 a.m. (after school has started and all are settled in class)	
SNA /identified teacher meets the student and they go to SET support for first class and then return to classes as normal	
Student attends lunch and classes as normal.	
Monday:	
Student arrives in school at normal start time.	
SNA /identified teacher meets the student and they go to SET support for first class and then return to classes as normal	
Student attends break times and classes as normal	

Signed: _____

Profession/Role: _____

Signed: _____

Profession/Role: _____

Signed: _____

Profession/Role: _____

Appendix H: Sample Support Plan for Student

SUPPORT PLAN

Name:

Date:

Class/Year:

At school these things can make me feel upset:



When I start to get upset, others notice these things about me:



Things I can do to make myself feel better when I'm at school:



Things that other people (staff and peers) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school:



Things that my family can do to support me to attend school:



Places in the school I can go to where I feel safe and supported:



This plan will be reviewed regularly so that it remains helpful.

Review date:

My signature

Key adult's signature

Parent's/Guardian's signature

Other people who have access to the plan are:

(adapted from WSCC Educational Psychology Service EBSA Guidance)

My key adult(s) in school is/are:

When I can speak to my key adult(s):

Where I can speak to my key adult(s):



My return to school plan includes the following changes to my attendance:

Days:

Times:



Changes to my timetable include:

(Identify any changes needed and what should happen/where they should go instead)



Any other changes include:

Identify any other changes to routines (break, lunch times, changes between lessons etc.), classroom expectations (not expected to read aloud, work in pairs etc.) or homework



When I start to get upset, I notice these things about myself:



Appendix I: Checklist for Parents/Guardians

TASK	Yes/No	COMMENTS
Reassure and encourage your child		
Problem solve ways to cope		
Find and discuss some positive aspects of school that they enjoy		
Have the parent/guardian who is better at encouraging attendance take the child/young person to school.		
Child/young person accompanied to school by friend/friends		
Friend or identified teacher to meet your child		
Address? family concerns and parenting issues		
T.V, laptops, gaming devices and the internet are not accessible when not in school		
Structure maintained outside of school		
Use school timetable at home		
Ensure school books are at home		
Be mindful of your interactions with your child during "school time" at home		

Appendix J: Resources for Parents/Guardians

- "Help! I've got an Alarm Bell going off in my head! How Panic Anxiety and Stress affect your body" by K.L Aspden. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- "Overcoming your Child's Fears and Worries" by Cathy Cresswell and Lucy Willetts , from the CBT overcoming series. Publishers Constable and Robinson
- <https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age6-12/mental-healthconditions-in-children/anxiety/tackling-back-to-school-anxiety>
- <https://www.parent/guardianline.com.au/parent/guardianinginformation/tipsheets/anxiety.php>
- <https://www.understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/education/strategies-to-support-anxious-children-in-the-classroom>
- For suggestions on Apps on mindfulness and relaxation <http://parent/guardianingchaos.com/anxiety-apps-kids/>
- NEPS information for parents and schools



- Neps information [booklet](https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/41219/9407bf80d6f54e4c85732884fb535490.pdf#page=null) for parents: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/41219/9407bf80d6f54e4c85732884fb535490.pdf#page=null>

Appendix K: Step by Step Meitheal Guide¹⁹

STAGE 1: PREPARATION

- Consider whether a Meitheal is necessary. Talk to the young person/parents using the Parent's Information Leaflet and Children and Young Person's Information Leaflet as a guide.
- Secure written consent by completing the Meitheal Request Form and return to the local Child and Family Support Network (CFSN) Coordinator.
- Liaise with CFSN Coordinator for support.

STAGE 2: DISCUSSION

- With the parent and young person, complete the Strengths and Needs Form identify strengths and needs and desired outcomes which will inform an outcomes-focused action plan for the child/young person.
- Use the "my world triangle" to guide the discussion.
- Keep the identification of strengths and needs concise and use clear, simple, plain English.
- Parents and young person will identify who they want to attend the Meitheal meetings, e.g. Representatives from school (Year head, guidance counsellor, SCP, HSCL, Principal etc.), EWO, Family support worker, CAMHS, addiction support workers etc.

STAGE 3: DELIVERY

- Assign a facilitator/ chair/ minute taker. Contact your CFSN coordinator for support if needed.
- Meitheal support meetings provide an opportunity for practitioners and families to discuss and identify additional needs and develop an action plan to meet them.
- It should lead to less duplication of services and more effective integration of services.
- The plan will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals appropriate to the needs of the young person's progress (usually every 6-8 weeks).
- Planning and Review Form will be completed and distributed following each meeting.
- The number of meetings will depend on the needs of the young person and the Closure and Feedback Form will be completed at the final meeting.

Appendix L: Children's Services Referral Form²⁰



Primary Care

Children's Services Referral Form

Who should use this form?

Referral can be made by the child's parents or legal guardian, health and social care professionals or education professionals **either** to a Children's Disability Network Team **or** to Primary Care Services. The completed Children's Services Referral Form should be sent with the Additional Information Form for the child's age group, completed by the child's parents.

Date of Referral Referrer

Please also attach any health or other reports you have on your child.

Which service do you wish to refer to?

Select either Children's Disability Services or Primary Care Services. Please do not send the referral to both services. We will send your referral to the appropriate service if needed.

Children's Disability Services

Children with complex needs arising from a disability should be referred to their local Children's Disability Network Team. A child has complex needs if they have a range of significant difficulties that require the services and support of a disability team.

To find your local Children's Disability Network Team please see the list [here](#).

Children's Disability Network Team

Or

Primary Care Services

Children with non-complex needs should be referred to Primary Care services.

Dietetics <input type="checkbox"/>	Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/>
Speech & Language Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupational Therapy <input type="checkbox"/>
Social Work <input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Medicine Service <input type="checkbox"/>	Nursing <input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify)

Child's personal details

Surname	<input type="text"/>	First Name	<input type="text"/>
Gender	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Child's Age	Years <input type="text"/>	Months	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>		

Parent/Guardian 1 Name	<input type="text"/>		
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	Mobile	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Address (If different from the child's)	<input type="text"/>		

Parent/Guardian 2 Name	<input type="text"/>		
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	Mobile	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Address (If different from the child's)	<input type="text"/>		

Country of Birth

First Language

Other languages spoken at home

Interpreter required Yes No

Number of siblings, their ages and details of any services they are attending.

Reasons for referral

What are the main concerns and priorities for the child and their family?

1

2

3

General practitioner details

GP Name/Practice

GP Telephone

Email

GP Address

Other community healthcare services currently involved or waitlisted

List all other services currently involved or waitlisted.

Children's Disability Network Team

Primary Care

Speech and language therapy Occupational therapy

Physiotherapy Psychology

Other (please give details)

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service

Tusla

Other (please give details)

Creche, pre-school or school details

(Attach any Preschool or School Reports)

Creche	<input type="text"/>
Preschool	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Manager/Contact Person	<input type="text"/>
Telephone	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

School	<input type="text"/>
Child's Class	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Principal's Name	<input type="text"/>
Telephone	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

Medical history

(Attach any relevant Medical Reports)

Relevant Medical History & Birth History.

Any diagnosis e.g. medical condition, learning disability, developmental disorder, hearing impairment. There may be more than one. Who made the diagnosis and date?

If the child is currently in hospital what date is he/she expected to be discharged?

Current medications.

Allergies/Adverse medication events.

Current investigations e.g. blood tests, scans, hearing tests.

Social circumstances

Relevant family and social history

For example family health or housing difficulties, financial or employment problems, bereavement or other stresses.

Any other relevant information

Please indicate whether referrer should be contacted prior to the initial appointment

Yes

No

Are there any relevant risk factors in relation to this referral?

Consent

Referrals without signed consent of parent(s) / guardian(s) will not be accepted.

It is required by law that at least one of the child's legal guardians consents to the referral and signs this form. It is advisable that both parents/legal guardians are aware of this referral.

Definition of a Legal Guardian

All mothers, whether they are married or unmarried, have automatic guardianship status in relation to their children, unless they give the child up for adoption. A father who is married to the mother of his child also has automatic guardianship rights in relation to that child. This applies even if the couple married after the birth of the child.

A father who is not married to the mother of his child does not have automatic guardianship rights in relation to that child. If the mother agrees for him to be legally appointed guardian, they must sign a joint statutory declaration. However an unmarried father is automatically a guardian if he has lived with the child's mother for 12 consecutive months after 18/1/2016, including at least 3 months with the mother and child following the child's birth.

Children in Care

For children in voluntary care or on an interim order, the parents must sign the consent. For children on a care order the consent is signed by a Tusla Child and Family Agency social worker.

Child's Name

Date of Birth / /

I give permission for my child to be referred to Primary Care Services / Children's Disability Services. Yes No

I give permission for information about my child to be held by Primary Care Services/Children's Disability Services in accordance with obligations under the Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 and 2018. Yes No

I give permission that in the event that this referral is not appropriate it may be shared with other relevant services to facilitate an onward referral. I will be contacted in advance of this information being forwarded on to another service. Yes No

I give permission to Primary Care Services/ Children's Disability Services to contact and obtain relevant information in order to understand and address my child's needs from the professionals and services listed below, such as a hospital consultant, psychologist, speech & language therapist, teacher etc. Only those listed overleaf will be contacted. Yes No

Professionals and services your child has attended

Name (if available)	Service	Contact Details

Name of Parent 1/
Guardian

Signature

Date

Name of Parent 2/
Guardian

Signature

Date

Referrers details

Name	<input type="text"/>		
Role (Parent/ Legal guardian, professional)	<input type="text"/>		
Date	<input type="text"/>		
Address	<input type="text"/>		
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	Mobile	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Signature	<input type="text"/>		

Any other information you want to give us

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background and a thin black border, intended for providing additional information.

Appendix M: NEPS Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour²¹



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochra Oideachais
National Educational Psychological Service

Managing Reluctant Attendance & School Avoidance Behaviour Information for Parents and Guardians

This handout is about understanding and supporting young people **who are reluctant to attend or try to avoid going to school**. It explains some of the reasons it occurs and offers suggestions to parents/guardians on what they can do to help.

What is reluctant school attendance and school avoidance behaviour?

This is when a young person is reluctant to attend school, tries to avoid going to school or has difficulties staying in school for the full school day. The young person may show very challenging behaviours in the mornings as they try to avoid going to school. They may end up going to school distressed and upset.

What does it look like?

They may shout, swear, refuse to do what they are asked, run away, hide, and cling to someone or something.

They might look sad, worried, and afraid. They might cry or complain that they are too tired because they didn't sleep the night before, or they might say they have a tummy ache, headache, a sore throat, 'feel sick' etc. These behaviours might get worse again after a weekend or holiday.

How does it start?

There are many reasons for reluctant attendance and school avoidance behaviour, sometimes we don't know why it starts but it is more likely to happen after times of stress in the family, if someone has been ill or died or if there has been a separation. It can also happen if a child has seen others in their family not go to school. Given the summer holidays and the length of time young people have been at home it may be difficult for some to get back into a school routine and leave their family and home environment.

If your child is reluctant to attend school or is trying to avoid going to school, it means they are stressed about something. That may be because of any of the following reasons:

- During the summer holidays your child may have had little contact with teachers and peers and may feel disconnected from the school community
- They may want to stay with people they love because they are afraid something will happen to them while they are at school
- They may want attention from someone at home
- They may be worried about leaving a family member alone at home for the day

- They may enjoy and want to do things at home or outside of school more than they want to go to school
- They might be afraid that they are going to be judged, rejected, shamed, humiliated or criticised by someone in school. If they are being bullied this must be reported to and dealt with by the school
- They may be anxious about a particular subject or teacher.

What can you do?

- Make sure there is nothing medically wrong with your child and that they are not being bullied or hurt. **Make sure they are safe.**
- Understand that reluctance to go to school is because they feel stressed about something that is real and important to them. **Listen and understand the reasons** they have for not wanting to go to school.
- Help them **to problem solve about their worries**, what they can do, what might help but **only do this when you and the child or young person are calm**. No one can think and have helpful conversations when they are highly stressed.
- **Reassure** them. Remind them that they can cope and that **you and their teachers will help them sort out any problems.**
- **Talk positively about school and encourage them to think about things they like about school.**
- Remember the way you talk about the school, the teachers, their friends etc. is really important.
- **Stay positive**- don't feel guilty about insisting they go to school! You are doing this because you love them. If you feel upset try not to show it. **Believe they can cope and that you can cope.** Remind them of other times when they have done something difficult and it turned out ok in the end.
- **Model how to cope** - they are looking to you to show them how to do it. Tell them about times when you felt worried and coped with something difficult. Know that they can learn to cope with and manage this stress but this takes time and needs patience, understanding and support from you - **stay hopeful**. There may be set-backs but many pupils have successfully returned to attending school regularly with **support to develop their skills and supportive relationships** at home and in school.
- Have a **regular bedtime and morning routine** before school.
- Get school bag and uniform ready the night before - **help them be organised.**
- **Ignore behaviour that is safe to ignore** e.g. shouting, swearing, pleading.
- **Tell them you understand** it is difficult and that they feel worried but do not get into long discussions about their feelings just before school.

- **Be clear, firm and kind** “I know this is difficult. I need you to go to school and you need to go to school. We can talk about it later and you’ll tell me how it went. I know you can do this; you are strong and I am here for you.” Repeat if needed.
- If it helps suggest they **go to school with another person** e.g. a friend and their parent or carer or another adult.
- Try changing who drops your child to school.
- Try and **distract them** by talking about something they are interested in or about nice things you can do together.
- **Don’t give up. Keep going** and get them to school.
- When you get to school- **say goodbye**, smile, say that you look forward to seeing them later then **leave quickly**.
- At the end of the day **tell them how proud you are that they went to school** and stayed there and they did it **even though it was really difficult** to do. This shows they can cope and are strong and it will get easier.
- **Do something enjoyable together** after school or at the weekend.
- If they stay at home when they should be in school try not to make it rewarding. **Try and keep to the routine**; get up, get dressed and expect them to get their school books out and attempt some work. Do not let them watch T.V, stay on their phone or gaming all day. Make sure that they don’t get lots of attention for staying at home.
- Contact the school for daily schedule of work, which can be completed at home. This can be reassuring for the student, that they’re not missing part of the curriculum.
- **Encourage contact** with other young people and activities **outside of school** if the young person wants it.
- **Talk to a member of staff** in the school regularly to share your successes and difficulties. Be honest and let them help and support you. There are likely to be set-backs, especially after weekends or holidays. This does not wipe out the successes.
- Even though this is very stressful for parents or carers **be very calm – stay strong – do not give in – you are the adult**. Young people need an education and need experiences with other young people to help them grow and learn for their adult life.
- If the problem continues following much time and effort by you and the teachers consider asking for a **consultation with the school’s NEPS psychologist** or whether a **referral** is needed to **HSE services**.

Appendix N: Useful Contacts, Resources and References

Organisation	Contact Details	Phone No
<p>Educational Welfare Officers</p> <p>(EWOs) are employed throughout the country to offer advice, support and guidance to parent/guardians who need support in ensuring that their child/young person attends schools regularly</p>	<p>TESS c/o LMETB</p> <p>Chapel St</p> <p>Dundalk</p> <p>Co Louth</p> <p>Ewsregion5@tusla.ie</p>	042 - 9419027
<p>National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)</p> <p>NEPS psychologists work with both primary and post-primary schools and are concerned with supporting wellbeing, learning, and social and emotional development. They work directly with schools to support students and teachers.</p>	<p>NEPS</p> <p>Donore Road Industrial Estate</p> <p>Drogheda</p> <p>A92 EC85</p>	01- 8650801
<p>Louth Meath Prevention Partnership and Family Support Practitioner Services</p> <p>Tusla Family Support Practitioners offer support to families in Louth and Meath who are going through stressful or difficult times. Family Support Practitioners help families to cope better and improve family life. If you are willing to work with a Family Support Practitioner they will support you and your children to deal with worries and improve your families quality of life so that your children are safe and achieving their full potential</p>	<p>North Louth PPFS Team</p> <p>South Louth PPFS Team</p> <p>Meath PPFS Team</p>	<p>042 - 9351680</p> <p>041 - 2152300</p> <p>046 - 9073178</p>
<p>Child and Family Support Network Coordination team</p> <p>Meitheal is a National Practice Early Intervention Model to ensure that the needs and strengths of children are effectively identified, understood and responded to in a timely way so that children and families get the help and support needed to improve children's outcomes and realise their rights. Tusla has developed this Practice Model to help children where they may need the support of one or more services.</p>	<p>Contact us for further information on the Child and Family Support Networks and Meitheal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra Stafford - Senior Child and Family Support Network Coordinator Louth / Meath. sandra.stafford@Tusla.ie • Anmarie Kidd - Child and Family Support Network Coordinator South Louth. anmarie.kidd@Tusla.ie • Paula McCabe - Child and Family Support Network Coordinator North Louth. paula.mccabe1@Tusla.ie 	<p>046 - 9073178</p> <p>041- 2152300</p> <p>042 - 9351680</p>

<p>Louth ABC Programme (Louth Local Development)</p> <p>Louth ABC (Area Based Childhood) Programme offer a wide range of evidence based supports for parents, children, families and services.</p> <p>Our goal is to measurably improve the outcomes for children in County Louth, using an area based approach.</p> <p>Supports include: Parent Support Programmes, Home Visiting Services, Community based activities (Parent & Toddler Groups, Baby Massage and Parent Forums).</p> <p>Louth ABC also provides school based and early years supports through the implementation of programmes designed to improve social and emotion development and speech and oral language development.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Info.abc@lldc.ie</p> <p>http://louthlocaldevelopment.ie/service/abc-programme/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/LouthABCProgramme</p> <p>Address Louth ABC Programme, Partnership Court, Park Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91 V2KF</p>	<p>087 468 2896</p>
<p>Community Psychology for Children & Adolescents</p> <p>HSE Primary Care Psychology for children and adolescents under 18 years using a stepped care model, including parenting parents, individual work and/or onward referral depending on the presenting difficulties.</p> <p>This child and adolescent primary care psychology service provides a service for under 18's and their families experiencing mild to moderate emotional and behavioural difficulties.</p>	<p>Boyne Primary Care Centre Patrick Street Drogheda Co. Louth</p> <p>Primary Health Care Centre Barrack Street An Stáisiún Sláinte Dundalk Co. Louth</p>	<p>041- 9809506</p> <p>042 - 6820015</p>

<p>Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs)</p> <p>The Children's Disability Network Teams in Louth (North Louth Team & South Louth/ Bettystown Team) provide services and supports to children with complex needs arising from a disability or developmental delay and their families.</p>	<p>North Louth CDNT</p> <p>Mounthamilton House Carrick Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91FY99 Northlouth.cdnt@hse.ie</p> <p>South Louth & Bettystown CDNT</p> <p>Unit 20 Boyne Business Park Greenhills Road, Drogheda Co. Louth A92ED91 Southlouth.cdnt@hse.ie</p>	<p>042 - 9381400</p> <p>041 - 9895000</p>
<p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</p> <p>Health Service Executive (HSE) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide mental health services to those up to the age of 18 years, who have moderate to severe mental disorders that require the input of a multi-disciplinary team. Referrals to CAMHS are made by the child's GP. In Louth there are CAMHS teams in Drogheda and Dundalk.</p>	<p>North Louth CAMHS</p> <p>Earl House 13/14 Earl Street Dundalk Co Louth</p> <p>South Louth CAMHS</p> <p>Child & Family Centre St. Mary's Hospital Drogheda Co. Louth</p> <p>South Louth East Meath CAMHS</p> <p>The Elms St. Mary's Hospital Drogheda Co. Louth</p>	<p>041- 9358330</p> <p>041- 9893300</p> <p>041- 9893300</p>

<p>Project: School Completion Programme</p> <p>Dun Dealgan</p>	<p>Contact: Niall Weldon Address: C/O Redeemer Boys School Ard Easmuinn Dundalk Co Louth Email: niall.weldaon@scp.ie</p>	<p>087 - 2956573</p>
<p>Project: Oriel SCP</p>	<p>Contact : Majella O’Hanlon Address: Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan Muirhevnamore Dundalk Co Louth Email: majella.ohanlon@scp.ie</p>	<p>087 - 6249940</p>
<p>Project: Deeside SCP (mid Louth/north Meath)</p>	<p>Contact: Andrea Duffy Address: Ardee Community School Ardee Co Louth Email: andrea.duffy@scp.ie</p>	<p>087 - 3285822</p>
<p>Holy Family Parish SCP</p>	<p>Contact: Kelly Redmond Address: St Oliver’s Community College Rathmullen Road Drogheda Co Louth Email: kelly.redmond@scp.ie</p>	<p>041 - 9838390</p>
<p>Drogheda Northside SCP</p>	<p>Sara Russell Email: sara.russell@scp.ie</p>	

Appendix O: References & Bibliography:

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An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational Psychological Service

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Children's
Disability
Network
Team

HE

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Seirbhís Tacaíochta
Oideachais Tusla
Tusla Education Support Service



LOUTH SCHOOL AVOIDANCE RESOURCE PACK

Information for Schools and Parents/Guardians