

Emotionally- Related School Avoidance- Whole School Audit

Definition: Emotionally related school avoidance (ERSA) describes a group of children and young people (CYP) who experience difficulties attending school due to school, parent and/or child factors as well as wider societal factors. ERSA presents as a continuum, ranging from CYP who are attending school but present with anxiety and behavioural symptoms, through to complete absence from school for an extended period of time.

Whole school systems for promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of ERSA				
	Whole school provision currently available	RAG Rating ¹	What is in need of development?	Next steps (including by whom and when)
School Culture and Ethos				
Committed and inclusive senior management team - values all students and allows them to feel a sense of belonging.	The school has a well-established Senior Leadership Team all of whom have been in post for several years. As the school is relatively small in size (capacity for 210 pupils) all staff, as well as the SLT, know the pupils by name and all foster positive relationship with the students. The staff have a strong presence around school (the site is small) and all are made aware of specific details about the children through weekly briefings (Monday morning) and staff INSETs. The Head Teacher, for instance, opens the gate every morning and greets the children individually as they arrive. The same happens at the end of every day. The Head Teacher stands at the gate to see parents and children out. Systems are in place for circulating information which is relevant for all to know. Teaching staff and teaching assistants provide supervision at breaktimes and teaching assistants provide	Green		

¹ Green = strength; Amber = some room for improvement; Red = not in place at all/ priority area for development

	supervision at lunchtime. The Head Teacher is also regularly out at lunchtime The school is a church school with a strong Christian ethos led by key values which is understood by all stakeholders. The children speak positively about their school and are proud of it. This is evident when visitors come in and give overwhelmingly positive feedback after speaking to the pupils. Many students aspire to be chosen as Ambassadors. Their role is to welcome visitors when we organise events like Open Evening.			
All staff working within school are valued. Clear protocols regarding emotional support and stress management for staff, including supervision.	As part of our strong vision all staff, regardless of their responsibility within the organisation, are valued. The school fosters a strong team spirit. The school has a clear and detailed staff handbook which is regularly updated and given to all at the start of every academic year. This outlines policy and procedure and makes clear the staff code of conduct. The senior leadership team who meet regularly, discuss staff wellbeing and consideration is always given to matters related to mental health. Regular team building activities are organised which foster a spirit of working together and the school operates an open door policy. The wellbeing focus in the form of 'Fitness Friday' in some classes was recognised by assessors when the school was judged for an Inclusion Mark. Equally beneficial in school are 'Mindfulness Mondays' and then tasks that relate. In the case of part-time staff, consideration is given to requests to switch working days and requests to attend appointments during the school day are looked favourably upon. This is also the case for full time staff. In the school's most recent OFSTED inspections, staff wellbeing was seen as a strength. Staff absence is low.	Green		
Continuous professional development for all staff which makes clear the promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility (including ERSA).	The school has a programme of INSET which is planned each term. This includes first aid training incorporating positive mental health. Staff have undergone ERSA training and the school invests in training for an ELSA who has time ringfenced to work with students and attend training. In the Autumn Term 2022, the school was awarded the borough's 'Inclusion Mark' and has since become a trauma informed, Attachment Aware school. In the last three consecutive years, the school has been awarded a bronze, silver and gold award. The school has a mental health champion who is	Green		Consider how expertise can be better shared across the school so all staff benefit when training is delivered to specific teachers or teaching assistants.

	also the SENDCo. Staff (teaching and support staff) have completed autism awareness training delivered by the SHINE team.			
The importance of pupil voice and viewing the child holistically are approaches which are embedded within the culture of the school.	The academic year always starts with a wellbeing workshop. This is a whole school project which involves each class taking a walk of the site, establishing boundaries, discussing what is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others and establishing who a child might choose to speak to they have a concern or worry. From this body of work a 'school charter' is created. This contains statements generated by the children which are designed to keep everyone safe and happy throughout the school year. It is displayed in a communal area and in every classroom. From this, the children also design their own classroom golden rules which all sign up to. The work is supported by a series of additional assemblies. In addition, every new academic year starts with a further whole school project which involves every class focusing on a given text, chosen because of its emphasis on wellbeing. This year the text is '<i>The Invisible</i>' by Tom Percival with other suitable texts used in the past ('<i>Rain Before Rainbows</i>' by Smriti Halls and David Litchfield '<i>Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth</i>' by Oliver Jeffers, Nicola Davies & Laura Carlin's '<i>The Promise</i>', '<i>The Secret Sky Garden</i>' by Linda Sarah, Gillian Hibbs' '<i>Errol's Garden</i>', Lucy Farfort's '<i>In our Hands</i>' and Bob Staake's '<i>The Path</i>'). The body of work around this text during the first week back allows the children to explore a range of wellbeing topics in more depth and gives them opportunities to address concerns and voice their opinions about key matters. Pupils are taught about British Values and through RE and PSHE among other subjects, they learn about the importance of having a voice and being able to share opinions. The culture across the school allows this to happen; pupils show respect when others voice views and they are taught how to debate effectively. Pupil voice is relied on to elect Year 6 House Captains and to select Eco-Councillors, for instance. Projects to support different charities regularly run, many of which are often led by the children. Support Plans are written in conjunction with the child and ERSA resources are used to support children with specific anxieties. Many aspects of school life reflect the holistic approach the staff take in viewing the child.	Green		

	Five themed weeks throughout the year promote a range of subjects with classes taken on at least one trip each term to support the curriculum. There are opportunities for the children to explore an interest in the Arts, (the school has been awarded a silver Arts Mark Award and opportunities are regularly found for the children to perform whether as part of the choir singing at the local old people's home, being involved in the Cookham Festival, playing in one of our Rock Steady bands or participating in a church service), in environmental matters, (we have an Eco-Council and a large wildlife area which allows for outdoor learning, we engage every year in the RSPB's Birdwatch campaign, we have forged links with 'Wild Cookham', children volunteer to be part of our 'Clean-Up Crew' who litter pick, we entered the 'Climate Wise Hero' competition, we hatch and look after ducklings each year and we are annual exhibitors at the Royal Windsor Flower Show), in charity work (many of which are suggested by the pupils) or in spirituality (ranging from participating in prayer worship, SpaceMakers or workshops run by Christian Connections in Schools). 'Learning to Work' also delivers sessions annually which gives the pupils an insight into a world beyond school in an exciting non-threatening way. Our PSHE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of our learners. A recent programme of work included discussion around privilege (school serves an affluent community) and responsibility, and consideration is given to black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) children with bookshelves recently updated to represent BAME characters. Weekly timetables are modified to address specific anxieties in children so weekly 'Mindful Mondays' have become the norm in one class and 'moments of calm to reflect' are numerous, regardless of religious belief.			
Recognition of the importance of communication and partnership working with parents and external agencies.	Weekly newsletters are written by the Head Teacher and distributed to all parents before being posted on the school website. In addition, a weekly EYFS newsletter is also circulated. The school operates an open door policy which parents are reminded of in 'Meet the Teacher' meetings at the start of the academic year. This allows parents to speak to class teachers and support staff at the end of every day. At the beginning of every term, every class teacher writes a class newsletter outlining school policy and areas of learning for the term which is sent to parents	Green		

	and posted on the school website. Google Classroom is also used as a platform for sharing information and provides a source of open dialogue. Six times a year, once every short term, parents are invited into the classroom at the end of a day to meet the teacher, see the classroom and, with their child, view their books. This 'Open House' event is always well attended and the children evidently enjoy the opportunity to show their work to their parents. This is in addition to two formal parents' evenings. The views of parents (and children) are also sought through regular surveys. The school SENDCo, along with the SLT, is proactive in approaching external agencies to seek support for specific children when the need arises. The school requests support from the Early Help team when necessary and invites external agencies in as a result. This sometimes follows requests from parents for Early Help which the school always facilitates. The school has developed partnerships with the Educational Psychologist Team, the Early help Advisor, the MASH team, SHINE, Speech and Language professionals, the DASH team and wellbeing councillors. The school seeks support in the form of assessments from Specialist Advisory Teachers as required. Aside from the needs of specific children, such agencies provide training as required. The Head Teacher regularly seeks advice from the borough's Inclusion and Access Manager and the borough's ERSA lead. Workshops are organised for the parents in conjunction with external agencies. For instance, the school has held an 'It's not easy being wheezy' coffee morning for parents at which the Paediatric Respiratory Nursing Team from Frimley Health, along with our local School Nursing team, spoke. The school successfully achieved the borough's Inclusion Mark (October 2022).			
School systems, policy and practice				
Clear and inclusive policies on attendance, behaviour, bullying, equality and transition which sets out the responsibilities for all and the support in place.	The school has policies on attendance, behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, equality and disability all of which are reviewed on an annual basis and posted on the school's website. The school's behaviour policy puts an emphasis on restorative justice which is reinforced through the school's ethos and vision. When disagreements happen, the children for the most part have the skills to resolve them themselves but when help is needed, staff	Green		

	step in and use resources such as circle time or collective worship to give guidance. A buddy system operates which means every child in Reception has a Year 6 friend who, because the children play altogether at lunchtime, is there to support them away from the classroom. Children across classes regularly buddy up for walking to church, reading together during Book Week etc. Attendance is an agenda item at every SLT meeting during which children with low attendance are flagged and discussed. When it is deemed appropriate, letters alerting parents to poor attendance are sent out with follow up conversations taking place with the head teacher. Plans are put in place to address specific issues. Notices are regularly placed in newsletters reminding parents of the importance of good attendance and informing them that time off for holidays is not permitted. Requests for absence in these circumstances is always marked as unauthorised. Attendance always appears as an agenda item at Full Governing Board Meetings and a written attendance report is included in every Head Teacher's Report to Governors (three times annually). The school has engaged with the ERSA programme and is an attachment aware school. Part of this ERSA support involves school working with ERSA children and their parents where necessary to agree an arrival time and routine in the morning which is agreeable to any ERSA affected children. To support transition and avoid ERSA, children with specific needs are invited into school as part of a familiarisation programme ahead of the official return to school date. This follows almost a week of transition the term before the summer holiday which is also designed to help alleviate anxiety.			
Curriculum includes the teaching of resilience, coping and social skills.	The school's curriculum, redesigned since the pandemic and regularly updated in line with the National Curriculum, has explicit links to key areas of wellbeing. Our PSHE curriculum is progressive and well structured to ensure all aspects of the subject are covered on a regular basis. To support this, the school engages with outside providers to reinforce key messages. For instance, NHS Dr Ranj and the Wellness Ambassador for Furniture Village visited school as part of their countrywide 'School of Sleep Roadshow'. The workshop, organised in conjunction with The Sleep Charity, was a joint mission to support the nation when it comes to sleep. The school has also brought the Fantastic Fred Experience to the	Green		

	children so that they could take part in their live performance-led mental health resource delivered by a team of trained actors. On both occasions the parents were made aware of the content and resources were shared via our online learning platform. The NSPCC and Childnet have also been in to work with the children. Inspirational speakers that have come to school to talk to the children in these sorts of workshops bring ways of overcoming adversity to live and promote positive wellbeing and personal safety. The school regularly promotes and takes part in: Children's mental Health Week, Safer Internet Day, Anti-Bullying Week, International Women's Day, Black History Month and National Fitness Day. On these occasions our online learning platform, Google Classroom, is used to share resources and endorse key aspects of learning related to these events. The school promotes Growth Mindset and staff have undertaken training on the work of Carol Dweck. The slogan, 'I can't do it yet', is one the children are very familiar with. Every classroom has a growth mindset board promoting resilience. Themes for collective worship regularly address aspects of wellbeing, resilience and growth mindset. This is sometimes done through current affairs and/or national or world events, e.g. The Olympics, COP30 or through specific dates in the calendar for instance Christmas. Children lead assemblies at which they share stories of people who have inspired them because of their resilience and determination. For the most part themes are driven by specific need with often a heavy emphasis on emotions and feelings. The text which every class studied during Book Week 2023 was '<i>The Colour Monster</i>' by Anna Llenas. Various activities were completed which allowed the children to explore their own feelings in a safe environment. A series of assemblies then followed during which the children were signposted to other picture books which addressed the same themes ('<i>Stormy Weather</i>', '<i>Worrysaurus</i>', '<i>Silly Billy</i>' etc). Most recently Book Week focused on the text '<i>The Comet</i>' by Joe Todd-Stanton which tells the story of Nyla who has to move from her home at on the coast to a city where she feels lost and alone. It explores the sense of belonging and how homes can become places of warmth and love if we have the right people around us.			
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	To promote positive mental health, the children have completed 'wellbeing journals' and activities like 'Mindfulness Monday' are organised for whole class participation by class teachers. When the pupils took part in the borough's 'Water Safety' workshop and 'Dog Safety' training with outside agencies, the programmes promoted social skills as well as conveying important teaching points around managing potentially dangerous situations appropriately. Top tips were shared with parents and pupils received leaflets on the topics. Within the wider curriculum, pupils have access to a number of extra-curricular activities which help to develop social skills and resilience as well as other key personal attributes like team work and commitment. These include football club for girls and football club for boys, for instance. A wide range of sporting activities are offered before, during and after the school day and in recognition of this the school has been awarded silver and gold School Games Mark in recent years. A Sports Week is organised annually giving the children an opportunity to try out sports they may not have previously come across. During Sports Weeks the 'A-Life' team, who provide a curriculum-based school workshop for improving physical mental health and wellbeing, have been in to work with all the children. Fundamentally, their aim is to develop healthy habits in children from a young age. The school regularly engages with the Ascot and Maidenhead School Sport Partnership, of which we are a member, participating in borough wide events. The children also have an opportunity to participate in a Bikeability course when they are in Year 6 and we regularly invite the borough's Road Safety Officer, Imogen Leonard and her team, into school to deliver workshops. The bicycles provided to school through a borough initiative and as part of the My Travel Choices Project are also regularly used by our youngest children. A healthy eating workshop was organised for everyone during Science Week and we have worked with the company 'The Outdoor Classroom' to set up an orienteering course on the school site which has a wide range of uses. The school recognises the importance of outdoor learning as a means of promoting positive wellbeing. A 'fitness mile' track on the field gets regular use. Activities like singing, with known benefits to mental wellbeing, are promoted. The school has two choirs who regularly meet. Music has a high profile in the school with many opportunities presented to the children.			
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	Outside themed weeks, literature in the form of posters for instance across many PSHE related issues are made accessible to children in classrooms and projects like setting up a 'Random Act of Kindness Jar' and 'Worry Box' in learning spaces have been successful in giving the children an opportunity to celebrate others and share things which they have not wanted to declare openly.			
Curriculum appropriately differentiated according to individual need.	While the school is led by a SENDCo, the expectation is that every teacher is a teacher of SEND and staff take this responsibility very seriously. Findings from a recent OFSTED noted that leaders aspire for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly. Staff work tirelessly to differentiate tasks to suit the needs of all pupils whilst ensuring that adapted tasks are tied into the overarching theme or topic so that SEND children feel included; a range of learning styles are regularly catered for. Every term the class teacher compiles a provision map outlining the intervention for specific children and updates SEND Support Plans taking into account pupil voice. The school achieved the Borough's Inclusion Mark (October 2022). Assessors concluded <i>'there are effective processes and paperwork in place with a child focussed approach. The interventions are being well timetabled and managed with evidence to show they are supporting the pupils to make progress.'</i> With regard to planning they found <i>'staff take ownership of the graduated approach in their classroom and could articulate how they identify and plan for pupils with SEND as well as implement strategies from external reports.'</i> In terms of support staff, it was found that <i>'TAs are experienced and knowledgeable with many developing specialisms to ensure the targeted support is of high quality and has an impact. The pupils describe the staff as kind and helpful who support them if they are stuck. They also noted staff spot when they needed help without them having to put their hand up.'</i>	Green		
Promotion of supportive literature regarding emotional well-being and mental health for young people, parents and staff.	Parents are signposted to material to help them support their child's emotional wellbeing in newsletters. Every classroom has a wellbeing display which parents have access to and when workshops are delivered, promotional material is circulated. All assembly material is posted on Google Classroom which children and parents can access at any time. When specific topics are addressed e.g. mental health, newsletters are used to direct parents to relevant assembly material.	Green		

Clear roles and responsibilities for SENCo and emotional wellbeing leads.	The school's SENDCo who is also the emotional wellbeing lead, along with the head teacher and the school ELSA has a clearly defined role which is successfully carried out.	Green		
Robust transition planning for vulnerable students, both within (i.e. year moves) and between school settings.	Systems are in place to ensure smooth transition from one class to another at the end of an academic year and from one setting to another mostly when pupils transition to senior school. Before the start of a new academic year the EYFS staff visit the new intake in their nursery setting where they speak to staff to gather information about each pupil. The children then spend two half days in school at the end of the summer term before transitioning in September. This allows the children to get used to the new setting and parents to meet the team. At the end of the summer term, there is always almost a week of transition when children from one class move into the classroom where they will be in September to work with their new class teacher. During this time, new routines are established and children have an opportunity to settle and become familiar with any changes. As previously mentioned, children with specific needs are invited into school for familiarisation before the official return to school for everyone else. Again, at the same time, if not a little before, the Year 6 teacher liaises with secondary school staff who, for the most part, visit to meet the children moving onto them and to information gather from staff here. Robust systems are in place for transferring records (especially Safeguarding/Child Protection records) across schools and internally. Details on every child in each class are shared, discussed and passed on in timetabled transition meetings at the end of the summer term. The day before the Autumn Term begins in September, specific vulnerable children are invited into school to once again meet and familiarise themselves with their new teacher, teaching assistant and classroom. The child, in discussion with the class teacher, decides on an appropriate seating arrangement and is given the opportunity to ask questions which might be causing them anxiety. Shortly into the new academic year, a parents' meeting is scheduled to allow staff and parents to discuss how the child has settled in to a new class as well as how they are managing new expectations of the curriculum.	Green		

School ERSA support and response				
A member of senior staff is responsible for overseeing arrangements for ERSA students (i.e. ERSA Lead)	Anna Smith, Head Teacher in conjunction with the school SENDCo, Amy Buckley, are responsible for overseeing arrangements for ERSA students.	Green		
Clear systems in place for the early identification of school avoidance (including good communication between SEN and pastoral teams)	The school has undergone ERSA training and up to date materials are easily accessible for all on the shared drive. The fact that the school is relatively small means school avoidance is very visible. Staff raise concerns with the Head Teacher when they surface. Tight procedures on monitoring attendance means the school's officer manager makes contact with any parent of a child who is not in school within half an hour of the day starting. Patterns are identified and the SLT notified. Attendance and school avoidance are discussed at every SLT meeting.	Green		
Clear procedures in place for supporting students with limited school attendance	For the most part whole school attendance is good (96.8% on 18.6.26). However, on a regular basis, the small number of pupils who have an attendance of less than 90% are tracked. In these circumstances, parents are contacted to ascertain the cause of such low attendance. In most cases this can be accounted for because of illness. Where low attendance is related to anxiety, ERSA resources are used first to establish possible reasons using the scoring system within the resource then parents are invited into school for a support plan to be created. Before this, daily contact with the parents of a child for whom ERSA is clear, happens. In extreme circumstances home visits and reduced timetables are considered. Once these things are in place the plan is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and effective.	Green		
Nominated member of staff who has a responsibility to investigate and act on concerns.	Either the Head Teacher or SENDCo takes responsibility for taking on and investigating concerns presented by other members of staff including office staff when low attendance is flagged. The Head Teacher and SENDCo liaise closely to ensure consistency.	Green		
Staff are aware as to whom they should convey any concerns regarding ERSA.	Following ERSA training, staff are clear that any concerns should be passed to the SENDCo and Head Teacher. Information is shared through conversations and/or significant observations forms and/or safeguarding referral forms.	Green		

Provision of interventions within a graduated response - assess, plan, do & review.	The school has one trained ELSA who is targeted to work with specific children identified as needing support. In addition, specific arrangements are discussed with parents and put in place as strategies to ease anxiety which in turn might result in school avoidance. For instance, staff meet pupils at the gate, pupils are timetabled to start the day in a class with younger children supporting them with the morning routine, 'hot chocolate with the head' meetings are set up when necessary, activities to appeal to specific young people (like football club) are laid on to support them in their wellbeing. There is a heavy emphasis on nurture and mental health in school as shown above. Interventions are closely monitored by staff who liaise with parents to ensure there is a strong partnership of support for any young person. There is a track record of interventions, especially those related to wellbeing, being successful.	Green		
Staff are aware of the role of other agencies and local arrangements with regard to assessing and supporting students experiencing ERSA.	Through whole school ERSA training, the knowledge of staff around anxiety related to school non-attendance is good. The school Safeguarding Policy and Staff Handbook signposts staff in procedures related to accessing appropriate support for students. The Head Teacher and SENDCo are knowledgeable on what agency support is available and who to contact to seek advice. Both work closely with the school's Early Help Advisor, the borough's Inclusion and Access Manager and RBWM's ERSA lead. Regular Attendance Network Meetings with Alistair Whitelaw are always attended.	Green		
Access to indicated provision, e.g. safe places within the school, key person, ELSA/mentoring, pastoral support, nurture group, breakfast club, personalised timetable tailored according to a specific pupil and/or results from an ERSA survey	The school always makes provision and space for outside agencies to work with pupils in school, with key personnel available to liaise with at regular intervals. Internally, the school puts in place ELSA programmes, breakfast Club, nurture groups and pastoral support when the need is recognised for specific students. The school recently repurposed an outside annex as an ELSA resource/ safe place for vulnerable children which can also be used by DASH, the Educational Psychologist and other professionals.	Green		
All staff are aware of specific strategies and programmes in place to support those experiencing ERSA (e.g. regulation strategies, relational	Staff have received ERSA training and resources have been shared and are easily accessible on the shared drive. Update training has also been attended.	Green		

<i>approaches, supporting communication and eliciting CYP views)</i>				
Partnership working with parent/carers: they know who to approach with concerns and staff are skilled in supporting them to share personal and sensitive information	The school works hard to develop positive relationships with all parents to enable those require support to seek it out. ERSAs and ELSA resources are posted on the school website for parents to access.	Green		

Completed by: Anna Smith

Date: 01.09.26

Date of next review: 01.9.27

With thanks to guidance from West Sussex EPS for which this ERSA Whole School Audit has been adapted from