

School anxiety

For children with SEND, anxiety or sensory overload are common factors affecting behaviour and attendance, which are not always immediately identified. If you think there may be underlying needs, discuss and explore with school how these might be identified and supported.


Things you can do:

Ask your child what they find difficult and what they would like to change - this can help identify specific triggers and worries. Your child's views should be the starting point of any discussion about support.

Here are **some ideas** for support strategies you can **raise with school** which may help your child cope:

- meet and greet by a trusted member of staff at the start (sometimes during or at the end) of the day
- adult-led approaches – regularly checking with a child that they are okay
- help to understand and manage their feelings and emotions
- positive praise (for getting through a lesson - replacing sanctions for challenging behaviour)
- 'time-out' card for when feeling overwhelmed in lessons
- lesson breaks (to allow some calm down time)
- changes to timetable if particular lessons a trigger
- learning away from the classroom, in a dedicated area or room sometimes known as a 'safe space'
- lunching away from the dinner hall, ask whether any lunchtime clubs available. (crowded dinner halls can cause anxiety)
- 1:1 or small group interventions, support programmes, anxiety or friendship groups
- leaving lessons or school 5 minutes early to avoid crowded corridors

You can **speak to a school nurse or your child's GP** for advice, recommendations or a possible referral to specialist services. Share this information with school so they have the full picture, and you can discuss next steps together.



When you **meet with school** to discuss your child's support plan, you can ask about referral options, for example...

- counselling
- home tutoring
- the Alternative Tuition Service
- the in-year fair access panel (IYFAP*)
- a CAF– a way of working with families and assessing needs
- to specialist services, for example the County Inclusion Support Service, the Educational Psychology service or to an appropriate health service. (for the full range of services available go to www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk)
- where support options available to school have been exhausted, a request to the local authority to carry out an EHC needs assessment

*(*The 'In Year Fair Access Panel' or 'IYFAP' process is where schools can seek alternative provision and support for vulnerable learners)*

Alternative provision

Alternative provision can be used where a child has not been excluded, including alongside mainstream or special education, to support vulnerable learners who may have health needs.

Take a look at the online directory of alternative provision (via the Suffolk local offer).

You can contact the local authority directly with any questions or concerns relating to 'IYFAP' or alternative provision.

Where you have an Education, health and care (EHC) plan

If your child is too unwell, or refusing, to attend a school named in an Education, Health and Care plan you could contact the local authority to request an early annual review.

An Annual review will provide you with the opportunity to let the local authority know about the attendance difficulties, discuss progress being made towards outcomes, ask for further assessment and/or request any amendments you would like to make to the plan.

You will also have an opportunity to request a particular school to be named, if the local authority decide to amend the plan following review.