

# COFFEE & CHAT

EMOTIONALLY  
BASED SCHOOL  
NON-ATTENDANCE

WEDS 1 MAY  
1.00 - 2.30PM



## Aims:

- Understanding what EBSNA is, and it's causes
- Best practice, strategies and tools that help
- Signposting
- Connection with others working in this space

**School attendance and absence**

# Record numbers of pupils in England absent for long periods, DfE data shows

**Number of severely absent children was 150% higher last year than pre-Covid, with one in 50 children missing at least half of lessons**

**Richard Adams** *Education editor*

Thu 21 Mar 2024 16:44 GMT



# What is EBSNA

- ‘Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance’
- Broad definition (spectrum, function), non-medical
- Attendance vs. participation
- Truancy / School Refusal?

Surrey Educational  
Psychology Service

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# Spectrum of EBSNA

- 
- School attendance with stress and pleas for non-attendance
  - Repeated behaviours in the morning to avoid school
  - Repeated lateness in the morning followed by attendance
  - Periodic absences or missing classes
  - Repeated absences or missing classes
  - Repeated absences or missing classes mixed with attendance
  - Complete absence from school during a certain period of time/parts of the day
  - Complete absence from school for an extended period of time

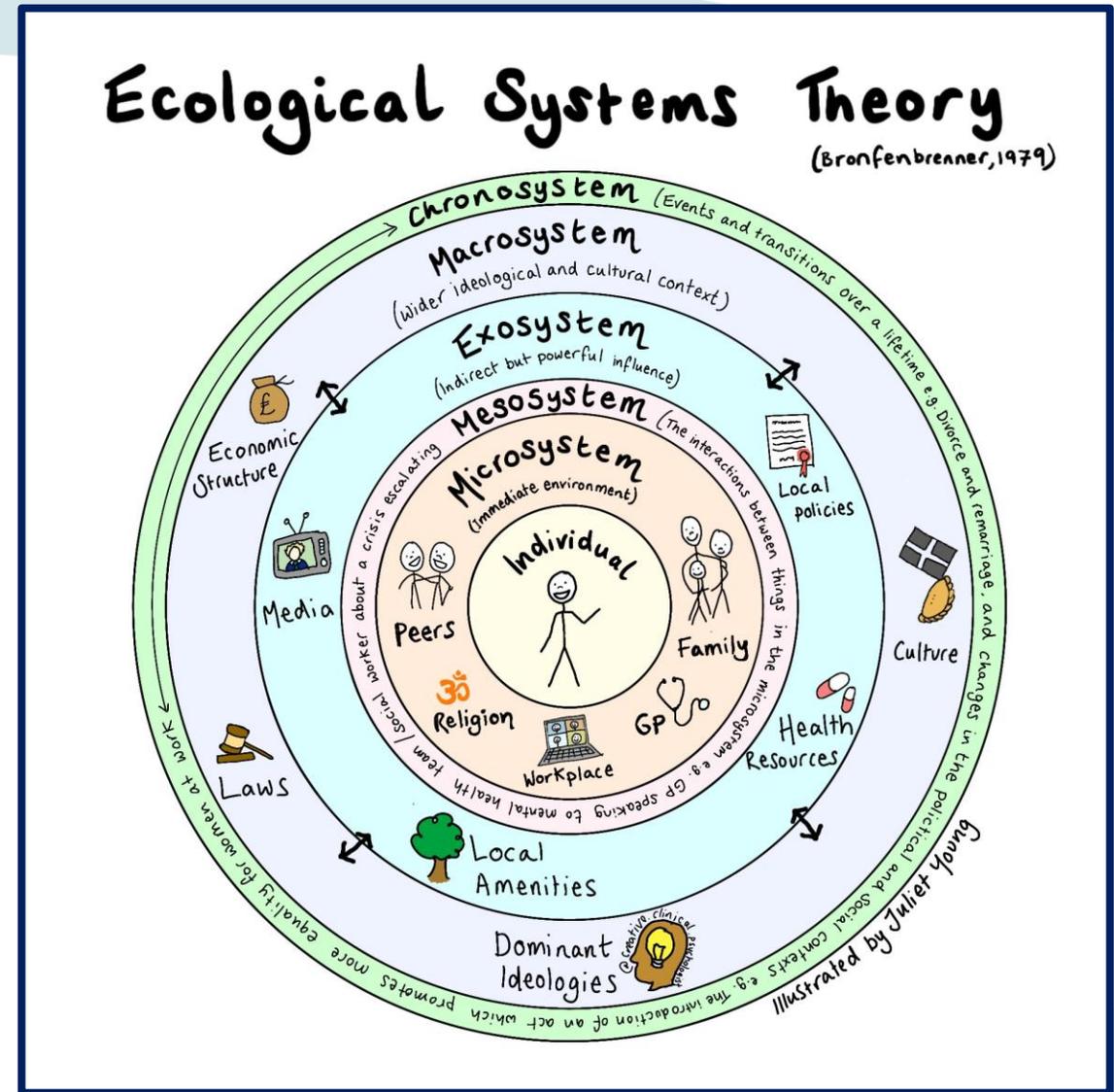
*Spectrum of non-attendance (Kearney, 2018)*

# Causes of EBSNA

‘An interaction of factors’

## Factors:

- Within child
- Between child and their environment
- In the relationships child has with others
- In relationships adults around a child have with each other
- In school, and education policy
- In society



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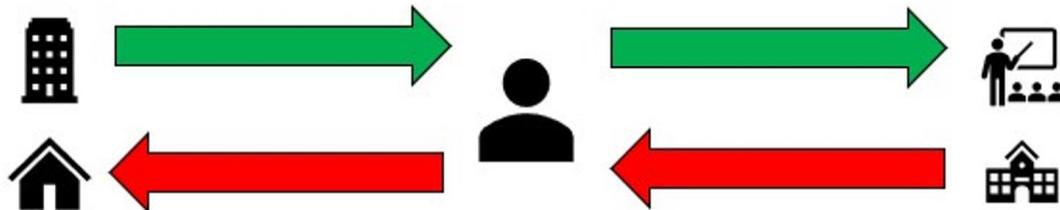
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# Reasons for EBSNA (Four functions, Kearney)

- (1) Avoiding negative emotion:** Avoiding uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school.
- (2) Situation avoidance:** Escaping particular situations that might be stressful (e.g. academic demands, social pressures, aspects of the school environment)
- (3) Attachment needing:** Reducing separation anxiety, gaining relational input from and/or spending more time with significant others
- (4) Tangible reward:** Spending more time out of school as it is more fun/stimulating

## Push and Pull Factors

Thambirajah et al., 2008



# Best practice, strategies and tools that help

## Curiosity, Compassion, and Partnership

**Curiosity:** Finding out about (function, strengths and exceptions, shared understanding based on a framework e.g. push/pull, resilience ball, 4 functions)

**Compassion:** ‘Every interaction is an intervention’ // ‘connect before correct’

**Partnership:** Particularly home/school relationship, shared (manageable) goal, and shared understanding of needs. *Our role is to support this partnership*

# Best practice, strategies and tools that help

## The Resilience Ball Framework

**Bonding:** I am connected to the world

**Mastery:** I have an impact on my world

**Meaning:** I have purpose in my world

**Skills:** I can cope with the ups and downs of my world

**Basics:** I have all the things I need to survive

Adapted from 'The Resilience Ball' – Lowther (2022)

# Best practice, strategies and tools that help

## The Resilience Ball Framework



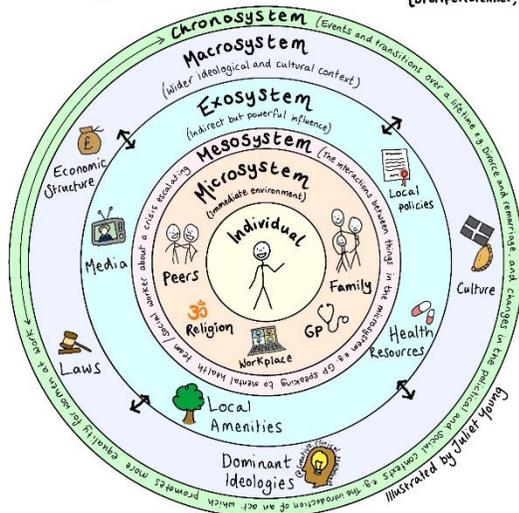
Adapted from 'The Resilience Ball' – Lowther (2022)



Break Out Activity: 'In my role I can best support with [\_\_\_] and would benefit from links to [\_\_\_] to support other areas'

## Ecological Systems Theory

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



Sense of belonging, friendships, group membership, positive relationships with staff

Experiences of success and progress, growth mindset beliefs, praise and recognition

Goals, awareness of personal values and principles, a sense of identity and narrative

Emotional regulation skills (inc. anxiety), metacognition, social skills

Food, water, shelter, safety, physical health, sleep, love

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## Examples from practice and recommended resources:

# Examples from practice (Primary Mental Health Worker in Schools Based Needs team):

GA was struggling to separate from her mum in the mornings. She feared becoming unwell and feared others being sick around her. This overwhelming fear started at the end of last year when she had some time out of school with Covid.

## Outcome:

Further to a joint consultation with [REDACTED] when we explored strategies to support another student presenting with EBSNA, I shared resources that school then used to structure their talk time. The school then subsequently used these resources with Miss GA to help GA gain a shared understanding of anxiety and how she could manage her emotional distress by formulating a calm plan in collaboration with GA and her mum.

By working in partnership with the school, Mum and GA have reported a significant improvement both in GA's mood and self-esteem. Mum described her daughter as being 'full of beans' once again.

## What has helped:

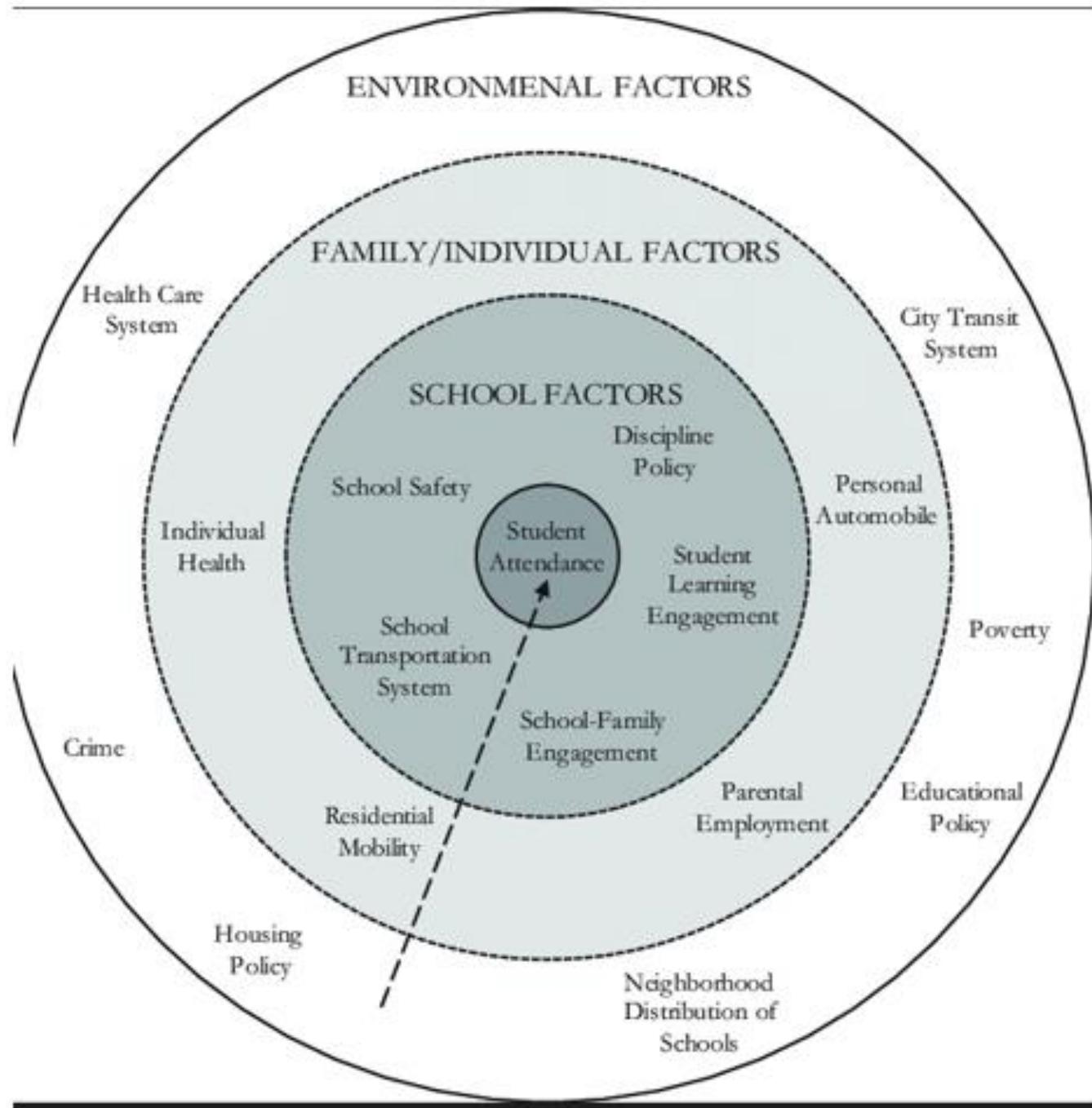
- GA and mum made an agreement to practice the self-soothing strategies each morning to help embed new patterns of behaviour and gain a sense of mastery and confidence in understanding and managing her responses to perceived challenges.
- GA is then met by a trusted adult at the school gate and escorted to a designated safe space where they continue to practice the calming strategies together. This has helped with the transition into school. She then goes into class with the knowledge that she can reach out for support if she needs it.
- At the end of the school day, GA meets with her trusted adult, and they reflect on her success.
- GA is met by her dad at the school gates rather than mum, and they spend quality time together until mum gets home. |

- Great outcome 😊
- Resource to support curiosity
- Partnership
- Specific strategies and adaptations
- Importance of looking to range of relationships around CYP

## Examples from practice:

- Context for EP role
- Background information
- Needs of young person

☺ make friends, kind adults, have fun, physical activity, animals, nature, finding out how things work, being successful, positive attention, ☺



# What made a difference?

- Complex cases requiring systemic, interactional perspective
- Multiprofessional working providing consistency of relationships & shared understanding
- Proactive support for genuine parent participation
- Understanding pupil views and motivations
- Joint working and visit with Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist & Ed Psych
- Link with existing, long term & trusted family support worker
- Attending Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings beyond the statutory assessment
- Sharing information with SEND to ensure understanding of the young person context & appropriate consideration re appropriate provision

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# Surrey Wellbeing Partnership Support

- **Identified need:** practitioners felt unclear about direction of short-term work with young people experiencing EBSNA.
- **New SWP practitioner training February 2024:** using same language, key concepts and psychological frameworks delivered in whole school EBSNA training.
- **3 x reflective practice follow up groups:** allowing space for case discussion and reflection.
- **Further annual training and termly reflective practice groups planned.**
- **Anticipated outcome:** better supported front-line practitioners delivering short-term interventions that align with key EBSNA messages and frameworks.



# Case study

## PRESENTING CHALLENGES...

- 14 year old female - had always struggled within school, especially around **change**, starting in primary school
- Moved to secondary during **COVID - missed all transition activities**
- Experienced **difficulties making healthy friendships and having a sense of belonging within school**
- **Needs were communicated via behavioural issues**
- Certain **lessons were avoided** and **behaviour got worse**
- Felt more and more **pushed away by school - school was avoided**

## WHAT HELPED AT SCHOOL:

- **Meetings with school** to help with friendships
- **School understanding needs**
- A change in tutor to one that helped the child feel a **sense of belonging (Resilience Ball)**
- **Pull to school - better relationships** with school staff and new friendship (**Kearney functions of EBSNA**)



# Case study

## WHAT HELPED AT HOME:

- Would have to get up same time as if they were going to school
- No phone/TV/laptop
- All school work completed and a list of chores (cleaning bathroom, hoovering, dusting etc) no electronics until done and only after school was over
- **Empathetic listening, problem solving techniques and challenges** where possible to support into school.
- Positive texts when child was distressed at school, **acknowledging the feelings, and praising for trying their hardest**
- **Push from home** - no sleeping, boredom, **boundaries** around what would happen when not attending school **(Kearney functions of EBSNA)**

**2023-2024 attendance 79.1%**

**Last 4 weeks 89.5%**



# Recommended tools: 'Mapping the Landscape'

- Visual
- Shared understanding of specific and school based factors
- Supports pattern spotting
- Supports adjustments to school experience

**THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

I avoid this if I can 	I am very anxious about this 	I feel a little anxious / uncomfortable about this 	I feel comfortable about this 	I enjoy this 

1. Greeting other students in the tutor group in the morning  


2. Walking down corridors in between lessons  


3. Lining up to go into the classroom before a lesson  


4. In class, if there is no teacher in the room  


5. Waiting to go into the canteen for lunch  


6. Buying food in the canteen  


7. Sitting in the canteen  


8. Break times when I have to go out with the other students  


9. Changing for PE/games  


10. Taking part in PE/Games  


11. Talking to teachers  


12. Talking to support staff/staff  


13. Getting to school and home from school: walk/bus/taxi  


14. Talking to other students in my tutor group  


15. Talking to classmates  


## Recommended tools: 'School wellbeing cards'

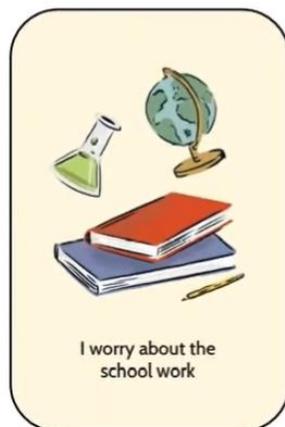
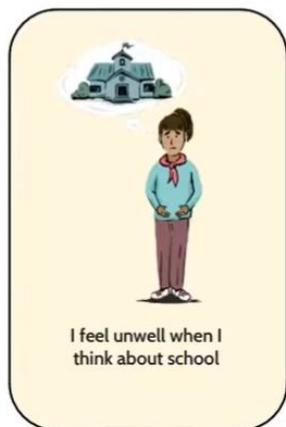
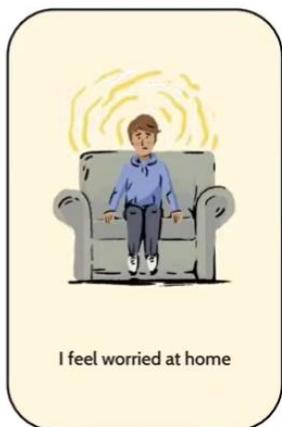
- Visual
- Good for CYP voice
- Access protective and/or risk factors

# SCHOOL WELLBEING CARDS

By Dr Jerricah Holder



# Risk Cards



# Resilience Cards



Home



Child



School



Home



Child



School

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# Sorting activities for the CYP to identify

- True about me or Not true about me
- Risk Factors: Top 5 most like me
- Resilience Factors: 5 things I would like to change
- Summary of activity



# 5

## Summarise the Activity

True about me



I worry about the school work



I feel worried at home



I am feeling pressure to attend school



I feel unwell when I think about school



I worry about being away from my parent/carers

Top 5 I would most like to change



I have lots of friends



My friends are there for me



There is at least one adult I can talk to at school about my worries



I know what I want to do when I leave school



I want to attend school

# Best practice, strategies and tools that help:

Break Out Activity:

- (1) What sounded helpful
- (2) What else works from own experience

# Resources and signposting:

1) The first stop for EBSNA resources and signposting in Surrey is the [Local Offer EBSNA Page](#):  
On this site you will find key terms, our Surrey EBSNA resources, and links to additional support.

2) Websites recommended by Family Voice Surrey, for parents/carers:

- <https://notfineinschool.co.uk>
- <https://missingthemark.blog>

3a) We have also compiled an online resource bank of helpful EBSNA resources for **PROFESSIONALS** (a 'padlet': [EBSNA resource bank \(padlet.com\)](#)). Here you can find e.g. guidance documents, information for parents, resources for gaining C&YP views.

3b) There is a version with more curation, with **PARENTS** in mind also [EBSNA Resources for Parents \(padlet.com\)](#)

# Resources and signposting:

EBSNA is broad, therefore there are lots of services that might be helpful on a case-by-case basis:

- **Mindworks**
  - [School Based Needs team](#)
    - Consultation, 1:1 support in early cases where specific anxiety is a factor
- **Surrey Wellbeing Partnership**
- **Educational Psychology Service**
  - [Consultation line](#)
  - [Analysis of Additional Needs Tool \(AANT\)](#)
- **Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice (STIP)**
  - Advice and training on whole school approaches to inclusive practice
- **Access to Education (A2E)**
  - Access to Education (A2E) provides a flexible, short-term, education service. It is for children and young people who cannot attend school through exceptional circumstances.

# Additional support

## Educational Psychology Service

### EP Consultation Line:

A 30-minute consultation via phone or video call. Appointments will be arranged between 1-4pm on a Wednesday, call or email to arrange a consultation time.

**NE: 01372 833588**

[east.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:east.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk)

**SE: 01737 737777**

[east.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:east.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk)

**NW: 01483 518130**

[west.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:west.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk)

**SW: 01483 517179**

[west.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:west.educationadmin@surreycc.gov.uk)

### EBSNA Support Role Training:

For school staff who can work directly with C&YP experiencing EBSNA

(two hours per session plus two supervision sessions)

Will be running again in Autumn term

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# Additional Support:

## Educational Psychology Service

### AANT Consultation (Analysis of Additional Needs Tool)

An AANT is suitable when:

- Key adults want to assimilate existing and new information as this child might not be well known.
- Key adults working with this child are unsure that what they are doing is the most effective and want to ensure that they are not missing or overlooking something.
- Key adults want to show parents/carers that their concerns are heard, valued, and acted upon. 
- A written record of EP involvement would be helpful to share with parents, staff members or other professionals.

An AANT is not suitable for children who have an EHCP or who are undergoing an EHC Needs Assessment. 

To request an AANT consultation, email [aantsupport@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:aantsupport@surreycc.gov.uk) and include:

- Name of school / e-mail address of the consultee
- Name and DOB of the child to be discussed
- Confirmation you have parental consent

# Ordinarily Available Provision

[Ordinarily available provision \(schools\) | Surrey Local Offer](#)

Patterns of non-attendance or Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA).

- Home-school meeting to develop a shared understanding of the factors contributing to the non-attendance (i.e., the function of the non-attendance), drawing upon best practice guidance e.g., [resources on EBSNA](#).
- Named key adult maintaining daily communication, to include a wellbeing check and ensuring provision of work if not in class.
- Meeting with pupil to gain their views around the non-attendance, using [resources on EBSNA](#).
- Co-authored support plan in place for the young person (collaboration between the young person, school, and home).
- Reasonable adjustments according to the young person's needs and factors contributing to the non-attendance.



**Ordinarily available provision (schools)**



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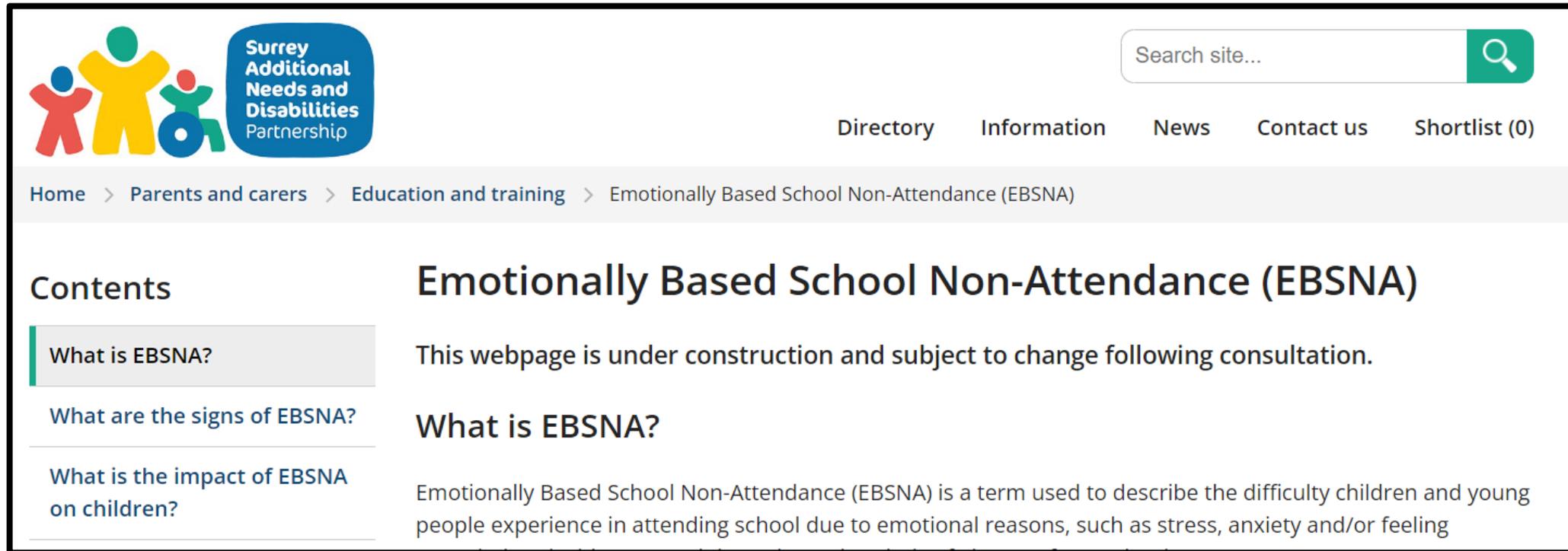
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# Surrey Local Offer, EBSNA page

[Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance \(EBSNA\) | Surrey Local Offer](#)



The screenshot shows the Surrey Local Offer website page for Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). The page header includes the Surrey Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Directory, Information, News, Contact us, and Shortlist (0). The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Parents and carers > Education and training > Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). The main content area features a 'Contents' sidebar with three links: 'What is EBSNA?' (highlighted), 'What are the signs of EBSNA?', and 'What is the impact of EBSNA on children?'. The main heading is 'Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)', followed by a notice: 'This webpage is under construction and subject to change following consultation.' Below this is the section 'What is EBSNA?' with the text: 'Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) is a term used to describe the difficulty children and young people experience in attending school due to emotional reasons, such as stress, anxiety and/or feeling'.

