

Understanding School Refusal: A Guide For Parents

WHAT IS SCHOOL REFUSAL?

Definition: School refusal is when a child consistently refuses to attend school or experiences significant distress about attending. It is not just a typical avoidance but a complex issue with various underlying causes.

WARNING SIGNS OF SCHOOL REFUSAL

Behavioral Signs:

- Persistent reluctance or refusal to go to school
- Frequent requests to leave school early
- Clinging to parents or caregivers

Emotional Signs:

- Extreme anxiety or panic attacks related to attending school
- Increased irritability or mood changes when school or homework are mentioned
- Expressing fear of specific aspects of school

Physical Symptoms:

- Headaches or stomachaches before or during school
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Frequent sleep disturbances



POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SCHOOL REFUSAL

Psychological Factors:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Separation anxiety

School-Related Factors:

- Fear of failure
- Teacher-Student relationships
- Unaddressed learning difficulties

Social Factors:

- Bullying or social difficulties
- Academic struggles
- Peer conflicts

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An Action Plan for School Refusal: A Guide For Parents

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO?

Open Communication

- Encourage your child to openly express their feelings and concerns.
- Actively listen without judgement.

Collaborate With Schools

- Communicate with teachers and school staff about the challenges your child is facing.
- Work together to develop a plan to support your child's return to school.
- Ask about accommodations to support your child's mental wellness.

Establish Routines

- Create a consistent morning and bedtime routine to provide security.
- Reinforce positive aspects of the school experience.

Seek Professional Help

- Consult with a school counselor, pediatrician, or mental health professional.
- Consider therapy or safe-for-kids medications.

SCHOOL REFUSAL IS NOT TRUANCY. TRUANCY IS A BEHAVIORAL ISSUE, WHILE SCHOOL REFUSAL IS A SYMPTOM OF ANXIETY.

Remember: Each child is unique, and the approach may vary based on your child's specific needs. Help is available, reach out to trained professionals for personalized guidance.

