

Information for children about Emotionally Based School Avoidance.



Plymouth Educational Psychology Service

Are you worried or feeling sad about school?

Children think lots of different thoughts about school, some are happy thoughts and some are sad thoughts

Everybody feels worried or sad about school sometimes but some children feel so upset that they do not want to come to school at all.



When these children get so worried about going to school they may want to stay at home where they feel comfortable and safe. However, often this feeling will happen again in the evening and morning before school and they will want to stay home the next day too. The more they stay off from school, the more worried they get about going.

When you stay off school, you may be scared about all the work you have missed, seeing your teachers and friends again and not knowing what they have been doing or saying. This is why it is so important to talk to somebody who can help you and make you feel happy again in school.



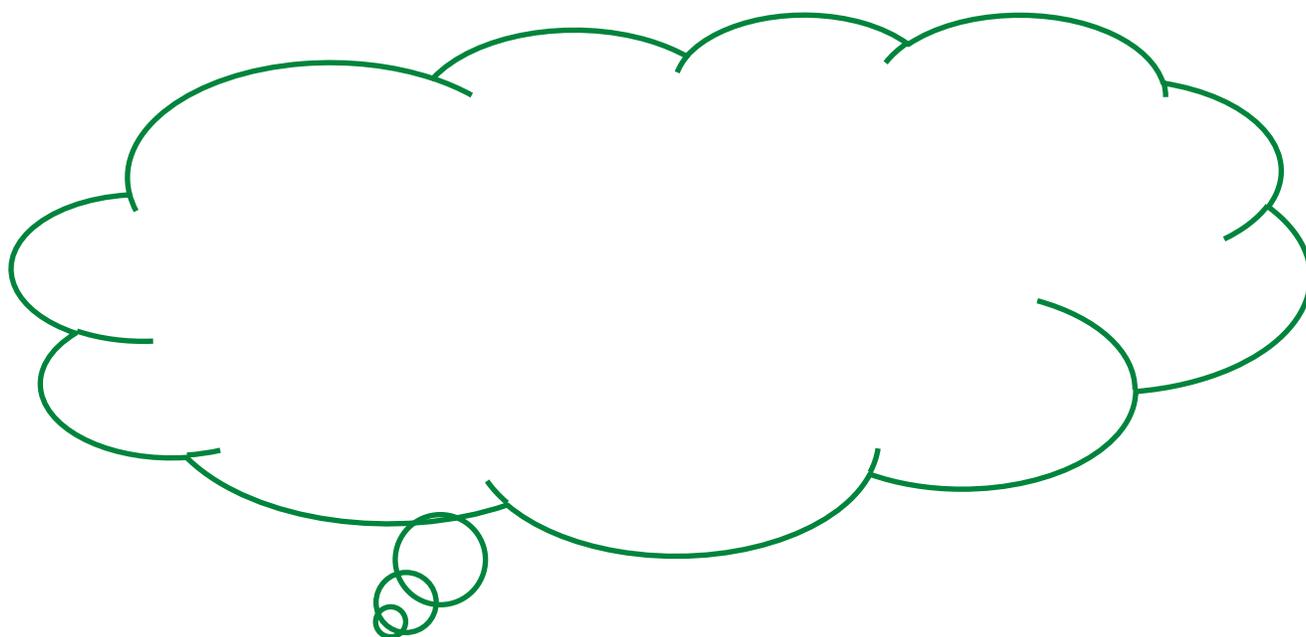
What do I do if I feel like this?

Talk to somebody; this could be your parents, an adult at school, other family members or a friend. Use these questions to help start a conversation with somebody who can help

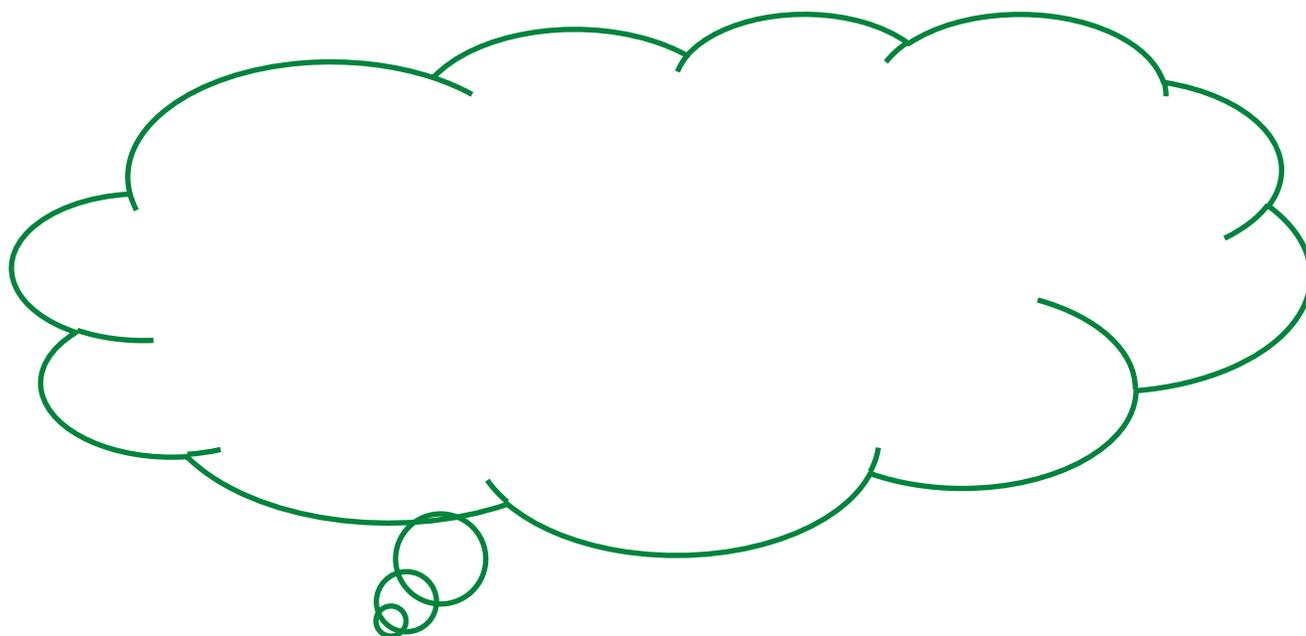
What are three things you most like about school?

What are three things you most dislike about school?

Or if you can't talk about it, maybe you could draw what you are worrying about



If you could change one thing about school to make it a happier place what would it be?



The adults in school and home will help you think about how they can help you with your worries and help you take little steps to help you feel happy in school.

When you are feeling worried or scared there are things you could do to make you feel better. Talk to the adults at home and school about these:

To get you started, try some of these...

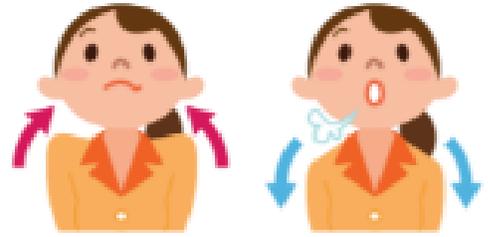
Try relaxing your body

1. Sit or lie somewhere quiet and comfortable
2. Stretch out your arms and make a fist, then relax
3. Push your legs out, wiggle your toes, and then relax
4. Shut your eyes tight and pull a scrunched-up face, then relax



Try calm breathing

1. Take a slow breath in through your nose for about 4 seconds
2. Hold it for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Slowly let it out through your mouth for about 4 seconds
4. Wait 5-7 seconds before taking another breath
5. Repeat 5-10 times



Try physical exercise

This increases your heart rate and releases endorphins that make you feel good. Running, going to the gym, cycling, skateboarding, surfing, horse riding, swimming or team sports such as cricket or netball are all great exercise. Choose one you love and build your exercise routine around that.



Try to keep a gratitude journal:

This is a special book. In this book you should write or draw each day about something good that happened to you or something in your life that makes you happy.



Childline

Childline comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling.

Phone 0800 1111 (24 hours)

Website: <https://www.childline.org.uk/kids/>