

Robert Browning, Snowsfields and Tower Bridge Primary Schools

We learn and succeed together



[@robertbrowning.bsky.social](https://www.instagram.com/robertbrowning.bsky.social) [@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social](https://www.instagram.com/towerbridgeschool.bsky.social)

[@snsprimary.bsky.social](https://www.instagram.com/snsprimary.bsky.social)

Find us at: www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk

Newsletter 13th June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please take a look at the dates for your diary box for many fun events taking part over the next few weeks.

As the weather improves (we hope), please can you ensure your child brings to school daily a water bottle, a sun hat/ cap and also is wearing sunscreen when they arrive at school. Children should be wearing footwear that they can safely run around in.

Have a lovely weekend, please support your child to arrive at school ontime, gates open at 8:45am, children are marked as late after 9am.

Looking for ways to support your child in attending school? Turn to page 12 for helpful tips and advice.



Saying Goodbye

This July we will be saying goodbye to Sarah Manley, Headteacher at Robert Browning. I have worked with Sarah since September 2001. Since she joined Snowsfields in 1998 she has worked across all 3 schools and been instrumental in improving them all. I know many of you will remember her and may have been taught by her.

We are all going to miss her so much! Anna Mulhern and Maureen Chance will remain as Co-Heads of School and ensure Robert Browning continues to go from strength to strength.

Term Dates 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 are on the Federation website

[Term Dates - The Bridges Federation](#)

Term time holidays will not be authorised.

Other important dates for this year can also be found on the school website here:

[Diary - The Bridges Federation](#)

Dates For Your Diary

Tower Bridge

Wednesday 18th June - Bicycle Security Marking with Safer Neighbourhood Team 3-4pm

Tuesday 1st July - Sports Day Y1-6 (DATE CHANGE)

Wednesday 2nd July - EYFS Sports Day

Tuesday 8th July - 9.00am Moving up to Year 1 meeting (Rec parents)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Thursday 10th July - Secondary Transfer Meeting Y5 parents - 9.15am

Monday 14th July - Year 6 Show for parents 2 - 3pm

Wednesday 16th July (AM) - Sunshine Class celebration assembly

Thursday 17th July - Year 6 Leavers Assembly for parents 9.15 - 10.15am

Robert Browning

Tuesday 1st July- EYFS Sports day

Friday 4th July- Sports Day (Date Change)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Friday 18th July- Year 6 Leavers assembly

Friday 18th July- 2.45pm- Reception Celebration of learning assembly

Tuesday 22nd July- Break up at 1pm.

Snowsfields

Tuesday 24th June - EYFS Fundraiser 3:30pm

Tuesday 1st July - Sports Day (DATE CHANGE)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Thursday 10th July- Transition into year 1 meeting for Reception parents 9am

Thursday 10th July - Secondary Transfer Meeting year 5 parents 3:30pm

Tues. 15th July - Sunshine class Graduation, 10am

Thursday 17th July - Year 6 End of year show 2pm

Tuesday 22nd July - Year 6 Leavers Assembly 9:30am

Tuesday 22nd July- Break up at 1pm



Bicycle Security

Marking

The Met Police Safer Neighbourhood Team will be in school from 3pm next Wednesday (18th June) to carry out security marking of your bikes. Please come to front gate on Tower Bridge Road from 3pm or via the back gate from 3.30pm. This service is free of charge.

**WE
ARE
SAILING!**

Some children were lucky enough to take part in sailing activities this week on the river Thames. They were able to steer their own boats in pairs.



This week Year 6 took part in the Bikeability programme. They refined their cycling skills and began to develop skills to be able to cycle on the local quiet roads.



Blue Class visited Harris Academy Bermondsey this week to take part in some secondary school science lessons.

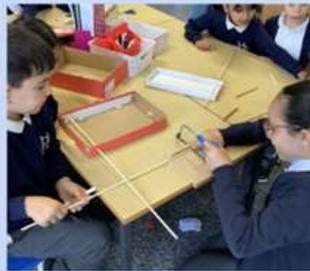


Sunshine Class recently received a pot of caterpillars. They will be watching them carefully over the next few weeks as they undergo their metamorphosis into butterflies.



resilience
and
responsibility
encouraged

[value of the week]
TOWERBRIDGE



**dt
PROJECT**

Year 5 and Year 2 have been learning new skills to make their own moving vehicles. They have used saws, wood glue and how to use them safely. Year 5 designed electronic motors for their vehicles to make them move forwards and backwards.



Groundwork Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the sessions this year- we hope you found them useful! The next date for this term:

Tuesday 17th June: Planning the school holidays.

This should be a really useful one, for sharing ideas and finding things to do at a low cost.

Beekeeper Visit

As part of the honeybee programme, the children had a visit from a beekeeper. The Beekeeper brought in a hive and the children loved seeing the bees!



Sailing Trip

Six children had a brilliant sailing trip on Wednesday afternoon.



Library Visits in Orange Class and Red Class

Year 2 and Year 1 have been continuing to have visits from Walworth Library. They love exploring new books!



Snowsfields Primary School



Our Year 6 class had an exciting trip to the Unicorn Theatre this week, where they took part in special workshops. The sessions gave them a fascinating glimpse into the world behind the curtains



Thank you to everyone who supported the Years 2 and 5 class fundraiser. Your generosity (and sweet tooth!) made it a big success!



Rainbow class have been learning about plants in science. They investigated real plants and labelled the different parts.



In PE, Year 1 had great fun exploring netball-style games using rackets. They worked on their coordination and teamwork while trying something new!



Well done to our football team, who took part in a tournament at The Den (Millwall) and smashed the opposition, finishing in first place! A fantastic achievement and great team effort!



Sunshine class have been learning all about water. They explored where it comes from, how we use it and why it's important.



Roar 'N Score
Thursday 12 June 2025

INFO MY TEAM STANDINGS SCHEDULE

Group A	PLD	PTS	GD
1 Snowfields	6	15	7
2 East Dulwich	6	10	11
3 Phoenix Fe...ation	6	10	-1
4 Phoenix	6	9	-1
5 Turnham	6	8	1
6 Oliver Goldsmith	6	7	1



Our school value this week is:
R - resilience and responsibility encouraged

 Reading Raffle Winners



Reading Raffle
Winners

Our core value this week
is: Independence



Times Tables
Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:
L - Love of Learning



Reading
Raffle
Winners





	% present	Lates	Total
Year 1	93.3%	5	675
Year 2	90%	3	675
Year 3	94.6%	9	150
Year 4	89.1%	8	300
Year 5	88.6%	13	25
Year 6	86.6%	6	325

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 02/06/2025: 90.13%

**1st Place Attendance: Year 3
1st Place Punctuality: Year 2**



Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 02/06/2025: 94.38%

**1st Place Attendance: Y2
1st Place Punctuality: Y1**

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	29	0	84.78%
Year 2	12	3	91.11%
Year 3	31	3	88.21%
Year 4	20	3	88.33%
Year 5	34	4	86.55%
Year 6	26	4	88.97%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	55	4	400
Year 2	40	7	150
Year 3	20	0	775
Year 4	22	5	275
Year 5	20	3	525
Year 6	23	7	350

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 02/06/2025:

86.76%

**1st Place Attendance: Y3 & Y5
1st Place Punctuality: Y3**

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ATTENDANCE UPDATE

Being in school and having the best attendance possible underpins all the many benefits of school for your child, such as their learning, wellbeing and wider development. We want to work with you to ensure that attendance for pupils at the Bridges Federation is the best it can be.

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable full time education. This means making sure your child is in school every day except when

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from your child's school for them not to attend. You should only ask for this in exceptional circumstances. Generally, a holiday will not be classed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Your religious body has a day especially for religious observance.

If my child needs to be absent from school, what do I need to do?

You should contact us as early as possible (no later than 10am) on the first day of absence to explain why. If you do not, we will contact you to find out where they are.

My child is ill. What should I do?

If your child is ill, read the NHS's 'Is my child too ill for school?' advice to help you decide whether they can go to school. Contact us as soon as possible to let us know that they will be absent.

Do I need to provide medical evidence to support my child's illness related absence?

We may ask for medical evidence when your child is absent due to illness. This may be in cases where:

- Your child is regularly absent due to illness, to assess how we can help by putting support in place.
- We have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation has not resolved the issue.

If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the NHS App.)

To avoid disruption to your child's attendance, medical and dental appointments should not be booked during the school day whenever reasonably possible.

My child is struggling to attend school. What can I do?

The first step is to talk to us about why your child is missing school, and what help we can give. You should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible whilst waiting for help and support to be put into place. Information on who you can contact for help, including the school's senior leader responsible for attendance, can be found in our attendance policy on the website. We follow the expectations laid out in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>

<https://thebridgesfederation.org.uk/home/attendance/>

secondary
transfer
for parents
of Year 5
pupils



**NORBURY
HIGH SCHOOL
for GIRLS**

"Pupils are articulate, and their confidence shines through. They achieve well and take pride in their work. They behave respectfully and are keen to learn." - Ofsted, 2022



Open Evenings 2025

- Tues 15th July & Tues 16th Sept, 16.00 - 19.00
- prospective year 7 students & their families
- Open mornings - please call/email to book

Norbury High School for Girls
Kensington Avenue CR7 8BT

020 8679 0062 | admin@nhsg.org.uk | nhsg.org.uk



HARRIS ACADEMY BERMONDSEY OUTSTANDING EVERY TIME!

Ofsted Outstanding in 2009 | 2015 | 2019 | 2025

#ProudToBeHAB



Outstanding in all areas - including Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, and Sixth-Form Provision.

Open Days

3rd June
10th June
17th June



Book a Tour

What Ofsted said about us

“Pupils benefit from an exceptional enrichment offer.”

“Pupils develop a rich body of knowledge and achieve very highly.”



Keep up with the latest school news, student achievements, and community events—follow us!

Stay Connected, Stay Informed - Follow HAB Online!



Contact us if you have any questions at admissions@harrisbermondsey.org.uk

55 Southwark Park Rd, Bermondsey, SE16 3TZ

www.harrisbermondsey.org.uk

020 7237 9316



Family
fun

HAB GIRLS PATHWAY CENTRE

MILLWALL GIRLS PLAYER

PERFORMANCE

PATHWAY

U7-U15 YEAR OLDS

HARRIS ACADEMY BERMONDSEY

SESSIONS EVERY FRIDAY

16:30PM- 18:00PM

REGISTER NOW FOR A FREE TRIAL

NFARRELL@MILLWALLCOMMUNITY.ORG.UK



PE & SCHOOL SPORTS NETWORK

FREE GIRLS FOOTBALL

EVERY MONDAY (17:00-18:00)
@ BURGESS PARK ASTRO TURF

WILD CATS | OPEN TO ALL GIRLS AGED 5-11 | SQUAD

PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER

AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS

AT MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN

FREE

School's out, time to play!
Children aged 5-11 - join us for FREE afterschool sports at Marlborough Sports Garden! Fun, beginner-friendly sessions run Tuesday-Thursday, with free play on Monday and Friday. Choose from football, touch rugby, rollerskating, cricket, volleyball and more.

SPRING 2025

Week 1: Tue 27 April 2025
Week 2: Wed 28 April 2025
Week 3: Thu 04 May 2025
Week 4: Thu 13 May 2025
Week 5: Thu 20 May 2025

SUMMER 2025

Week 1: Tue 02 June 2025
Week 2: Tue 09 June 2025
Week 3: Tue 16 June 2025
Week 4: Tue 23 June 2025
Week 5: Tue 30 June 2025

TIMES
All sessions start from 3.45 - 5.30pm

LOCATION
Marlborough Sports Garden
Lower Road, SP7 1DD

Get in touch! by email sports@best.org.uk or by text on 01235 74023393 or visit our site at www.best.org.uk/afterschoolsports

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

MILLWALL LIONESSES GIRLS ACADEMY 2025/26 TRIALS

MILLWALL LIONESSES ACADEMY ARE LOOKING FOR TALENTED YEAR 5 GIRLS FROM LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK

TRIALS TAKING PLACE ON WEDNESDAY 18TH JUNE

AGE
YEAR 5

Scan here to register your interest



Lewisham Disability Sports Network presents: Lewisham Inclusive Sports Festival

Register Now!

A free event, accessible to all abilities, for disabled young people and their families, aged 5-25!

Register below or scan the QR code: <https://bit.ly/LewishamMultiSport>

Saturday 21st June
2 pm to 4 pm
Ladywell Arena
Silvermere Rd
SE8 4GK

In Partnership with:
Access Sport | GLL | SPORT | Lewisham and Greenwich | LWS | Lewisham London Borough Council

Camilla.Redfern@AccessSport.org.uk | 020 7993 9033

Family support

FATHER'S GROUP



Join a 12-week course to improve your parenting skills.

Whether you are a father, grandfather or stepdad, receive advice and tips on topics such as positive parenting, improving relationships and role modeling. Crèche provided.

When: 1st Place Family Hub
13 Charnock Street, Burgess Park, SE5 0HT

BOOK A PLACE
Email: ben.compbell@southwark.gov.uk
Phone: 07738 860 768

Parent Skills PARENT SPACE
A 12-WEEK ONLINE & IN-PERSON PROGRAM
A 12-WEEK COURSE DESIGNED FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN FROM TWO YEARS TO SCHOOL AGE. YOU CAN TAKE PART AS WELL AS YOUR OWN CHILDREN THAT SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN.

DATES
THURSDAY 10TH JANUARY 2025 11AM-11AM
WEDNESDAY 2ND APRIL 2025 10AM-11AM
WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2025 10AM-11AM

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER
Admin@parentskills.co.uk
parentskills.co.uk

CONTACT
02007443293
07725370183
02070241818
07394442883

The Nest - Wellbeing Hub

The Nest operates a drop-in service every **Saturday between 10:30 and 14:30**. Therapeutic practitioners and support workers can offer 1:1 emotional support, information & advice and signpost you to the appropriate services.

Drop-In Service | The Nest

SENsational Stay & Play
Fun FREE groups for children with additional needs or disabilities and their parents/carer.

- Have fun with your child
- Meet other families
- Get advice and support from a range of specialists on topics such as Speech & Language, Behaviour and Autism

Multiple locations across Southwark
Midweek **drop-in** sessions for under-16 Saturday respite sessions for 9-11 years
See timetable on back of this leaflet

For more info visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/southwark-council or to book www.southwark.gov.uk/childrenandfamily

Southwark Young Carers

To get involved, you can refer via our website www.imago.community or scan the QR Code

IMAGO

We support young people living in Southwark aged 6-24, who provide unpaid care or support to a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition or a substance misuse issue.

For further information, please contact our Hub
youngcarers@imago.community
0300 111 110

Free Workshops for Parents and Carers

Do you want more guidance on how to talk to your children, teens and young people about vaping, alcohol or drugs? Do you want to be informed on the current themes and trends we come across working with young people in the borough?

Substances are more accessible today than ever before. For parents, carers or anyone responsible for children and young people, it can feel overwhelming and difficult to know how to respond.

We're offering FREE online workshops for parents and carers in Southwark, to give advice and guidance to help you navigate this quickly changing landscape.

Workshops:

- Current trends amongst young people
- Strategies for talking to young people about substances in an open and supportive way
- Practical advice on how to assist your children away from the dangers of substance misuse

For further information contact:
Email: Southwark.YoungPeople@cg.gov.uk or scan the QR code for a direct link to the event page.
You can call us on: **020 3404 7699**

TAP - IN SESSIONS

Free and stand alone information sessions for parents and carers on a range of topics - 'TAP-IN' to the ones you need or complete the set!

Sessions include:

- Digital Safety - how to support children to be safe online
- Agnes and Stages - how to support different developmental stages
- Parental Wellbeing - how to communicate our needs
- Parenting and Autism
- Parenting and ADHD
- More to come...

JOIN NOW

Beth Gilbey
07394 865 580
bethany.gilbey@southwark.gov.uk
EARLYHELP@SOUTHWARK.GOV.UK

We hold in person and online sessions throughout the term
Contact the team for next available session

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

For parents of children aged 8 - 16 years

This 12-week course helps parents and carers to:

- Build positive family relationships
- Manage anger and stress
- Implement effective discipline strategies
- Understand your child's development
- Recognise and value your family and cultural traditions
- Develop effective communication
- Meet others and share ideas

JOIN NOW

Where is it on?

Monday
10am to 12pm
1st Place Family Hub
13 Charnock Street
Burgess Park
SE5 0HT

The Neurodiversity Family Hub

The Neurodiversity Family Hub provide specialised clubs for children & young people with SEND in Southwark, including: Teen Tribe, Junior Tribe and Tiny Tribe

As well as parent/carer support, including: Parent Connect, Parent Circle, Walk & Talk, My Advocacy Partner and whole family gatherings.

<https://theneurodiversityfamilyhub.org/>

FREE YEAR 6 LITTLE FISH THEATRE SUMMER PROGRAMME
FOR SOUTHWARK CHILDREN
28TH JULY - 8TH AUG 2025 (MON-FRI)
AT RYE OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK A PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD
EMAIL: INFO@LITTLEFISHTHEATRE.CO.UK

TO FILL IN A BOOKING FORM
CLICK THE LINK BELOW OR
SCAN THE QR CODE

<https://bit.ly/1W13nERW>

ART DREAMS Music DANCE

Let's talk PANTS with Pantosaurus! | NSPCC

NSPCC



- Privates are private
- Always remember your body belongs to you
- No means no
- Talk about secrets that upset you
- Speak up, someone can help

We're using Arbor's free Parent Portal and Parent App

We've chosen Arbor to help us manage our school.

Arbor is a simple, smart and cloud-based MIS (Management Information System), which helps us work faster, smarter and more collaboratively as a school. The Parent App and Parent Portal mean we can keep you informed about your child's life at school in a much more accessible way. Log into Arbor to see and update your child's information, get live updates and make payments or bookings on the go!

The Parent Portal works on Google Chrome (computer or laptop) and you can download the Parent App from the App Store or Google Play Store on your phone (Android 6.0; IOS 10.0 and upwards).

How to get started

- Wait for your welcome email from us telling you Arbor is ready - you won't be able to log in before
- Click the link in your welcome email to set up your password
- Go to the App or Google Play Store on your phone and search 'Arbor'
- Click 'Install' on Android or 'Get' on iPhone then open the App
- Enter your email, select the school, then enter your password
- Accept the Terms & Conditions and enter your child's birthday

Need help using Arbor?

Contact the school office if you have questions about Arbor, the App or Parent Portal. Tell us the type and model of your phone, e.g. an iPhone SE, and include screenshots or screen recordings.

To safeguard student data in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Arbor only works directly with schools.

Some tips to try:

- Ensure your username is the email address you use for Arbor. Ask us to **check the email address** linked to your account.
- Reset your password from the login page, or ask us to do this.
- If the login email was sent to you more than 96 hours ago, the password link will have expired. Ask us to send it again.
- Ask the school office to check that your email address has not been used twice - e.g. on another guardian or child's profile.
- Enter the birthday of one of your children to log in.
- Only relatives who are Primary Guardians of a child can access the Arbor App. Ask us to check you can access Arbor.

Family info

Online English (ESOL) Course

A FREE 15-week Entry level online accredited course for Southwark residents

Classes will be on
Tuesdays & Thursdays at 10am—12.30pm
25th February - 26th June 2025
(seven times only)
plus online Conversation Clubs
This course will take place on Zoom.
Applicants should live in Southwark

To apply for a place on the course in advance please use this link:
<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/online/english-course-course-1457771434>

Spaces are limited so book soon.
We will contact you to confirm your place on the course.

Price & Buckland NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM WEBSITE LAUNCH

On the 11th of February we will launch our NEW website. The URL remains: www.price-buckland.co.uk

Website QR code. This will take you to the homepage to search for your school

If you have ordered from our website before, go to the Account Section and re-set your password. You can use the same password that you have currently.

You can then see previous orders and manage your account.

Any Questions? Call us on 01899 640327

Free Home Fire Safety Visits

A fire can start in any room and the effects can be devastating, even a small fire in your home can lead to substantial damage and expensive repairs. The LFB want to stop fires from happening and that is why we offer free home fire safety visits to help keep you and your loved ones safe.

What happens during a home fire safety visit ?

Our firefighters or trained staff will visit you at home, at a time that suits you and carry out a risk assessment. They will give you advice based on your home and individual needs, this includes; information on how to prevent fires, the importance of smoke alarms to detect a fire and your escape plan in the event of a fire.

A visit can take up to 90 minutes or longer if needed and we will fit free smoke alarms if required.

Specialist alarms can be fitted for people who may have a delayed response to escape for example; strobe light and vibrating pad alarms for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

How to book a Home Fire Safety Visit:

Freephone: 0800 028 4428
Email: smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk
Text /SMS: 07860 021 319

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>

Free* 15 week Learning Unlimited course for adults interested in becoming Teaching Assistants Award in Support Work in Schools

Wednesdays 9.30am – 12.30pm
From 26th February to 25th June 2025

We will contact you after you register to arrange an assessment time. This course will be delivered online using Zoom.

What will I get from attending the course?

- The Knowledge and Skills Required to become an effective teaching assistant
- The City & Guilds Award in Support Work in Schools (Level 2)
- The opportunity to progress to the Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools or to apply for work as a Teaching Assistant
- Final course FDS file - <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/online/english-course-course-1457771434>

How much does it cost?

*The course is free but there is a non-refundable registration fee of £10.
To apply for a place on the course see the link below to complete the online form:
<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/online/english-course-course-1457771434>

All applicants should have proof of English.
Please note you will need to complete an equality which will require you to fill in a form. If you are unable to complete this, please contact us for further advice.

SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Southwark Council is leading a primary schools' indoor air quality project to improve the air quality in schools and to protect children's health.

Artaria - Air Quality Monitoring & Engagement Project for students in Year 6 and above

This project will use air quality sensors placed in classrooms and the homes of pupils with Asthma, offering a live insight into the air quality they experience.

Teachers and students will participate in a specially designed curriculum to deepen their understanding of air quality's effects on health and discover strategies to mitigate harmful emissions.

This initiative builds on existing air quality efforts and provides tools such as a dedicated webpage and monitoring devices to assist schools in fostering a cleaner, healthier educational atmosphere.

School staff and parents can register interest by filling out the form in this QR code or by emailing: https://www.southwark.gov.uk/123456789

www.southwark.gov.uk/123456789
www.southwark.gov.uk/123456789

Community Action Plan
Check out the Community Action Plan page which includes a list of initiatives to support us as a quality.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term used to refer to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. It's often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. The rate of children who miss school more than 10% of the time in England has more than doubled since before the pandemic: rising from 10.9% in 2018-19, to 22.3% in 2022-23.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

168 REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include complaining of a tummy ache, headache, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity which is making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

While there may be times you feel frustrated or angry, try to stay calm; acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss a range of coping strategies together to help them face the discomfort and overwhelming feelings. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk and practice the strategies in less overwhelming situations first.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and limited time on screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

REDUCE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES AT HOME

If a child is avoiding school, reduce their access to more stimulating activities (such as watching television, playing games and spending time with friends) during school hours, where possible. This reduces the potential for the child having rewarding experiences at home, which could be interpreted as a positive aspect of avoiding school.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



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