Emotionally related school avoidance (ERSA) support plan

Support plan (option 1)

The emotionally related school avoidance (ERSA) support plan is a tool and intervention to help schools, parents, carers, and the child or young person identify achievable goals. These goals will help the child or young person move towards greater school attendance and engagement in education, and will include the necessary provisions and key stakeholders required for support. The ERSA support plan should be completed alongside the child or young person and a trusted adult to ensure that the goals and support are agreed upon by all parties involved, and that the child's or young person's voice is heard.

The child or young person may be able to provide valuable information to create a successful ERSA support plan, including examples of support that has previously helped, steps towards goals that feel manageable for them, and key people they want to support them. Examples of strategies for an ERSA support plan that can be suggested to the child or young person follow towards the end of the document. The ERSA support plan should be reviewed at regular intervals to track progress and amend if necessary.

Support plan: ERSA person centred path (PCPath) (option 2)

The PCPath is a tool you can use to support a child or young person with ERSA towards a specific goal or dream for the future, to work out the actions that need to be taken to make that happen, or when a situation would benefit from group planning and focusing on the future.

When using the PCPath, a group of people chosen by the child or young person along with the child or young person themselves, or just the child or young person individually, work alongside a facilitator to use the PCPath template. They will develop achievable and realistic goals for the future based on 'the dream' and implement backwards planning to create a step-by-step path to reaching that goal.

It has a very clear structure and commits to tasks within a given timescale, while always maintaining focus on the hopes and goals of the child or young person.

How to use it

Using a very large sheet of paper with the PCPath template drawn on it, the group and/or young person is guided by the facilitator through the process, and the plan is recorded in words and pictures.

- Firstly, they look at the young person's dreams. No limits or constraints are placed on the dreams or the ideal future that they illuminate, allowing the young person to express what matters most to them. Based on these dreams and the young person's vision for the future, specific goals that are positive and possible are identified.

- Next, they imagine possible and positive achievements and goals that could be reached over the next one to two years.

- This is then compared to how the young person's life is 'now', with current strengths identified. The skills that need to be developed or what needs to be put in place to help reach the one to two year goals are highlighted.

- Finally, the next steps needed to achieve the goals are planned, along with identifying the people who can help the young person reach their goals, and what they need to do to stay strong and motivated. For some examples, please refer to the ERSA support strategies at the end of this document.

A key to this planning process lies in identifying who will be responsible for what in helping the child or young person achieve their goals. This allows the child or young person, family members, other community members, and school staff to make specific commitments to take action. Usually, opportunities to review the young person's goals and update actions are provided.

ERSA support plan (option 1)

Support plan for:

Date my views were gathered:

At school, these things are working well:

When I don't want to go to or be at school, I notice these things about myself:

When I don't want to go to school or be at school, others may notice these things about me:

My short-term targets to help me attend school are:

Identify manageable and achievable steps towards successful school attendance. This can include attending school for a half a day, developing strategies to control anxiety, or joining a lunchtime club.

At school, my key adult(s) that support me are:

My key adult(s):

When I can speak with my key adult(s):

Where I can speak with my key adult(s):

The things that could be even better and adapted to support my attendance are:

Identify any changes to the timetable that could be made (for example: changes to days and times, what should happen in school and where to go in school).

Identify other changes to routines (for example: adapting breaks and lunchtimes or implementing changes between lessons), classroom expectations (for example: not being expected to read aloud or work in pairs) or homework.

Things I can do to make myself feel better when I'm at school:

Things that other people (school staff and friends) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school:

Places in school I can go to where I feel safe and supported:

Things that everyone at home can do to support me to attend school:

Things that other key adults outside of school (such as a grandparent or family friend) can do to support me to attend school:

My views are important, and this plan is designed to support my return to school. The next step is to try out the plan and review it regularly so that it remains helpful.

Review date:

I give my consent to share this plan with other professionals who may want to help me.

My signature	Key adult's signature	Parent or carer signature

Other people who have access to this plan are:

To be printed in A3

ERSA support plan

Option 2: ERSA person centred path

Dream (1)

All about me now (3)

My strengths:

At school, these things are working well:

Things people may need to know about me:

Even better ifs (4)

The things that could be even better and adapted to support my attendance are:

What needs to change? (5)

Things I can do to make myself feel better when I'm at school:

Things other people (such as school staff and friends) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school:

Places in school I can go to where I feel safe and supported:

Who can help me? (6)

At school, my key adults that support me are:

When I can speak with my key adults:

Where I can speak with my key adults:

Things that everyone at home can do to support me to attend school:

Things that key adults outside of school can do to support me to attend school:

Next steps (7)

If on a reduced timetable, when will I be in school? This includes days and timings.

Review date:

To review:

What is working well?

What needs to change?

What are the next steps?

Goals or targets (2)

Example of strategies for ERSA support plan
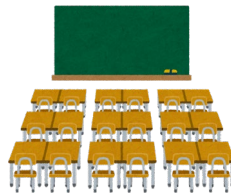
Having a reduced timetable

Soft start, for example: coming into school after everyone else so that it is quieter and meeting with a safe adult

Checking in with a safe adult at the beginning, middle and end of the day

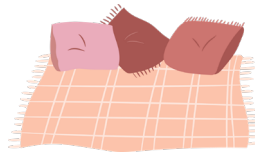Safe adult meeting me every day at the gate or by my locker

Entering the classroom before or after everyone

Having jobs to do at the beginning of the day or during the day

Having a "I need a break card"

Having a safe space in the school I can go to

(where or when?)

Having a safe space in school where I can go to at break and lunchtime

Being able to leave school five minutes early to avoid crowds

Being able to leave lessons five minutes early to avoid crowds

Uniform accommodations

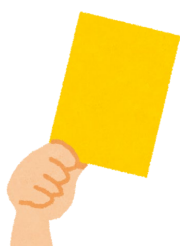# Example of strategies for ERSA support plan

Toileting accommodations

Taking exams in a separate space

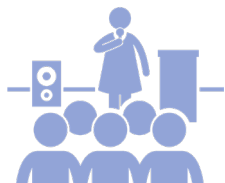Having an intervention during a disliked lesson

Skip lunch queue card

Bringing in a transitional object

Not being expected to read aloud in lessons or answer questions if my hand is not up

Not attending assemblies

Having a visual card to ask for help in lessons

Being able to join lessons remotely from a safe space in school

Having clear routines and structure

Having task management boards in lessons

Using alternative methods of recording