

**School refusal is
when children
are refusing to go
to school on a
regular basis or
are having
difficulty staying
in school.**

-ADAA.org

SCHOOL CONTACTS

Counselor:

Principal:

Nurse:

REFERENCES

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/school-refusal#>

<https://childmind.org/article/when-kids-refuse-to-go-to-school/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/pages/School-Avoidance.aspx>

Information compiled by Kelly Knipp, Heritage School Counselor

**HELP FOR
SCHOOL
REFUSAL**

What it can look like...

- A strong resistance to attending school or leaving the house (tantrums, avoidance, separation anxiety, defiance, etc.)
- Complaining of physical symptoms right before it's time to leave for school or the night before (stomachaches, headaches, nausea, etc.)
- Leaving the classroom frequently for the restroom/water fountain or to visit the nurse or counselor

A child's distress with attending school and the frequency of these behaviors can help parents determine the difference between normal avoidance and school refusal.

What Parents can do...

1. Talk to your child about their feelings and reasons for not wanting to go to school.
2. Help your child focus on the positive aspects of going to school (i.e. making friends, learning about favorite subjects, playing at recess).
3. Communicate with your child's teacher, school counselor, or principal to receive extra support or direction.
4. Validate your child's feelings so they feel safe continuing to share with you.
5. Acknowledge your child's concerns, but insist that they attend school on a daily basis when he/she is not sick. This takes a commitment to being firm on school mornings, when your child may be the most resistant. The longer your child stays home, the more difficult their return to school can become.

Parents may also choose to explore options for receiving help from outside resources like a pediatrician or mental health professional.

How The School Can Help...

- Your child can talk to a school counselor, teacher, nurse, and/or principal about their feelings or concerns.
- It can be arranged for a staff member to kindly greet your child at drop-off each morning and assist with walking in the building.
- Your child can be set up with a mentor to receive extra support and encouragement.
- A school attendance contract involving you, your child, and the classroom teacher can be created.
- The school can work closely with any outside professionals you may choose to access to follow their recommendations.