



CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

Emotional Based School Avoidance

Information for Families

What is Emotional Based Avoidance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is when a young person experiences strong feelings of anxiety, stress, or emotional distress that make it very difficult for them to attend school.

It is different from truancy - these children want to attend but feel unable to because of their emotional state.

We recognise that all behaviours are a communication of an emotional need that is either unmet or being met elsewhere.

Possible indicators of Emotional Based Avoidance

Possible indicators include:

- Difficulty attending school with periods of prolonged absence
- Child reluctant to leave home and stays away from school with the knowledge of the family
- Reluctance to leave their family or get out of the car
- Regular absence
- Frequent absences for minor illnesses
- Patterns in absences, for example, particular days and/or subjects, after weekends and holidays
- The young person wants to attend classes but is unable to do so
- Anxiety on separation and dependence on family members e.g. worry expressed about the safety of those at home
- Social isolation and avoidance of classmates or peer group
- Challenging behaviours, particularly in relation to specific situations at school
- Severe emotional upset with excessive fearfulness, outbursts of temper and complaints of feeling ill on school days.
- Depression, low self-esteem, and low confidence

Risk/Resilience factors

There have been factors identified that place children at greater risk of EBSA. It is usually a combination of factors interacting with a change in circumstances that leads to what we see as EBSA.

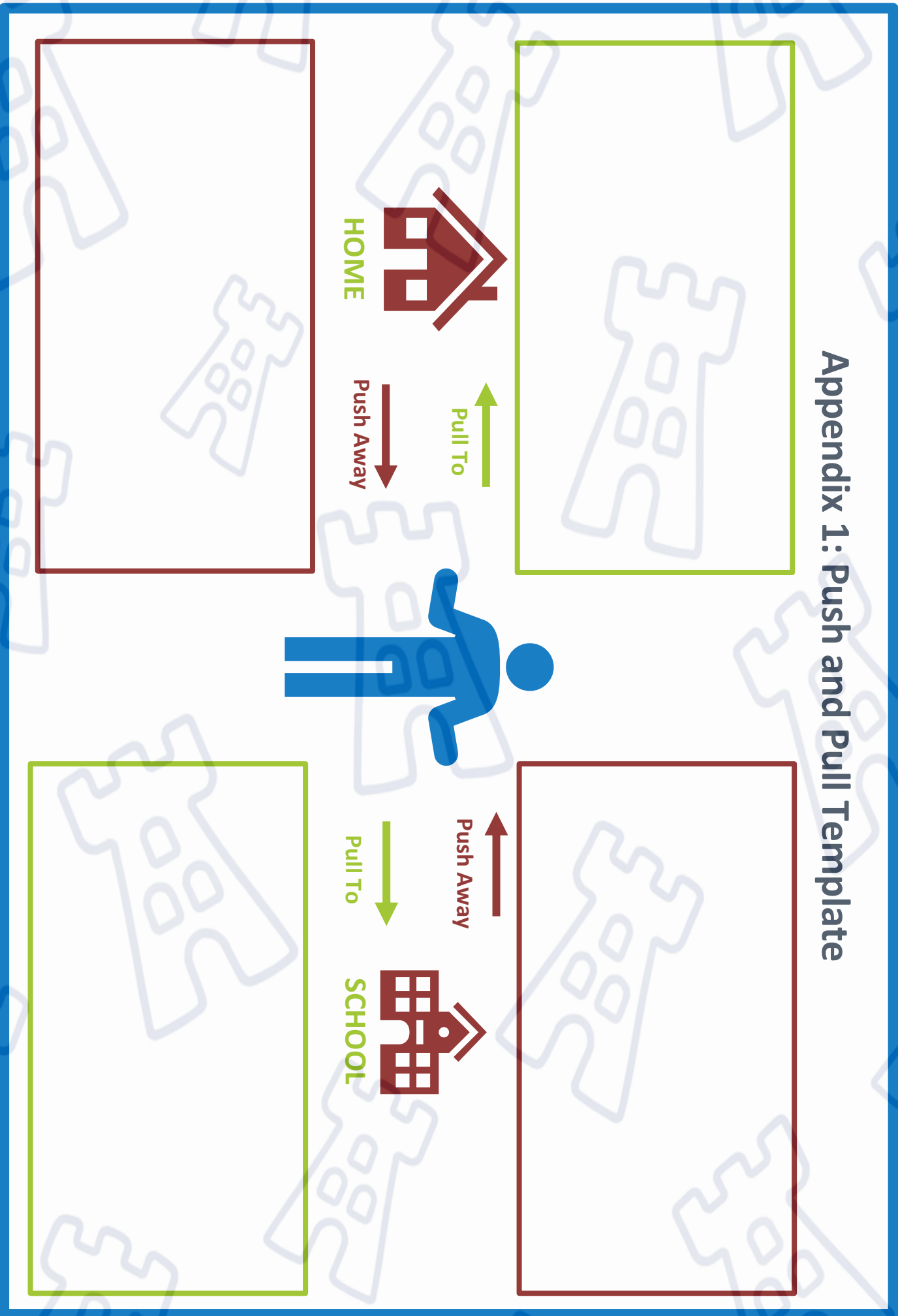
School factors	Family factors	Child factors	Community factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bullying ▪ Difficulties in specific subject ▪ Transition to secondary school, key stage or change of school ▪ Structure of the school day ▪ Academic demands/high levels of pressure and performance orientated classrooms ▪ Exams ▪ Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships with peers or staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separation, divorce, change in family dynamic ▪ Parent physical or mental health challenges ▪ Attachment relationship with parent ▪ High levels of family stress ▪ Domestic violence or abuse ▪ Loss or bereavement ▪ Family history of EBSA ▪ Young carer ▪ Financial situation ▪ Sibling non-attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social anxiety ▪ Fixed mindset ▪ Low self confidence ▪ Physical illness/injury ▪ Period pain/poverty ▪ Transition ages (5-6, 11-12 & 13-14 years) ▪ Difficulties accessing learning/making progress at the same rate as peers ▪ Trauma experiences ▪ Separation anxiety ▪ Gaming addiction ▪ Health anxiety ▪ Uncertainty about future aspirations beyond school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Racism ▪ Social media ▪ Gang membership ▪ Transport or journey to school ▪ Community safety

‘Push and Pull’ factors

Emotional Based School Avoidance is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience, when stress and anxiety prevail, and when the factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the factors that encourage school attendance. By mapping out what is going on for a young person, we can identify where there are imbalances which would tell us how to intervene to support a young person. This can be a helpful tool for families to use and go through with their child at home to discover areas of support needed.



Appendix 1: Push and Pull Template



Contacts at Castle Mead Academy

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