

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD WHEN SCHOOL IS DIFFCULT

DENBIGH SCHOOL - PARENT INFOMATION BOOKLET

DENBIGH SCHOOL

Aspire, Innovate, Achieve, Belong



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When School Feels Hard

All children have times when school feels difficult. For some young people, this difficulty is linked to worry, anxiety, friendship concerns, learning pressures, or changes in life outside of school.

Sometimes this can affect attendance. This does not mean a child is being difficult or choosing to refuse school. It often means they are feeling overwhelmed and need the right support.

At Denbigh School, we work with families to:

- Understand what is behind the difficulty
- Put supportive steps in place
- Build confidence gradually
- Help your child return to regular attendance in a calm and sustainable way

We believe that strong relationships between home and school make the biggest difference.

Be Engaged

Be Kind and Respectful

Do No Harm



How We Work with Families

Step 1 – We Listen:
We speak with:

- You as parents/carers
- Your child
- Key staff who know your child well

We want to understand what feels difficult and when.

Step 2 – We Understand:
We explore:

- What might be triggering the difficulty
- What is going well
- What has helped before
- What small changes might reduce stress

Step 3 – We Plan Together:
We agree a short, supportive plan. This might include:

- A trusted adult check-in
- A calm arrival routine
- Temporary small adjustments to the school day
- Gradual build-up of attendance

Plans are always reviewed regularly.

Step 4 – We Review and Adapt:
We check in frequently to see:

- What is improving
- What still feels hard
- What needs adjusting

Support is flexible and tailored to each child.

What Helps at School and at Home

What Helps at School

- A consistent trusted adult
- Clear routines and predictable structure
- Calm arrival support
- Gradual exposure to more challenging parts of the day
- Positive reinforcement of small successes

What Helps at Home

- Calm, consistent morning routines
- Clear expectations about attendance
- Short, supportive conversations (not long negotiations)
- Recognising effort, even small steps
- Supporting sleep routines and screen balance
- Encouraging independence gradually

Children build confidence when adults stay calm, steady and consistent.









Support Available

In School Support:
Your child may receive support from:

- Head of Year
- Pastoral team
- Attendance team
- Form tutor
- SEN department (where appropriate)

Local Support in Milton Keynes:
Mental Health Support Team (MHST)
Provides support for mild to moderate anxiety or low mood. Referrals can be made through school, and some families may self-refer.
📞 01908 725691

CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)
For more complex or significant mental health needs. Referrals are usually made via GP or professional.
📞 01908 724228

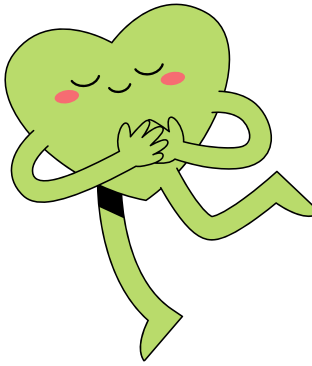
School Nursing / 0–19 Service
Advice and support for emotional and physical wellbeing.
📞 01908 725100

Additional Support

- Kooth (online emotional wellbeing support)
- Mind BLMK
- Youth counselling services in Milton Keynes
- YoungMinds (parent advice resources)

If you are unsure which service is appropriate, please speak to the school and we can guide you.

How to Support Attendance at Home



Keep Routines Steady

- Same bedtime each night
- School uniform ready
- Calm, predictable mornings

Validate Feelings — But Keep the Expectation

- You can say: “I understand this feels hard. I believe you can do this. We will take it step by step.”
- Avoid long debates about staying home.

Focus on Small Wins

Success might look like:

- Getting dressed
- Arriving at the gate
- Staying for one lesson
- Small steps build big confidence.



Use Calm Tools

Simple breathing exercise:

- Breathe in for 4
- Hold for 2
- Breathe out for 6
- Repeat 5 times.



Avoid Accidental Rewards for Staying Home

- Keep home calm and neutral during school hours.
- Avoid making staying home more enjoyable than attending school.

FAQ

My child says they feel sick before school. What should I do?
Anxiety can cause real physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches. Stay calm, acknowledge how they feel, and use gradual steps to support attendance.

How long will this take?
Every child is different. Some improve quickly; others need longer. Consistency and teamwork between home and school are key.

Should I stay with my child at school?
Short-term reassurance can help. Gradually reducing support helps build independence.

Is this my fault?
No. Attendance difficulties linked to emotional distress can affect any family. Support works best when we work together.



Be Engaged



Be Kind and Respectful



Do No Harm

Meet the Pastoral Team



Mr Stewart
Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Asif
Head of Year 7



Mr Hairsine
Head of Year 8



Mrs Wiltshire
Head of Year 9

Mr Ozgul
Head of Year 10

Mrs South
Head of Year 11

Meet the Pastoral Team



Miss Blackall

Lead Attendance Officer



Mrs Arnold

Attendance Officer



Mrs Lewis

Family Liaison Officer



Mrs Skipper

PSC Coordinator



Mrs Burgess

Operational DSL Lead



Ms Boddy

Pastoral Mentor

Meet the Pastoral Team



Mrs Rose

Isolation Manager



Mrs Anderson

School Counsellor



Mr Fisher

Lead School Counsellor

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