

Parent Talk – free online service

School refusers

[Parent Talk](https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk) (<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk>) is a free online service, launched by Action for Children, which provides accessible and trustworthy advice, support, and reassurance for parents and carers of children aged 0-19, or up to 25 if a child has a special educational need or disability.

Parents and carers can access one-to-one support from a parenting coach – a trained family support worker – as well as advice and guidance articles across a range of common parenting challenges. Last year the service supported over 500,000 families across the UK.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, their advice on school refusal was referred to more than 50,000 times. Through this they identified three issues for parents of children who refuse to come to school:

1. Parents don't know where to turn

The most common challenge raised by parents whose children are refusing to go to school, or struggling with school anxiety, is that they don't know where to turn for help. That can be because their child's school is struggling to offer the support they think their child needs, or because they simply aren't being offered any support at all.

2. Parents struggle to access specialist support for their children

Where families are struggling with school refusal it is often related to challenges accessing specialist support. That can be mental health services, support for special educational needs, or early help services.

3. Learning from home can help and hinder school attendance

Many parents struggling with school refusal mentioned the impact of home learning during the pandemic. For some parents home learning was a lifeline, enabling their child to stay in touch with their schooling to some degree. For others, the option of learning from home had solidified their child's reluctance to attend school.