

# SCHOOL AVOIDANCE PROGRAM: A SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATIVE

## What is School Avoidance?

School avoidance is the inability of a child or adolescent to complete some, or all, of a regularly scheduled school day. About 5-28% children will refuse to go to school at some point in their lives. Children avoid school for several reasons, including but not limited to anxiety they feel in school, attention from parents or care givers when not attending school, and the benefits of engaging in recreational activities outside of class. The longer avoidance persists without treatment, the more difficult it is to transition back.

## How Do I Get Started?

Referrals can be made by school personnel, outpatient providers or parents by selecting 'School Avoidance' on our intake form. This will prompt completion of the School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (SRAS-R) which will help us understand the function of avoidant behavior and what interventions are appropriate for the student.

## Who Would Benefit?

- Motivation to return to a regular school schedule
- Students with high parental involvement and motivation to return to school
- Students who attended school in the last month
- Recent onset of school avoidance
- Avoidance has been present for 2 weeks – 1 year
- Primary diagnosis of anxiety or depression

## Who may not be a good fit?

- Students with active suicidality
- Chronic issues (absences for greater than a year)
- Unsafe school/home environment
- Active substance use
- Severe aggression, behavioral and conduct issues
- ASD/Non-verbal
- Family Court/PINS/DSS involvement
- Acute physical illness, medical issues

## Our School Avoidance Program Offers:

Short-term intervention for 4-6 weeks

- Psychoeducation
- Individual counseling
- Exposure based treatments
- Parent coaching and groups
- Family contracting
- Collaboration with the school
- Consultation with outpatient providers
- Assist in creating ongoing plan

**Please note: The Behavioral Health Center does not provide ongoing mental health treatment and cannot perform medical assessments, physical exams, or diagnostic tests.**

## Important Links and Numbers

- Commack Behavioral Health Center: 631-775-3280
- Mineola Behavioral Health Center: 516-321-5770
- RVC Behavioral Health Center: 516-927-1630
- South Oaks Hospital Admissions: 631-608-5885
- Cohen Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care: 718-470-3148
- Cohen Pediatric Emergency Department: 718-470-3768
- Long Island Crisis Center: 516-679-1111
- Center for Hope: 516-216-5194
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call/Text 988

## Meet our School Avoidance Counselors

- Nicole Casquarelli LMHC- Rockville Centre
- Michelle Grabovsky LMHC- Mineola
- Dani Ospina LMHC- Commack
- Courtney Epple LMHC- Riverhead
- Besjana Ugrinaj LMSW- Mt Kisco

Questions: [schoolavoidance@northwell.edu](mailto:schoolavoidance@northwell.edu)



Physician Partners