

# Mental Health Memo

## School Refusal: Supporting Kids Who Avoid School



With the return to in-person learning this year, is your child overwhelmed with uncertainties and fears about school? Are they having physical symptoms: headaches, sleep disturbances, refusal to sleep alone, or stomach aches that often start the night before school?

If your child consistently finds it difficult to go to school, it is important to speak to a health professional first to get a better understanding of your child's concerns. If your doctor has ruled out physical illness, it could be that your child is struggling with mental health issues leading to their concerns about school and their refusal to attend school.

Here are some tips to support children and teens struggling to go to school every day:

- Focus on your relationship with your child – find out what they need to make the school experience better
- Take time to understand the issue – think about the situations/circumstances that they find difficult
- Commit to the idea that staying at home is not an option – acknowledge their feelings, offer coping strategies
- Try a scaffolding approach to get your child back to school – slowly work towards reengaging into the routine
- Connect with the school – help the teacher to know your child's needs and coping techniques

For more information, click on this link to Children's Mental Health Ontario:

<https://www.family.cmho.org/school-refusal/>

School  
Mental Health  
Backpack



For more information, please contact the RRDSB Mental Health Leader: [tracey.idle@rrdsb.com](mailto:tracey.idle@rrdsb.com)