

## Questions to ask parent/carers

Areas to cover & example questions:

### **Developmental and educational history**

- What were they like as a young child?
- Can you tell me about their early experiences at school? *Include pre-school, primary school, and the start of secondary school if applicable.*

### **Strengths, interests, and aspirations**

- What are they good at?
- What do they like doing?
- What are their hopes for the future?
- What do they want their life to be like when they are an adult?

### **Any potential changes or losses within the family or child's life**

- Tell me about your family. Who is in it, who is like whom etc?.
- Who are they closest to?
- Have there been any changes within the family recently? (You could ask them to draw a family tree/ genogram).

### **Relationships**

- What (if anything) do they say about other children in school?
- What (if anything) do they say about any other adults within school?
- Who do they get on with? Anyone they get on less well with?

### **Academic progress**

- School should be aware if the young person has identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and should ask about these needs and the support in place.
- If there is no identified SEND school should ask if they have any concerns, or if the child has spoken about difficulties.

### **The child's view of their specific fears/worries**

- Have they spoken to you about what they find difficult about school? What do they say?

### **The child's view of what is going well in school**

- Have they mentioned anything that is going well in school? (e.g., teachers, lessons, friends)

### **Behaviour and symptoms of anxiety**

- What does it look like when they are feeling worried?
- What do they say they are feeling? Can they articulate this? Can they indicate it non-verbally if provided with options to choose from?

### **Typical day – when they go to school and when they don't go to school**

- Please describe a typical day when they go to school from the moment they get up until they go to bed..... and when they don't go to school?
- What do they do when they do not go to school?
- What do other family members do?

### **Impact on various members of the family**

- How does their non-attendance impact on you (as the parent/carer)? And on other family members?
- Are there any key people in the family who support the child particularly well? If so, what is it they do that helps?

### **Parental views on the reasons for the EBSA**

- What sense do you make of why they struggle to attend school?
- If (other parent/ sibling/Grandparent etc.) were here what would they say?
- Are there any differences of views about the reasons and what should be done within the family?

### **Exceptions to the problem**

- Have there been times when they managed to get into school?
- What was different about those times?

### **Previous attempts to address the problem**

- What has been the most helpful thing that someone else has done in dealing with the difficulties so far?
- What has helped in the past when things have been difficult?
- What strategies have been most helpful so far in managing their anxiety?