

winter 2024

MENTAL HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

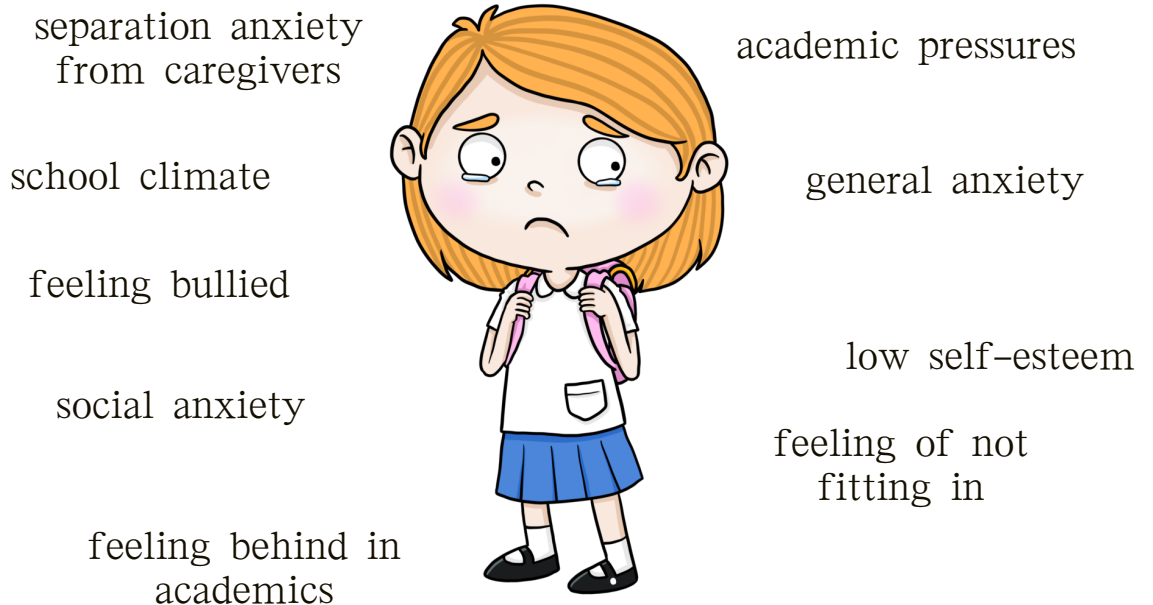
NEWSLETTER OF THE APS MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

FOR A LIST OF
ALLENDALE MENTAL
HEALTH COMMITTEE
MEMBERS AND
CONTACTS, GO TO:

[ALLENDALE
MENTAL HEALTH
COMMITTEE](#)



Is your child's anxiety affecting their attendance?



This time of year we see increases in absences. We know that flu and cold season play a role in this increase, but we also hear from caregivers that they are struggling getting their child to school as they are just flat out refusing to come. We know that pressures of academics as well as many different forms of anxiety play a big role in this refusal.

Each building at APS has an Attendance Team that is built around staff members that can help. If you have a student that you feel is overwhelmed resulting in school absences, please contact a [Mental Health Committee Member](#) and ask to be connected to an Attendance Team staff that can help.

What Can Parents do to Help Stop the Cycle of School Refusal?

Step in Quickly

Missed school work and social experiences snowball, making school avoidance a problem that grows larger and more difficult to control as it rolls along. If the problem lasts more than a day or two, step in. Help identify issues. Try to find out why your child is avoiding school. Some identifying issues that may cause avoidance are:

- school is too hard or they are worried about academics
- they are struggling with their peers socially or may feel as if they are being teased or bullied
- they are fearful of being separated from their parent(s) for a full day

Communicate and Collaborate

School is a key partner in combating school avoidance. Contact your Community School Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, or Social Worker to share what you know about your child's struggle. The more information the school has about why the school avoidance is occurring, the better they will be able to help you and your student. Collaborate to problem solve with your child's school by identifying steps that can help your child gradually face what they are avoiding at school.

Be Firm About School

Be empathetic but firm that your child must attend school. Let them know that you are confident they can face their struggle. If they are struggling with anxiety, it is important that they learn that they can persevere and do what they need to do even when experiencing anxiety. It is important that children learn to face their fears and learning this firsthand can empower your child.

Make Staying Home Boring

Make sure the out of school environment isn't tempting your child to stay home. For example: screens, sleeping or lounging in bed, or no adults in the home during the day are all temptations for kids to want to stay at home. Be clear that if your child does not attend school, you will be collecting all screens - and follow through. Ask the school to send work for your child to complete during the day.

Burch, J. PhD. (2018, Sep 18) *School Refusal: When a child won't go to school.* Harvard Health Publishing. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/school-refusal-when-a-child-wont-go-to-school-2018091814756>

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Visit the [Mental Health page](#) on our APS website.

- Mental Health Committee Members
- Mental Health Resources & Information
- Crisis Help Lines



In the event of a mental health crisis, call 988 or go to the nearest Emergency Department:

Holland Hospital
602 Michigan Ave, Holland
• 616-392-5141

Spectrum Health - Zeeland
8333 Felch St, Zeeland
• 616-772-4644

North Ottawa Community
1309 Sheldon Rd., Grand Haven
• 616-847-5310

Spectrum Health- GR
100 Michigan St. NE, GR
• 616-391-1774