

Parent School-Refusal Response Plan

Respond to difficult mornings with greater consistency and less escalation.

Use this plan to create a calm, predictable caregiver response. Adapt it with the child's treatment team and school when avoidance is persistent or severe.

Our consistent morning message

Write 1-2 short statements that validate distress without turning the morning into a long negotiation.

What we WILL do

- Keep our voice calm and brief
- Point to the visual routine
- Use the agreed regulation plan
- Reinforce brave approach behavior
- Validate the feeling
- Offer limited choices
- Follow the school contact plan
- Debrief later, not during escalation

What we will try NOT to do

- Repeatedly debate whether school is required
- Give long lectures
- Accidentally make staying home more rewarding than school
- Add new threats in the moment
- Ask the same reassurance question repeatedly
- Argue between caregivers in front of the child

If distress escalates, our sequence is:

1	Regulate / reduce words	
2	Restate the next small step	
3	Contact school support if needed	
4	Follow the agreed attendance / safety plan	

School contact / support person:

What we will reinforce after a brave step:

Safety note

If the child expresses suicidal thoughts, self-harm intent, inability to stay safe, or another acute safety concern, shift from the attendance plan to immediate safety assessment and appropriate crisis/emergency support.