

Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties.

Children with emotional difficulties include those who may be withdrawn or isolated, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills and those presenting other difficulties arising other complex needs.

Some children may have emotional needs and/or social problems that interfere with their own ability to learn effectively. In some instances, the difficulties they experience may cause disruption to the learning of other children or young people.

Social difficulties, in this context, occur when pupils have problems managing interactions with others in school effectively and appropriately. They may have difficulty making the necessary adjustments to conform to the expectations of others in a variety of settings. The process is known as socialisation. Either difficulty may impact substantially on the child's ability to learn.

Some of the aspects of difficulty included in this area are:

Adjustment Disorders

A child suffering from an Adjustment Disorder may have witnessed a stressful event or had a big change in their normal lifestyle. This could then have an adverse reaction on their emotional health and/or behaviour.

Anxiety Disorders

A child suffering from an anxiety disorder may be prone to frequent panic attacks. Here the child may complain of physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches. The child may also display inappropriate emotional responses, such as outbursts of laughter or crying out of context.

Separation Anxiety

This anxiety is particularly common in younger children and is thought to be the most common disorder found in children under the age of 12. It is a term used to describe a feeling of anxiety or stress when away from parents/guardians/family. It affects how children act towards other people as they may only feel comfortable at home. Children with separation anxiety may also feel afraid of going to sleep alone and, when they do get to sleep, they may have nightmares about being apart from their

parents/guardians/family. Often children with separation anxiety create excuses, such as that they don't feel well, to avoid being away from home. Often this anxiety also stems from the child's concern that something bad will happen to him/her or his/her parent/guardian during the time that they are separated.

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Children with Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) have recurring fears and worries that they find difficult to control. They worry about almost everything e.g. school, sports, being on time, even worrying about worrying etc. They may be restless, irritable, tense or easily tired, and they may have trouble concentrating or sleeping.

Children with GAD are usually eager to please others and may be dissatisfied if they have a less-than-perfect performance. Children with GAD worry both about events that took place in the past and events that will take place in the future. They also worry about conversations, actions, health, performance at school, performance in after school activities, friendships and even current affairs. Often this anxiety can interfere with their daily lives and sleeping patterns. The anxiety is not as a result of any specific trigger, but those children with this type of anxiety feel that they are 'on edge' all the time for no specific reason.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder ('OCD')

A child suffering from EBD may also have an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Here the child can display recurrent and persistent obsessions or compulsions. Behaviours may include repetitive hand washing, counting, and repeating words silently.