



The Ideal School



Questions and Template

What is The Ideal School?

The Ideal School is an activity based on Personal Construct Psychology. It is adapted from an approach originally developed by Moran (2001) and enables children and young people to express their views about school and to consider ways that school could be a happier place for them.

When can it be used?

This activity can be used by Educational Psychologists, school staff, parents or other trusted adults to help understand why a CYP might be struggling to attend school.



Materials:

Paper

Drawing materials of your choice (pencils, markers, paint, etc.)

Lego

Play Doh etc

Instructions

- Ask the CYP to think about their 'ideal' or 'best' school, i.e. a school that they would really like to go to - emphasise that this is not a real school, so they can be as creative as they like.
- Ask the CYP to draw (or build with Lego, Minecraft or on Canva) their ideal school.
- As you work through each part of the school, ask open-ended and curious questions about what is being drawn and note down what the CYP says in their own words
- Once the school is complete, ask the CYP to rate how close they feel their current school is to their ideal school
- Consider with the CYP how their current school could become closer to their ideal school

Getting ready for school

- What would you do when you wake up / before school?
- Any questions about the day ahead?
- What would you like to take with you?
- What are you looking forward to?

Notes / your questions

Outside of the school

- What does your school look like?
- How do you enter / get in to school?
- Is it quiet or busy?
- Do you play games first, or go straight in?
- Who would you first like to see / meet?

Notes / your questions

Your Classroom

- What is on the walls of the classroom?
- Do you have your own desk, with 1 other child, or on a group table?
- Where is your desk and what is on it?
- How many other children are in the class?
- Does the classroom have different 'areas' that you'd like to go to at times?

Notes / your questions

The playground

- Is the ideal playground big or small?
- What games are people playing?
- How would arguments / falling outs be managed?
- What is the best thing about the playground?
- What game would you love to play?

Notes / your questions

The Adults

- What does your ideal teacher look and talk like?
- What does your ideal teacher do for fun?
- How do they help you with learning?
- How do they help you feel good / calm?
- What are the classroom rules?
- What do they say to your parents / carers at the end of the day?

Notes / your questions

The Children

- What do the other children look like?
- What do you love to do / play with your friends?
- How many children are in your friendship group?
- Do you sit next to a friend or someone else?

Notes / your questions

Me!

- How do you feel at this school / what's your face like?
- What do the teachers think of you?
- What would you like them to say about you?
- What do the other children in your class think of you? What would they say?
- How do you know you are safe at school?
- How will adults know you are ok / happy?

Notes / your questions

**The most important thing about
the school is...**

Notes / your questions

How close is your real school to your ideal school?

(Circle a number)

Not at
all close

Exactly
the same

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

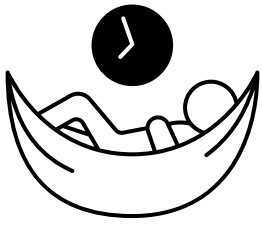
8

9

10

What would help your real school be more like your ideal school?

You can use the pictures on the next page to help if you are stuck



Let me have more breaks



Teach me ways to manage my worries



Listen to me more



More lessons I enjoy



Fewer lessons I don't enjoy



Give me less homework



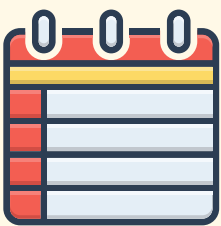
Give me easier or harder work



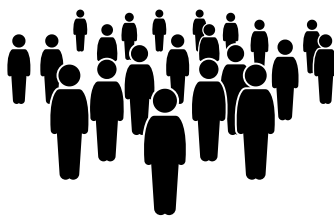
Make school quieter



Help me with friendships



Visual timetable



Make school less crowded



More lessons with my friends



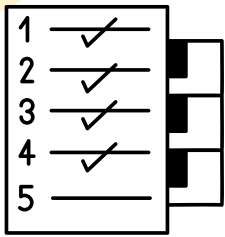
Having somewhere
I can go when I
am worried



Getting rewards
or praise



Smaller
classes



Clear routines
and structure



Having something
to fiddle with



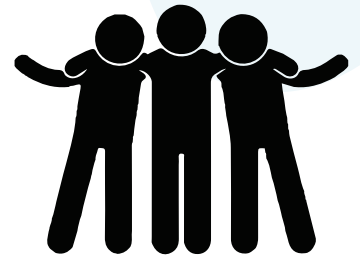
Talking to someone
I trust at school



Teachers knowing
about my needs



Instructions
being easier to
understand



Feeling included
and accepted



No busy
corridors

Want to learn more about EBSA?



EBSA Horizons is a comprehensive CPD course on Emotional Based School Avoidance by specialist EP, **Dr Jerricah Holder**, which develops our understanding and skills to support children and young people experiencing difficulties attending school.

Online and **on-demand**, with an ever growing EP community inside.

www.edpsyched.co.uk/ebsa-horizons

Ideal School

Prompt Sheet

Getting ready for school

- What would you do when you wake up / before school?
- Any questions about the day ahead?
- What would you like to take with you?
- What are you looking forward to?

Outside of the school

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The playground

- Is the ideal playground big or small?
- What games are people playing?
- How would arguments / falling outs be managed?
- What is the best thing about the playground?
- What game would you love to play?
- Is there anywhere you'd prefer to be?
- Is there anything you'd prefer to be doing?

The Children

- What do the other children look like?
- What do you love to do / play with your friends?
- How many children are in your friendship group?
- Do you sit next to a friend or someone else?

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