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DSPL9 Parent, Carer and Family Newsletter

15th April 2026

Welcome to the 13th DSPL9 newsletter for the academic year 2025/26 .
This provides families and school colleagues with current local SEND information with a focus on **Parents and Families**.

This newsletter is published fortnightly during term time. Next edition-**29th April 2026**

Please contact Triage enquiries@dsplarea9.org.uk if your child or young person has complex needs that you require further support with.

DSPL9 support

- DSPL9 invite you join us for our SEND information fair
- DSPL9 Parent and Carer Coffee Mornings for all parents of children with SEND in May 2026.
- DSPL9 will be holding support groups for parents/carers of children experiencing EBSA
- DSPL9 along with Nessie are holding a 6-Week Group for Parents of Neurodivergent Children and Young People

Other services offering support or training

- [Add Vance](#) would like to remind about their support line
- Potential Kids share their April activities
- Hertfordshire Mental Health, Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Health and Care Partnership (MHLDN) share some useful information about EBSA
- Childrens Wellbeing Practioners are hosting workshops
- Family lives are running a 6 week programme on parenting when separated



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DSPL9 SEND Information Fair.

Monday 27th April 12.30-3.00pm
The Stanborough Centre , St Albans Rd, WD25 9JL

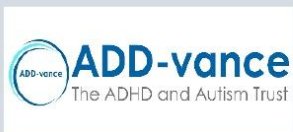


We are delighted that a wide range of fantastic local services will be in attendance to share their work and the support available.



In addition there will be 3 optional workshops to choose from as well as the event providing great networking opportunities.

We'd love to see you there!



Please use the link below to confirm your attendance and to book an optional workshop.

<https://buytickets.at/dspl9/2132432>

Refreshments available!



[Click here to book!](#)



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For all parents/carers of children with SEND

Tuesday 12th May 2026 10-11.30am

ASDA WATFORD COMMUNITY ROOMS
ST ALBANS RD, WATFORD WD24 7RT

Please join the DSPL9 Triage team to find out about the support available locally and to meet other parents and carers of children with SEND. We are delighted that Charlotte from [HPCI](#) will be also be in attendance to share information about how they support parents of children with SEND.

If you would like to attend or to find out more please email us at
enquiries@dsplarea9.org.uk



DSPL 9

Emotionally Based School Anxiety Coffee Morning



DSPL 9 are pleased to be able to offer a face to face session for parents and carers of children and young people who are experiencing EBSA (emotionally based school anxiety/avoidance).

The event will be run by DSPL 9 with a Family Support Worker and Nessie Therapist available to offer support and guidance.

Dates for 2025-26:

Monday 11th May 2026

Time: 10.00am-11.30am

**Venue: ASDA Community Room 3,
St Albans Rd, Watford WD24 7RT**

Please let us know you will be attending by booking using [this link](#)
or contact admin@dsplarea9.org.uk for further information.



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DSPL 9

Summer Term: EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) Transition Support



DSPL 9 are pleased to invite parents to attend EBSA transition support coffee mornings during the summer term.

The purpose of these meetings will be to:

- Consider how best to support your child with EBSA as they transition from year group or school.
- Meet with other parents in similar situations and network/build connections.

To access a session please use the link below:

Monday 15 th June	9.30-11am	Asda Community Room	BOOK HERE
Monday 29 th June	9.30-11am	Asda Community Room	

If you have any queries or questions about these sessions please contact
gemmahall@dsplarea9.org.uk



Neurodiversity at Home: Practical Strategies for Everyday Family Life

A 6-Week Group for Parents of Neurodivergent Children and Young People



Together We Will Explore Practical Strategies to Help Parents:

• Understand patterns behind behavior	• Reduce overwhelm
• Communicate more effectively	• Support anxiety and emotional regulation
• Build confidence and independence	• Try strategies at home using the Test - Learn - Adjust model

Group Details

- Group is aimed to support parents and guardians with Secondary School children
- Group runs from Tuesday 21 April 2026 to 2 Jun 2026
- 6 weekly sessions, with a one-week break for half term (week starting 25th May)
- Every Tuesdays, 9:30am to 11:00am @ The Green Room, Bournehall Primary School, WD23 3AX

Parents and Guardians are required to attend all 6 sessions. Sign up now at: <https://buytickets.at/dspl9/2124484>



Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals across Hertfordshire

 **01727 833 963**

 **supporthub@add-vance.org**

Whether you need practical advice, emotional support or simply a listening ear, we're here for you.

Helpline hours:

Term Time: Mon, Wed & Fri: 9am - 1pm

Tues & Thurs: 9am - 3pm

Wed evenings (by appointment): 7pm - 9pm

School Holidays: Mon - Fri: 9am - 1pm

All our helpline team are parents/carers of neurodivergent children.

No
diagnosis
required



APRIL 2026 ACTIVITIES



Date		Sessions	Time	Venue
31march - 12 April	Easter Holidays	Please see our Easter Flyer		Spaces still available for some sessions
13th,27th	Mon	Dungeons & Dragons 18-25 (contact for details)	12.30 3.00	The Zone@The Galleria
16th,23rd 30th	Thu	Bushcraft/Stem Home Ed Age 4+	10.30 12.00	Potential to Grow Garden
16th	Thur	Teen Group 12 Plus	5.00 6.30	The Hub@The Galleria
17th	Fri	Youth Group 16 Plus	6.30 8.00	The Hub@The Galleria
17th,24th	Fri	Parent /Carer Wellbeing	12.30 2.00	The Zone@The Galleria
18th	Sat	Family Football	4.00 5.00	Birchwood Leisure Centre Astro Turf
20th	Mon	Dungeons & Dragons 12 + (contact for details)	12.30 3.00	The Zone@The Galleria
21st	Tue	Roller skating	6.00 7.30	Roller City Campus West
23rd	Thur	Trampolining Age 5+	5.30 6.30	Gosling Sports Centre
24th	Fri	Skateboarding Age 9+	5.30 6.30	Pioneer Club St Albans
25th	Sat	Potential Tracks Train Club 10+	12.00 2.00	The Hub@The Galleria
25th	Sat	Basketball/Archery	4.00 5.00	Birchwood Leisure Centre

To book visit : potentialkids.org.uk/events

For futher information email: info@potentialkids.org

SCAN FOR ALL OF OUR
IMPORTANT LINKS



INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (EBSNA) FOR FAMILIES

EBSNA can affect children and young people of any school age. It can happen as a result of a wide range of different factors – home, wider family, community, school, friendships – often a combination of some or all of these.

WHY COULD MY CHILD BE ANXIOUS?

Anxieties can stem from a number of things such as:

- An unmet special educational need such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia
- Friendship issues, not 'fitting in', or bullying
- Finding schoolwork confusing and overwhelming
- Separation anxiety
- Trauma
- Bereavement
- Low self-esteem
- The environment itself - especially for those who are autistic and/or neurodivergent



A child might become anxious about school at any stage. It can occur when children start school or transition into secondary school, or it might be related to puberty or hormonal changes. Read more on the [Local Offer website](#).

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS

- ? Can you spot patterns in your child's absence from school, e.g. certain days/activities?
- ? Does your child regularly say they don't want to go to school, or reluctant/delaying going to school?
- ? Does your child struggle with changes to environment, routine or stimulus?
- ? Are there physical symptoms on school days e.g. tummy aches, feeling sick, headaches?

(NB please always check with a GP to rule out any medical cause or illness).



WHAT TO DO

- 👍 Ask for a meeting with your child's school involving someone who knows your child e.g. class teacher, pastoral lead, SENCo. Be prepared by taking along any notes about the things your child finds difficult.
- 👍 Work together with school to build a child centred plan that understands the underlying problems which are making your child feel anxious about going to school. This could include adjustments to help your child access their education. There are tools which can help such as [Hertfordshire's EBSNA Framework](#).
- 👍 Include your child's voice in any plan as they are more likely to be able to stick to it. Check in after a while and review it with your school to see what is working well and what is not.
- 👍 Do advocate for your child's needs but also understand the limitations as to what your school might be able to do.
- 👍 If the agreed strategies are not working, speak again with your school to identify other services and professionals that might be able to support your child. The [Herts Hub](#) has a wealth of mental health signposting and ideas for early help.



REMEMBER...

- 👁️ With the right plan in place, being in school supports your child's academic progress, social development and mental wellbeing.
- 👁️ Small steps are often big wins.
- 👁️also ensure that you find ways to support your own wellbeing in the process.

STRATEGIES TO TRY AT HOME

- ✓ Develop a plan for the evenings, which can include calming activities before bedtime e.g. gentle music, bath, story or reading.
- ✓ Also plan for the morning, and where possible get things ready for the next day the night before (school bag, lunch box etc).
- ✓ Make a diary which includes your child's worries and also identifies positives and what works well.
- ✓ Respond with empathy whilst encouraging small, manageable steps.
- ✓ Visual timetables at home and school might also help.

Children's Wellbeing Practitioner Workshops April – June 2026

Workshops are open to all young people & parents/carers of children and young people who attend a school or are registered with a GP in Hertfordshire. A referral is not needed to access a workshop.



All workshops are currently being delivered online via Microsoft Teams. For more information about what each workshop covers and to book a place onto a workshop, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/hct-childrens-wellbeing-practitioners-33494371787>

Workshop	Date & Time
<p style="text-align: center;">Supporting your Child's Self-Esteem and Resilience</p> <p>A workshop focused on parents/carers supporting their child to improve their self-esteem and resilience.</p>	<p>Tuesday 28th April 10am-12pm Tuesday 30th June 6-8pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supporting with Sleep Difficulties</p> <p>This workshop focuses on supporting children and adolescents with managing their sleep difficulties and things parents/carers can do to help.</p>	<p>Tuesday 7th April 6-8pm Monday 8th June 6-8pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Developing your Child's Emotional Literacy</p> <p>A workshop focused on parents supporting their child with developing emotional literacy.</p>	<p>Monday 13th April 10am-12pm Tuesday 5th May 6-8pm Monday 15th June 10am-12pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">General Emotional Wellbeing and Regulation Tips for Parents/Carers</p> <p>A workshop focused on parents supporting their child's general emotional wellbeing and ability to emotionally regulate.</p>	<p>Tuesday 21st April 6-8pm Wednesday 20th May 10am-12pm Tuesday 23rd June 6-8pm</p>

To access the recorded **Emotionally Based School Avoidance Webinar** please visit:
<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/service-details/service/childrens-wellbeing-practitioners-21/>



Parenting When Separated for Parents of SEN Children

A 6-session programme, specifically tailored to help separated parents navigate the complexities of co-parenting and provide the best possible support for their SEND child. This is a valuable opportunity to enhance co-parenting skills, support children's development and build a strong foundation for the future.

The programme covers themes including:

- Understanding SEN and its impact on children and family dynamics
- Effective Communication Skills
- Managing Emotions & Stress
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Building a Supportive Network
- Creating a Unified Parenting Approach



These 2 courses will be delivered via MS Teams, over 6 sessions on the following dates/times:

Date: Wednesday 22, 29 April & 6, 13, 20 May & 3 June 2026

Time: 9.30am to 11.30am

Date: Thursday 23, 30 April & 7, 14, 21 May & 4 June 2026

Time: 7.00pm to 9.00pm

For more information or to make a referral, scan the QR code, email services@familylives.org.uk or call 0204 522 8700 or 0204 522 8699

We build better family lives together

www.familylives.org.uk

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Funded by
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