

A parent's perspective

Introduction

- * Reflections as parent
- * Real life example of 'school refusal' by my son in Term 3 2016
- * My son and school aware of Forum

About My son

- * Strengths – caring, intelligent, strong, daring, calm in an emergency, loves animals, close extended family
- * Difficulties – ADHD, ODD, anxiety, single parent home, computer addict, 'no friends'
- * Schooling – private boys school since Year 5, lower classes
- * When sick takes longer to return to school than 'normal'

What happened in Term 3 2016

- * 1st two weeks – gastroenteritis whole family
- * 2nd two weeks – still unwell, awake at night. GP tests clear. Chronic reflux and constipation.
- * Next 6 weeks – still feeling unwell, awake at night. All clear from the clinicians. Return to school plans.

What didn't work

- * Clinicians giving contradictory advice
- * Clinicians telling son (and school) "there is nothing wrong with you"
- * People telling Mum "just tell him to go to school"
 - Mum suggesting son change schools

What worked

- * Young ED registrar listening to son
- * Mum gains insights (with clinical psychologist):
 - * *What is psychosomatic?*
 - * *What is school refusal?*
 - * *What is worrying my son?*
- * Encouragement from Principal/ Deputy Principal

What worked (2)

- * 'Return to school plan':
- * Collaboration between child psychiatrist, school counsellor, school nurse, my son, Mum
- * Lowering the bar, focus on school attendance, education needs supersede health needs
- * Addressing issues worrying my son
- * (PS: unfortunate school detention on speech day)

Where are we now?

- School setting clear expectations for school attendance in Year 10
- * Is attending school – sat 4th term exams
- * Is focussed on Year 10 (and Gaming!)
- * Attends when sick but Mum's notes to excuse him from sport
- * Not 'normal parenting'
- * Focus on connection and persistence