

Supporting Your Child When They Feel Anxious About School



We understand that when a child feels anxious about school, it can be worrying and exhausting for families.

You are not alone, and there are positive, gentle ways to help your child feel supported and confident enough to attend.

● Listen Calmly and With Reassurance

The first step is to help your child feel heard.

- Let them know it's okay to feel anxious – many children feel this way at times.
- Encourage them to talk about what feels difficult.
- Ask questions to get them talking, *“Can you tell me what's been making school feel hard lately?”*
- Try not to dismiss worries, even if they seem small.

What helps:

Reflect what you hear so they feel understood, for example:

“It sounds like you're feeling worried about speaking in class – that's understandable.”

● Take Small, Steady Steps

Keeping children at home can sometimes make worries feel bigger over time. Where possible, aim for small steps rather than full days off, such as:

- Going in later for a lesson they feel more comfortable with.
- Meeting a trusted staff member in school at the start of the day.
- Speak to school about working with a trusted adult to provide additional support.

What helps:

Celebrate each small success and remind your child you're working through this together.

● Work With the School Early

Please let us know if your child is feeling anxious. We can help by:

- Identifying a trusted adult your child can check in with.
- Offering pastoral or counselling support.
- Providing a safe, calm space if your child needs time to settle.

What helps:

When home and school work together, children feel safer and more supported.

● Keep Routines Consistent

Even when anxiety is present, routines help children feel secure.

- Stick to regular bedtimes, wake up times and morning routines.
- Keep the day structured, even if attendance is reduced at first.

What helps:

A simple morning checklist or visual schedule can reduce stress.

● Help Your Child Learn Coping Skills

Simple calming techniques can help children manage anxious feelings.

- Slow, deep breathing.
- Grounding exercises (naming things they can see, feel or hear).
- Drawing or writing about worries in a journal.

What helps:

Practice these when your child is calm so they are easier to use when worries rise.

● Try to Understand the Cause

Anxiety often has a reason – such as worries about friendships, bullying, learning, change or separation. Understanding the cause allows the right support to be put in place.



● Seek Extra Support When Needed

If anxiety is persistent or leading to regular absence, further support may help. This might include:

- Your GP
- School counselling or wellbeing support
- A child mental health professional e.g. CAMHS

Early support can make a big difference.



A Message to Share With Your Child

“You’re not alone. We’re here to help, and we’ll take this one step at a time – together.”