



# Anxiety and School refusal

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Remember, anxiety is a natural feeling. It is completely normal for children and young people to feel worried about school from time to time.

However, if this anxiety becomes excessive or continues over a long period of time, it becomes an issue.

Any absence means that pupils miss their learning and friendship, so it is important to support your child to overcome these difficulties as quickly as possible by:

- recognising the signs and triggers
- helping your child directly
- working with the school and, if appropriate, external professionals



## **10 Top Tips:**

1. Be open and keep communicating and working with the school. Follow up conversations with emails.
2. When speaking to your child, plan ahead, and organise a relaxed space so a supportive conversation can take place.
3. Introduce something fun before, during or after the conversation so it is not too intense. Be at the same height and use age-appropriate language. Older children may like a text or consider introducing a worry journal.
4. Actively listen and validate their feelings. All feelings are allowed.
5. If your child does not want to talk straight away, reassure them that you are there when they are ready.
6. Use a transitional object to make them feel more secure when they are at school and you are not there.
7. Use a weekly planner so they know what to expect each day. Consistently go through this the night before. This is especially important when others are doing the school run.
8. At the school gate, give them a quick kiss/hug and reassure them but do not hang around. Be a role-model.
9. Be confident, even if you do not feel this inside. Children can pick up on how we are feeling, and this can make them feel worse or better.
- 10 Read the relevant school policies.  
These should be on the school website. If not, ask for a copy.

## **Further Signposting:**

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>

<https://schoolrefusal.co.uk/>

<https://notfineinschool.co.uk/home>

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