

6

Tips to Help Your Child Manage Back to School Anxiety



**Toolkit for parents
and carers from
child mental
health specialists**



What is back to school anxiety?

Many children **feel nervous** before a new school year.

For some children, these worries can be **overwhelming**.


These feelings can be particularly intense during **big transitions** like moving from primary to secondary school or returning after a difficult term.



How to spot back to school anxiety

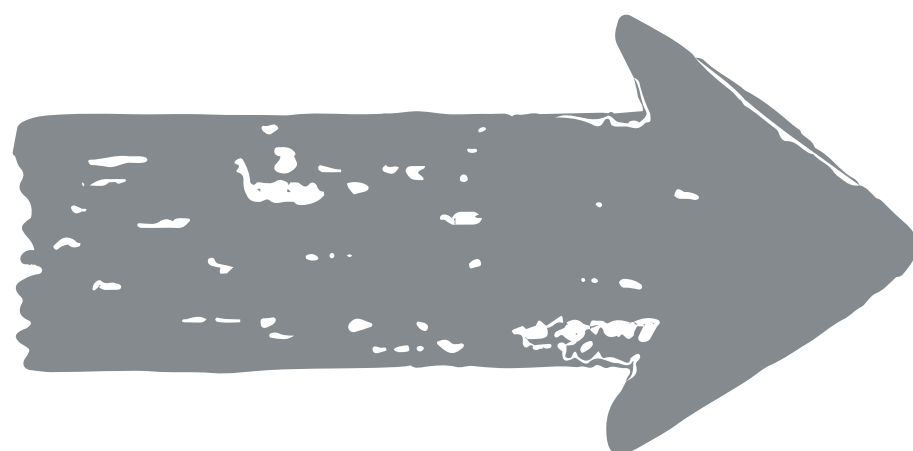
Young people don't always say "I feel anxious."

Here are some common signs to look out for:

- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Increased irritability
 - Repeated requests or excuses to stay home
 - Bedwetting or tantrums
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What can you do to help your child with back to school anxiety?

Here are six practical tips
from Cygnet's Child and
Adolescent Mental Health
Services (CAMHS) teams to
**help your child prepare for a
smoother return to school.**



1. Listen with **empathy**

- ☒ Give your child **space to share**
- ☒ **Try open questions:**
“What feels most difficult right now?”
- ☒ **Avoid:** “You’ll be fine”
- ☒ Say: **“That sounds tough,**
I can see why you’d
feel nervous.”

2. Reintroduce structure

Children thrive on predictability.

Before school starts, try to:

- ☒ Set a **consistent bedtime** and **wake-up** time
- ☒ Have **regular mealtimes**
- ☒ **Practice getting ready** in the mornings
- ☒ **Limit screen time**, especially before bed, to help reset sleep patterns

3. Problem solve **together**

Invite your child to problem-solve with you:

- ☒ “**What would help** make the mornings easier?”
- ☒ “Would you like to **meet a friend** before school?”
- ☒ **Practice social situations together** or walk through what the first school day might look like

4. Be **calm and confident**

Children often pick up on your feelings and follow your lead, so:



Speak positively about school



Try to stay calm during the morning rush

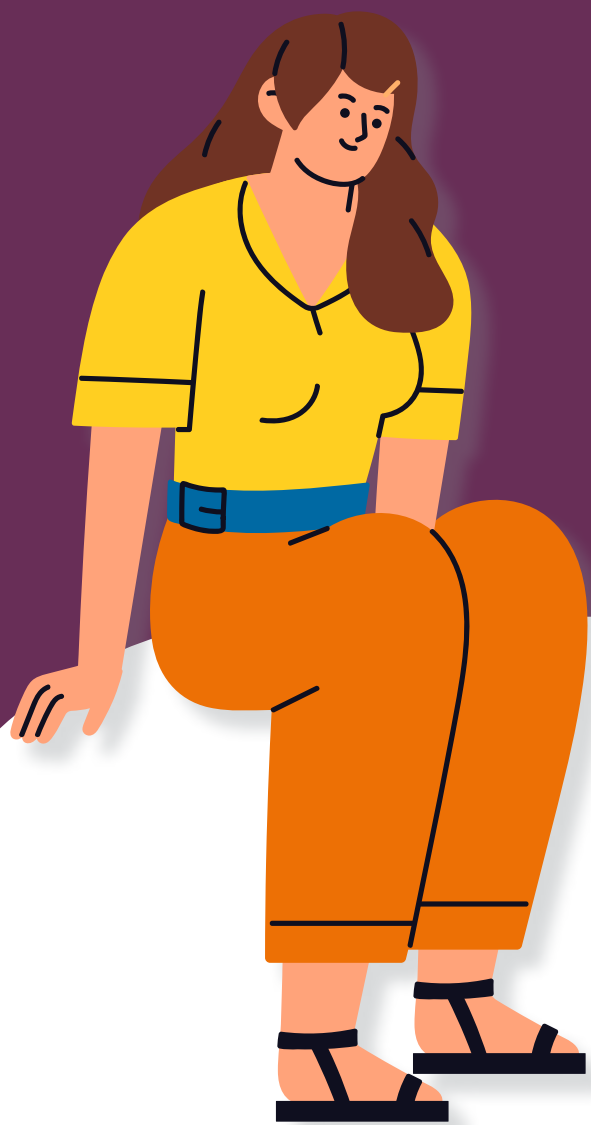
5. *Work with the school*

- ☒ **Let teachers know** what's going on - they can offer safe spaces, check-ins or a friendly buddy
- ☒ **Keep chatting** - the more you share, the more they can help
- ☒ Schools can often make **small adjustments** that have a big difference

6. *Seek professional support when needed*

If your child's worries aren't easing after a few weeks and it's impacting daily life, **talk to a GP, school counsellor, or mental health professional.**

You don't have to figure it out alone - there's support for you and your child.



**With patience,
empathy and the
right support, your
child can find their
confidence again**



**For more advice
and support visit
[the Cygnet website](#)**