

6

Tips to Help You Handle Back to School Anxiety



**Toolkit for
young people**



What is **back to school anxiety?**

New year, new routines, **new faces...** it can be a lot to take in.

Back to school anxiety is when **those changes feel overwhelming.**

It's your brain's way of saying: **"This feels big."**



How to spot back to school anxiety

You may notice changes **in your body and your mind:**

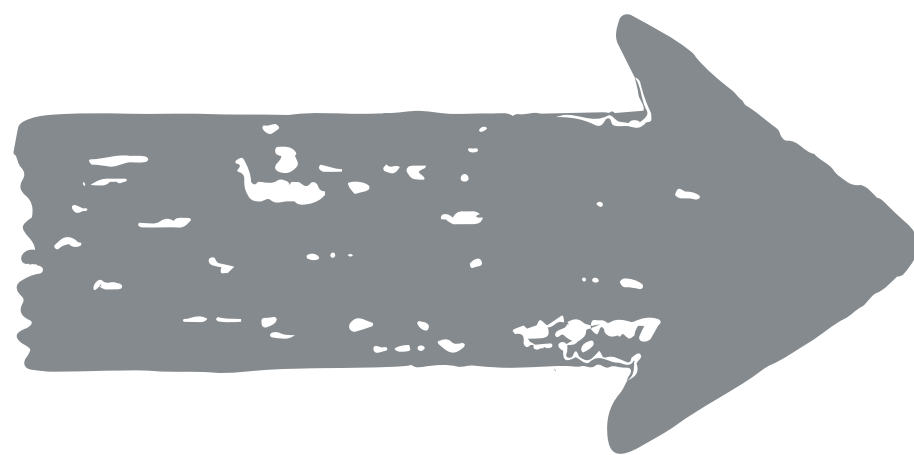
- **Struggling to sleep**
- Keep **feeling sick** or having **headaches**
- **Feeling panicky or tearful** for no clear reason
- **Not feeling hungry** or **eating more** than usual
- Wanting to **avoid school** altogether



You are **not alone** in
feeling this way

Back to school worries
can feel heavy.

Try these six simple tips
to help calm your
nerves and boost
your confidence.



1. **Talk** about it

- ☒ **Share how you're feeling**
with a parent, carer,
friend or teacher
- ☒ Talking helps **lighten
the load**
- ☒ Try: **"I'm nervous about
going back** - can I talk to
you about it?"

2. Start preparing **early**

- ☒ **Go to bed early** and wake up a bit earlier each day before school starts
- ☒ **Pack your bag** and get your uniform ready
- ☒ If you can, **do a practice walk to school** or check your timetable

3. Take it **step by step**



Thinking about a **whole term or year** at once can feel overwhelming



Break it down: try to focus on the first day, or even the first class



You **don't have to have everything figured out** right away

4. Use coping tools



Breathing:

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, breathe out for 6, repeat a few times



Grounding:

Look around and name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 you can touch
- 3 you can hear
- 2 you can smell
- 1 you can taste



Positive self talk:

Think “I’ve done this before” or “I can ask for help if I need it”

5. Focus on what you can control

You might not be able to control what others say or how the school day goes but you can:

- ☒ **Pack your bag** the night before
- ☒ **Sort out your lunch**
- ☒ Take **deep breaths** and **speak kindly** to yourself





6. Be kind to yourself




Feeling nervous is
completely normal



Celebrate the small wins,
like making it through
your first day



Each step you take
builds confidence

A cartoon illustration of a young girl with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a white t-shirt, a grey skirt, orange leggings, and black shoes. She is carrying an orange backpack and is looking towards the center text.

**If your worries
stick around,
talk to someone
you trust**

A cartoon illustration of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, grey trousers, and black shoes. He is carrying a purple backpack and is looking towards the center text.

**You don't have
to do it alone**

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

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