



Press Release

Immediate Release

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### **Cygnet launches expert guide to help parents and young people manage Back-to-School anxiety**

Cygnet Health Care has produced a practical new resource designed to help recognise the signs of back-to-school anxiety and provide strategies for both young people and parents.

Returning to school after the summer break can be an exciting milestone, but for many children and young people, it can also bring feelings of worry, stress and uncertainty.

To support families during this transition, Cygnet, a leading independent provider of health and social care services, has produced an informative guide written by Dr Laurie Van Niekerk, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Cygnet.

The resource highlights the different reasons children may feel anxious, from fear of the unknown and academic pressure, to social worries, separation from family, changes in routine, or previous negative experiences at school.

Dr Van Niekerk explains that anxiety is a normal human response, but if left unaddressed it can impact sleep, appetite, mood, and even school attendance.

He said: "It is very common for children and young people to feel anxious about going back to school, particularly after long breaks or major transitions. Starting a new school, moving up a year, or returning after a difficult term can all trigger big feelings. For some children, these worries are short-lived, but for others, they can build up and feel overwhelming.

"By understanding the causes and spotting the signs early, families can provide reassurance and practical support to help children feel more confident and ready for the year ahead."

The guide includes:

- Signs to look out for - including physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches, emotional changes like irritability or withdrawal, and school avoidance behaviours.
- Tips for young people - such as breathing techniques, grounding exercises, positive self-talk, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and preparing routines in advance.
- Advice for parents and carers on how to listen with empathy, re-establish structure, model calm confidence, and work with schools to provide additional support.

Dr Van Niekerk added: "Every child is different, and what works for one may not work for another. The important thing for parents to remember is that you don't need to have all the answers straight away, sometimes just listening and validating your child's worries is enough to make them feel less alone. With patience, empathy, and the right tools, most young people can overcome back-to-school anxiety and begin to thrive again in the classroom. And if anxiety is getting in the way of daily life, reaching out for extra help from schools or health professionals can make a huge difference."

Cygnets Hospital Bury and Cygnets Hospital Sheffield are Cygnets's two specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) services which support young people with a range of mental health challenges. The new guide is part of Cygnets's wider commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and making expert advice more accessible to families and communities.

The full guide is available to read and download on the Cygnets website:

<https://www.cygnetsgroup.com/service-users-carers/useful-information-helpful-resources/mental-health-advice-for-children-and-young-people/>