

Information booklet for young people



Are you feeling anxious about school?

Worrying or anxiety is a normal feeling that we all experience from time to time. It can even keep us safe from harm or help us perform in difficult situations. However, sometimes anxiety or excessive worrying can become a problem especially when it stops us doing what we want or need to do.

Many children and young people worry about school. This is normal. Anxieties are part of life and learning to deal with them is part of growing up. However sometimes our feelings can make us not want to attend school. If you have high levels of anxiety and worry about attending school you may need some additional support to help you manage these feelings.

When you think about school are you?

Bad tempered

Feeling down

Worried

Struggling to sleep

Feeling ill or
pretending to feel
ill

Worrying about
friendship

Scared

Feeling unsure of
yourself



You are not on your own. We all feel like this from time to time because of things that happen in our life at home, at school or elsewhere.

There may be some things at school that can make you feel this way, such as:



Bullying

**Feeling too
different to other
people**

Changing schools

**Pressure to
achieve your
target grades**



**Not understanding
or coping with
school work**

**Worried about
your appearance**

**Worried about
getting changed
for PE games**

**Anxious about
exams and tests**

**Not being good at
sports**

**Not getting on
with some
teachers**

**Problems with
friendships**

**Don't like the
noise in school**

There may also be some things outside of school that can make you feel this way, such as:



**Death of
somebody
important to you**

**Parents arguing or
splitting up**

A parent who is ill

**Members of your
family feeling worried,
depressed or sad**

**Birth of a new
brother or sister**

**Death or loss of a
pet**

**New people
moving into your
home**

**Difficulties in
getting to school**

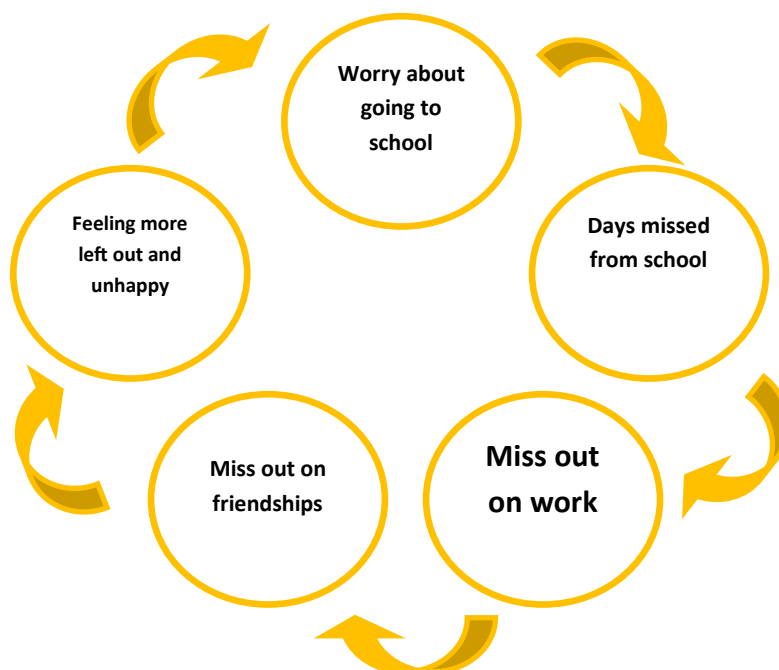
**Parents not
understanding
your feelings**



What happens when you don't attend school?

It is very important to try to overcome these difficulties as soon as possible. Sometimes you might feel that staying at home is the best thing to do as it makes you feel better.

However, the more time you spend out of school the more you miss out on lessons and the learning gets harder. You also miss out on seeing friends which means keeping friendships becomes more difficult. This increases feelings of worry about going to school and makes it harder to return. This can be seen in the diagram.




It is important to let an adult know if you are worried about anything in school or at home and get the help to make it better rather than let things get worse and get stuck.

What do I do if I feel like this?

Most importantly, talk to somebody. This could be your parents, an adult at school, other family members or a friend.

Think about the things that are worrying you, write a list or draw them then order them from most worried about to least worried about.

Most Worried	
Least Worried About	

What can your school do to help you?

Find an adult at school you trust and talk to them, they should listen and believe you. They can work with you and your parents to help find out what things are worrying you and what you and they can do to help you. Things they could do include:

Key person to talk to

Alter your timetable

**Find a safe space for
you to go to**

**Help with school
work or friendships**

These actions could be written up into a support plan so that you, your parents and school know what actions have been agreed to help support you.

What can I do to get back to school?

If your worries are so great that you are not attending school it is important that you work with your school and your parents to help you get back to attending school as soon as possible. Things you can do to help include:

- ⇒ **Take part in the planning of how you will go back to school. Work with your parents and teachers to think of things that will help you.**
- ⇒ **Think about a time that you did cope with a worry. What did you do then?**
 - ⇒ **Keep in contact with your friends and what is happening at school.**
- ⇒ **Catch up on some of the work that you may have missed before you go back.**
- ⇒ **Take little steps to get back into the routine – don't expect that everything will get back to normal or will be okay immediately.**
 - ⇒ **Take that chance! Once you are at school, it may not seem as bad.**
- ⇒ **Acknowledge the steps you have taken and celebrate the small successes!**

When you are feeling worried...

Your whole body reacts when you are anxious.

Scared

Shortness of breath

Skin goes pale

**Feeling tired,
little energy**

**Thoughts racing,
difficulty sleeping**

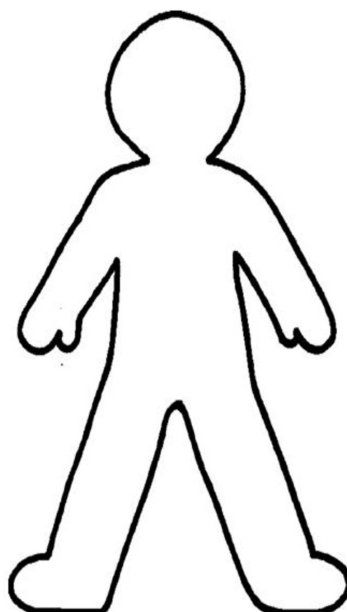
**Your heart
beats faster**

**Dry throat
or mouth**

**Muscle aches
and head-aches**

Your muscles tense

**Poor digestion,
stomach aches,
bowel problems**



Try to notice when you start to feel any of the signs above and stop to take a moment. There are many different strategies to help you feel relaxed and calm when you are feeling stressed or anxious and you will need to find the ones that work for you. To get you started, try some of these...

Try relaxing your body

1. Sit or lie somewhere quiet and comfortable
2. Stretch out your arms and make a fist, then relax
3. Push your legs out, wiggle your toes, and then relax
4. Shut your eyes tight and pull a scrunched-up face, and then relax



Try calm breathing

1. Take a slow breath in through your nose for about 4 seconds
2. Hold it for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Slowly let it out through your mouth for about 4 seconds
4. Wait 5– 7 seconds before taking another breath



Try physical exercise



This increases your heart rate and releases endorphins that make you feel good. Running, going to the gym, cycling, skateboarding, surfing, horse-riding, swimming or team sports such as cricket or netball are all great exercise. Choose one you love and build your exercise routine around that.

Think balanced thoughts



If you find yourself thinking a negative thought or worry a lot of the time e.g. 'I will fail all my exams because I am stupid'. Try thinking of a more balanced or positive thought instead e.g. 'If I work hard, I'll do ok in my exam'. Every time you notice your self thinking the negative thought – stop and tell yourself the positive thought.



Try visualisation

1. Close your eyes
2. Take slow deep breaths in and out
3. Think of your favourite place, maybe somewhere that you go on holiday
4. Focus on the place and picture yourself there

Where to get further help

The Bury Directory provides a guide to emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children, young people and adults in Bury. <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/support-for-children-young-people>

Kooth Online mental wellbeing support which is free, safe and anonymous. Includes access to online tips and advice from other young people and the Kooth Team, discussion boards, a chat service and online journal. <https://www.kooth.com/>

Shout 24 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. A place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text 85258.

<https://www.giveusashout.org/>

The Mix provides information, support and listening for people under 25. Phone 0808 808 4994 (24 hours) www.themix.org.uk

Think Ninja - 'Thinkninja' app providing self-help knowledge and skills for young people from 10-18 years old who may be experiencing increased anxiety and stress. www.healios.org.uk/services/thinkninja1

Childline - Features lots of breathing exercises, activities, games and videos to help you let go of stress www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone

Emerging Minds - Supporting young people with worries about COVID-19 emergingminds.org.uk

Early Break Mindfulness and holistic therapy and Streetwise Counselling (for ages 14-16). Phone [0161 723 3880](tel:01617233880) or email info@earlybreak.co.uk

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership – Resource Hub

Free access to a useful range of documents and films around mental health, includes a COVID-19 specific section. <https://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/>