

Anxiety / School refusal

- Can be linked to a learning difficulty, a social/emotional difficulty, a sensory difficulty or a speech and language difficulty.
- Can appear to be 'behavioural' in origin, but is fundamentally to do with anxiety.
- Severe anxiety can result in school refusal.
- Anxiety can result in a lack of engagement with classwork.
- Anxiety can reflect a lack of experience of school/preschool.
- It can be shown in crying and refusal to engage.
- It can be linked to certain days/activities/people.
- Severe anxiety can limit learning and development.
- It can be linked with weak self-esteem; 'I can't do it'.
- It can spiral and affect the whole family.
- Anxiety can be particularly focused on homework.
- Severe anxiety can be linked to selective mutism (anxiety causing a refusal/unwillingness to talk in school).



Some ideas to try

- Where possible, reduce environmental distractions
- Meet and greet in the morning in an agreed place, to give structure to the day, predictability and reassurance.
- Try setting up a friendship/support group of peers.
- Having an older mentor in school may give encouragement.
- Celebrate successes and give many opportunities to succeed.
- Accessing a social skills group to develop playground skills and other social skills may be useful.
- A visual timetable with explicit expectations on may be helpful and reassuring.
- Check the student's understanding of information and requests.
- Bolster self-esteem by building in opportunities for success.

