



Supporting Children to Manage Worries and Anxiety at Home

Many children struggle to manage their worries and need support and strategies to help them manage this.

It's important to remember that worries often manifest as physical or behavioural signs. Children struggling with worries may display a variety of behaviours including:

- **Physical Symptoms:** Trouble sleeping, complaining of feeling unwell, especially an upset tummy, or using the toilet more often.
- **Emotional & Cognitive Signs:** Angry and irritable behaviour, emotional outbursts, finding it hard to concentrate, and negative thoughts and self-talk.
- **Behavioural Changes:** Needing to control situations and becoming reliant on routine, or changes in eating habits.

The Pastoral Team has compiled a list of ideas to help children manage worries:

Emotional Validation and Communication

- **Respect Feelings:** Allow your child to talk about their worries in a place they feel safe. Don't tell them to "forget about it" or "grow up". It's crucial that children express their feelings, so they do not grow and fester.
- **Scheduled Worry Time:** Some children benefit from having a scheduled "worry time" each day when they can talk to a trusted adult. This enables children to "stick a pin" in their worries, meaning they do not dominate their thinking all day.

Practical Tools for "Downloading" Worries

- **Worry Boxes:** Your child could use a **worry monster** or **worry box**. Worries are written on a piece of paper and "fed" to the monster or placed in the box. Once there, they don't need to be worried about anymore.
- **Worry Journal:** If it is helpful, your child could have a special book in which they can draw or write about their worries.
- **Fidget Tools:** Make a **worry ball** using a balloon filled with flour, lentils, or rice. Support your child to use a **"Worry Tree"** to process their worry.



Sleep, Health, and Routine

- **Sleep Priority:** Ensure they have a regular bedtime and are getting enough sleep. Children find it more difficult to regulate and manage emotions when they are tired. Try to reduce the use of phones and gaming devices before bed.
- **Exercise and Routine:** Encourage your child to take some form of exercise each day to promote their well-being. Try to have a daily routine to follow and differentiate between weekdays and weekends.
- **Media and Food:** Keep children's exposure to the news as little as possible so as not to fuel worries. For children for whom food is an issue, encourage them to help plan shopping lists and weekly meals, cook and prepare food, help set the table, or make menus and place settings for the family.

Resources and Support

- **Mindfulness:** Use mindfulness apps and videos to help regulate breathing and calm unhelpful thoughts, **Cosmic Kids** has excellent guided meditations for children on YouTube [Peace Out Guided Relaxations for Kids- YouTube](#)
- **Recommended Books:** Two books we use regularly in school are "*What to Do When You Worry Too Much*" by Dawn Huebner and "*The Huge Bag of Worries*" by Virginia Ironside.
- **Online Guidance:** For further practical resources and ideas (including printable worry tree and calm-down strategies), please visit the [Wellbeing Support for Parents](#) section of our website.