



## Supporting Children During Times of Change

At Hyde Park Schools, we want to support our families in navigating the inevitable changes in home and family life. This may include a house move, the birth of a new baby, a breakdown in the family home, redundancy or unemployment, and bereavement, among other things.

Depending on the circumstances, some children will approach this with anticipation and excitement, others with fear and worry. It's important that we encourage them to talk about how they are feeling and reassure them that this is completely normal.

## Understanding Anxiety in Times of Change

Change, even positive change, can trigger anxiety. Children may display a variety of behaviours as a result. For a detailed list of emotional and physical signs to watch out for, please refer to our **Managing Worries & Anxiety** page on the school website.

Common indicators that a child is struggling may include:

- **Emotional Shifts:** Negative self-talk, aggression, or a tendency to freeze/shut down.
- **Physical Signs:** Increased fidgeting or agitation, attention-seeking behaviours (especially concerning feeling unwell), or using the toilet more often.
- **Decreased Independence:** Saying they can't do things they previously managed independently (like dressing or feeding themselves).
- **Eating Changes:** Becoming more selective about food or refusing to adhere to family mealtimes.

## Strategies to Support Your Child

We are committed to helping all of our children and their families navigate any new circumstances. Here are several ideas you can use at home:

- **Positive Reframing:** Encourage daily reflection by creating a **Positives Jar** where one positive event is written down each day and saved for reflection during tricky times.



- **Emotional "Download":** Encourage children to write or draw their feelings in a daily diary or journal. They can also use tools like a **worry box or worry monster** to physically externalise and contain their fears.
- **Consistent Connection:** Set aside a regular time each day to talk to your child about how they are feeling, answer any questions they may have, and alleviate any fears.
- **Routine and Rest:** Make sure your child is getting enough sleep and where possible follow a routine, as predictability provides comfort during uncertainty.
- **Reward Independence:** Introduce reward charts to encourage independence and celebrate when they successfully complete tasks.
- **Creative Focus:** Make a playlist of songs that help your child feel happy and positive to listen to when they are feeling wobbly. Use guided relaxations to help children wind down before bedtime, as this is often when worries start to surface.

### Looking After Yourself

It is so important that in addition to caring for your children during times of change, you also care for yourselves. Remember, you can't help others if you are struggling.

- **Prioritise Sleep:** Make sure you are getting enough sleep, as this will give you more energy and patience to care for your children.
- **Take Time Out:** Try to take some time each day for yourself, even if it's just a few minutes for a quiet cup of tea or exercise.
- **Reach Out:** Phone a friend or family member if you're having a tricky day. Take advantage of mental health and mindfulness sites and apps, many of which offer free resources.
- **Manage Media:** If social media and the news are affecting your mental health, try switching off your phone or deleting or pausing apps.

Our **Pastoral Team** is committed to helping all of our families navigate new circumstances. Our **Family Support Advisor, Mrs Warne**, is able to help some families who may need referrals to food banks and other forms of support. Please contact us via the school office.