



St. Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Autumn SEND Newsletter 2025

Welcome to our new Autumn term SEND newsletter. As St Brendan's Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENCO), I am here to offer support and advice regarding additional needs or SEND support for your child. As a school, we value the engagement of our parents, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. My contact email is CThomas@olicatschools.org



Welcome to a new school year! I hope you've had a restful summer and would like to extend a very warm welcome back to all families, as well as to those joining us for the first time this year. Starting a new school year can bring excitement as well as worries, especially for children with additional needs. This newsletter aims to share some helpful tips, guidance, and reassurance to support you and your child as we begin our journey together this term.

Supporting Transition Back to School

Transitions can feel overwhelming, particularly after a long break. Here are some supportive strategies:

- **Routine Building:** Re-establish bedtime and morning routines as early as possible. Predictable structures help children feel safe. Become familiar with the school day and weekly timetable such as PE days and support with talking about school.
- **Visual Schedules:** If your child benefits from visual cues, create a clear plan for each day so they know what to expect.
- **Small Steps:** Break down the return to school into manageable stages (packing bags, walking past school, visiting the playground).
- **Familiar Reminders:** Bring in a small comfort item or use transition objects agreed with school to ease separation.
- **Be prepared:** Allow your child to be involved in preparing for school such as choosing what they may like for lunch or encourage independence by laying out their uniform the night before.
- Remember, transition is a process, not just one day or week. Keep reviewing how your child feels, and don't hesitate to ask the school for more help if new worries arise.

Helping with School-related Anxiety

It's normal for children to feel nervous at the start of a new term. Signs of anxiety might include change of behaviour, sleep difficulties, tummy aches, or reluctance to come to school. Try these gentle approaches:

- **Acknowledge Feelings:** Reassure your child that it's okay to feel worried and that you understand. Try to stay calm and consistent.
- **Positive Framing:** Talk about the things they might enjoy (friends, favourite lessons, clubs).
- **Practice Calm Breathing or Sensory Breaks:** Simple relaxation tools can really help ground your child before school. Plan in time for family time such as playing a game or reading a story together at bedtime.
- **Maintain Communication:** Share concerns with the class teacher or SENCO so we can put extra support in place. Talk with your child and praise them for their achievements.
- **Plan in advance:** put in place set routines for before and after school, a visual calendar or list may help. Involve your child in preparing for the school day such as getting out their uniform the night before or packing up their school bag.





Recognising and Responding to Anxiety:

Signs of anxiety can include changes to sleep or appetite, headaches, tummy aches, perfectionism, meltdowns, refusal or withdrawal.

Validate your child's feelings—avoid minimising worries. Listen, reflect back what you hear ("It sounds like you're worried about lunchtime"), and reassure them they are not alone.

Practical Coping Tools:

Acknowledge feelings and plan for goodbyes. Talk positively about change, validate all feelings, and create opportunities for farewells, for example with a simple memory book or a plan to keep in touch with friends.

Practice calming exercises together, such as the 3-3-3 rule: notice three things you see, three things you hear, and three things you can touch. This sensory focus helps reduce anxious thoughts.

Schedule "worry time" each day—for example, share worries after dinner, then move on. This can help contain anxiety naturally.

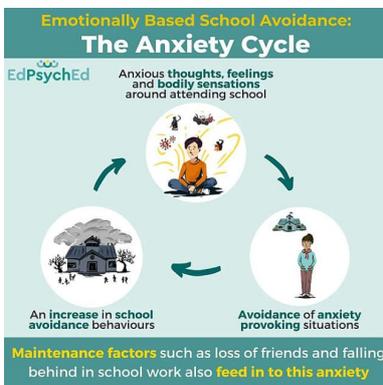
Encourage your child to use a "safe space" or a quiet zone to support them to re-regulate.

Collaborate with School:

Please let us know if anxiety is making attendance difficult for you child. We can discuss in more detail about strategies and approaches that may help to reduce anxiety and consider if other support is needed.

When to Seek Extra Help:

If worries are severe, please ask about referral for additional mental health support such as CAMHS or the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) or if you feel their anxiety is greatly impacting access to learning and school.



Parent-Friendly Guides and Tools:

[BBC Bitesize Starting School Game](#)

[Understanding Anxiety in Children with SEND | Kids](#)

[Local Offer | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Emotionally based school avoidance | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[School Anxiety and Refusal | Parent Guide to Support | YoungMinds](#)

[School anxiety and refusal: How parents can help their child get through tough times - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#)

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH SCHOOL ANXIETY

@BELIEVEPHQ

- 1 Listen to what your child has to say. Be patient and understanding with them.
- 2 Talk to the school. Don't be afraid to express your concerns to teachers.
- 3 Get some extra support. Speak to your GP or local mental health charity.
- 4 Help them to challenge negative thoughts in a thought diary.
- 5 If your child is worried help them to problem solve and come up with rational solutions.
- 6 Let your child know that you are there to support them. Show them love and affection.
- 7 Make sure your child is looking after their physical wellbeing (sleep, exercise, food).
- 8 Work through some relaxation skills with your child. Why not try some deep breathing together?
- 9 Encourage your child to think realistically about a situation.
- 10 Encourage healthy and helpful thinking.
- 11 Encourage autonomy and independence. Develop their resilience.
- 12 Allow your child to make mistakes and to be creative. Help them to learn from mistakes.
- 13 Try and limit the amount of reassurance that you are giving your child.