

**20 Strategies to support Pupils with Anxiety**

Practice self awareness and teach pupils to recognise the triggers and symptoms of anxiety.

Teach simple breathing exercises and practice them regularly

Practice positive self-talk regularly. Use visual prompts and affirmations to make this habitual.

Give plenty of opportunities for exercise and bringing awareness and focus to the physical self.

Access to an agreed safe space is important. Pupils need to have an agreed plan of how to use this

space. This may be a room or a space within the classroom with a ‘calm box’.

Make timetable adjustments where possible to allow for difficult transitions, e.g coming in early at the

beginning of the day.

Set structures and routines. Where possible, let children know in advance of upcoming events, changes

in usual teachers and make plans for particular situations which may cause anxiety.

The use of sound is very powerful for engaging a calm response. Use rain sticks, bells, chimes and

music. There are many websites that provide music for focus, relaxation, and visualization.

Listening games and exercises help focus pupils’ attention on the present.

Be mindful of timed activities and testing situations. Some children with anxiety may perform poorly with

time pressures – even the commonly used countdown can trigger an anxiety response.

Using the senses for mindfulness helps pupils focus on the present. Observation challenges such as

Kim’s game, still life drawing, or spotting items of different colours in the classroom can be a calming

focus. Try mindful colouring.

Visualise colors while focusing on the breath. Inhale a deep green, and exhale a smoky grey.

Have the pupils imagine the colors as swirling and alive with each inhale. If a pupil is de-escalating from

an angry moment, the colour red is a great colour to exhale.

Using the sense of touch to focus attention can be effective. Giving an item, a pebble or even a pencil,

and getting them to sit in silence focusing only on that item; how it feels in the hand, thinking about how

it came to be and feeling its weight, all provide a focus for attention.

Help pupils break tasks down into smaller segments. This can help to decrease feeling overwhelmed

by large pieces of work and help a pupil feel a sense of achievement by completing each section.

Involve a pupil in writing an action or support plan to help themselves when they feel anxious.

Practice and role play regularly when they are feeling calm.

Fresh air, nature and physical exercise have been proven to reduce cortisol in the brain and

calm the mind. Increase opportunities for these wherever possible.

Reward effort by a pupil with anxiety. When a child shows effort or is able to control their anxiety

symptoms through interventions, let them know you have noticed and are proud of their efforts.

Recognise and decrease situations that induce stress. For example, instead of having a child stand in

front of the class to read a report, find an alternative presentation technique.

Teach progressive muscle tension and relaxation exercises.

Practise mindful body scans regularly to bring focus to the present and increase self-awareness.

Encourage pupils to recognise negative thinking patterns and challenge them by asking questions and

speaking to themselves as if they were their best friend.



**Useful Resources for Anxiety**

**Websites**

[**www.youngminds.org.uk**](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)– Excellent mental health and wellbeing information and resources including 360 school community

[**www.anxietybc.com**](http://www.anxietybc.com) – American site with some great information and resources for teens and young people

[**www.childmind.org**](http://www.childmind.org) – American site on Child mental health and psychology. Lots of information and ideas for teachers on anxiety

[**www.relaxkids.com**](http://www.relaxkids.com)– Relaxation resources and training

[**www.gozen.com**](http://www.gozen.com) – Huge library of videos to reduce anxiety and promote resilience in children and young people

[**www.howidecide**](http://www.howidecide)– Free to subscribe mindful choices programme

[**www.worrywisekids.org**](http://www.worrywisekids.org)– information for parents and teachers including strategies, scripts and advice

**Books**

**[Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Starving-Anxiety-Gremlin-Children-Workbooks/dp/1849054924/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516056449&sr=1-5&keywords=anxiety+cbt+children" \o "Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9 (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks))** [(Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Starving-Anxiety-Gremlin-Children-Workbooks/dp/1849054924/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516056449&sr=1-5&keywords=anxiety+cbt+children" \o "Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9 (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks))

by [Kate Collins-Donnelly](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Kate-Collins-Donnelly/e/B006JG1UY4/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_5?qid=1516056449&sr=1-5)

**[Starving the Anxiety Gremlin](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Starving-Anxiety-Gremlin-Behavioural-Management/dp/1849053413/ref=sr_1_9?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516054220&sr=1-9&keywords=anxiety+children" \o "Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks))**[: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Starving-Anxiety-Gremlin-Behavioural-Management/dp/1849053413/ref=sr_1_9?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516054220&sr=1-9&keywords=anxiety+children" \o "Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks))

by [Kate Collins-Donnelly](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Kate-Collins-Donnelly/e/B006JG1UY4/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_9?qid=1516054220&sr=1-9)

**[Helping Children to Cope with Change, Stress and Anxiety](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Helping-Children-Change-Stress-Anxiety/dp/1843109603/ref=sr_1_7?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516054220&sr=1-7&keywords=anxiety+children" \o "Helping Children to Cope with Change, Stress and Anxiety: A Photocopiable Activities Book)**[: A Photocopiable Activities Book](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Helping-Children-Change-Stress-Anxiety/dp/1843109603/ref=sr_1_7?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516054220&sr=1-7&keywords=anxiety+children" \o "Helping Children to Cope with Change, Stress and Anxiety: A Photocopiable Activities Book)

by Deborah M. Plummer

**[Anxiety Relief for Kids](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Anxiety-Relief-Kids-Spot-Strategies/dp/1626259534/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516056526&sr=1-4&keywords=anxiety+cbt+school" \o "Anxiety Relief for Kids: On-the-Spot Strategies to Help Your Child Overcome Worry, Panic, and Avoidance)**[: On-the-Spot Strategies to Help Your Child Overcome Worry, Panic, and Avoidance](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Anxiety-Relief-Kids-Spot-Strategies/dp/1626259534/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1516056526&sr=1-4&keywords=anxiety+cbt+school" \o "Anxiety Relief for Kids: On-the-Spot Strategies to Help Your Child Overcome Worry, Panic, and Avoidance)

by [Bridget Flynn Walker PhD](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bridget-Flynn-Walker-PhD/e/B074MLV41H/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_4?qid=1516056526&sr=1-4) and Michael A. Tompkins PhD

**Mindfulness for Kids**

by Dr Nicola Kluge

**Mindfulness Skills for Kids and Teens**

by Debra Burdick

**The Invisible Classroom**

by Kirke Olson

**The Mindful Education Workbook**

by Daniel Rechtschaffen

**Programmes**

**Friends for Life** – Resilience group work for 4-11 year olds. A2E run regular training to become a licensed facilitator which includes all associated resources.

**ELSA** – anxiety and worries small group course with resources downloadable from www.elsasupport.co.uk