



Student Guidance: Anxiety & Overthinking

Feeling anxious or stuck in overthinking loops is more common than you might realise.

This guide explains how anxiety shows up and shares small strategies you can use to feel more grounded and in control during the school day.

What anxiety can feel like

Anxiety is not just “worrying too much.” It can feel like a racing mind, tight chest, restlessness, or replaying situations over and over. Your brain is trying to protect you by thinking ahead, even when nothing is actually wrong.

Spotting early signs

You might notice:

- Difficulty concentrating or switching off thoughts.
- Feeling irritated, tired or withdrawn.
- Avoiding certain lessons, people or situations.
- Recognising early signs helps you reset before things feel overwhelming.

Breaking worries into steps

Big worries can feel heavy, so make them smaller:

- Write down one main worry and one small action you can take.
- Split tasks into short, manageable steps.
- Remind yourself that thoughts are not always facts.

Ask for help

If you're feeling overwhelmed and need to talk:

- Visit [Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)
- Text CONNECT to 85258 for free to speak to Shout
- Call 0800 1111 to speak to Childline, or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) for their free online chat

Quick grounding strategies

Try small actions to calm your body and thoughts:

- Slow breathing: in for four seconds, out for four.
- Focus on something around you, like five things you can see.
- Take a short movement break or stretch if possible.

Asking for support

You don't have to deal with anxiety alone:

- Tell a trusted adult if you feel overwhelmed.
- Use simple phrases like “I'm struggling to focus today.”
- Reaching out early can stop worries building up.