

Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Summer 2 2023

Welcome to the second Summer Term newsletter from the Virtual School. We hope you all had a restful half term break.

Just a reminder that the deadline for Summer PEPs is the 16th June. Please ensure that your PEP meetings have happened and the PEP document is complete by this date. **For statutory age children, any PEPs completed after this date will not be able to have funding agreed.** Please remember that we hold both recovery funding and Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children and that you can request this through the PEP attached to an outcome for the young person. Any questions please just get in touch.

Sarah Deale Virtual School Headteacher

Anxiety in children and young people

Many of our young people show signs of anxiety which can impact on their attendance, outcomes and well-being. Here some thoughts from education psychologist Dr Aimee Cole on what this might look like and how we can support in school.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease such as fear or worry. It's one of the body's natural responses to stress, and affects our thoughts, feelings, body and behaviour.

Anxiety activates the body's fight-flight-freeze response like an alarm. This means that the body prepares to either confront, escape, or freeze in the face of a perceived threat.

Most of the time, anxious feelings are normal responses to stressful situations.

Anxiety in children and young people

For children and young people in particular, some level of anxiety is normal as they grow up and learn to navigate the world.

Difficulties can arise when normal levels of anxiety become more severe and start impacting a child's everyday life.

Anxiety can become a problem when:

1. It is constant, intense, and overwhelming.
2. It occurs in response to no real threat, or the threat is exaggerated.
3. It interferes with someone's daily life and stops them doing things they want to.

Common signs and behaviours

Avoidance of people and places

Difficulty concentrating

Withdrawal from social activities

Tired, fidgety, or absent minded

Not completing learning tasks

Constantly seeking reassurance

Frequent headaches, stomach aches etc.

Difficulty separating

Anxiety in children and young people continued.

How do I support in the moment?



Reassure them the anxious moment will pass and it will be okay. It can be helpful to describe it as a wave that they can ride or surf until it peaks, breaks and gets smaller.

Breathe slowly and deeply together. You can count slowly to 5 as you breathe in and slowly to 5 as you breathe out or try hand breathing.



Try using all 5 senses together. Think together about 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell and 1 thing they can taste to ground them in the present moment.

Offer calm, physical reassurance and a safe space. Remind them you are there, and they are okay and direct them to a safe space as necessary.

Encourage them to engage in something calming or regulating. This could be running, walking, listening to music, painting, drawing, colouring-in, or writing in a journal.



How can I support a child to manage their anxiety?

Listen with curiosity and openness. Avoid making assumptions, minimising their feelings, rushing to reassure or telling them to calm down.

Establish a clear routine. Use visual aids such as schedules or calendars. Make the child aware of any upcoming changes and prepare them in advance.

Normalise feelings of worry and anxiety. Explain that it is a normal response to difficulties we face.

Help them to understand their feelings and triggers. Name and label their feelings and validate what they are experiencing.

Explicitly teach self-regulation strategies. Explore different activities that they will find regulating, including physical exercise and breathing techniques. Create a regulating box of activities they can access.

Other support

Young Minds <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/anxiety/>

Anna Freud <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/let-s-talk-about-anxiety-animation-and-teacher-toolkit/>

Health for teens <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/anxiety/>

Useful Resources

Wellbeing

Just a reminder of the Education Support Partnership which is a charity that supports teachers and school leaders. As well as having a helpline staff can ring, they have lots of useful resources [Mental health & wellbeing resources for teachers & education staff \(educationsupport.org.uk\)](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk) They also have a financial grants service for teachers, teaching assistants, supply and support staff to help with short term money worries.

The Anna Freud Centre has a useful booklet on practical guidance to support colleague's well being—[Guide to supporting staff wellbeing in school | School staff mental health and wellbeing | Teacher mental health | Anna Freud Centre](#)

Well Schools aims to help improve education outcomes by placing wellbeing at its very heart to support school staff, senior leaders and young people. You can find out more here: [About Us - Well Schools \(well-school.org\)](https://www.well-school.org)

Safeguarding

The TES has teamed up with the NSPCC to deliver a live lesson where children can learn how to stay safe, about their rights, who safe adults are and the support available to them. You can watch the lesson and download resources here: [Tes Live Lesson with NSPCC | Tes](#)

Support for EAL

The Bell Foundation are holding a FREE webinar on 20th June 2023 at 4pm on Developing the Academic Writing Skills of Secondary Multilingual Learners: This free webinar will present key principles and a teaching framework that can be used to develop EAL learners' advanced academic writing skills. You can register for it here: [Developing the Academic Writing Skills of Secondary Multilingual Learners Tickets, Tue 20 Jun 2023 at 16:00 | Eventbrite](#)

They also have lots of useful resources for supporting EAL learners including an EAL assessment framework and lots of resource packs for teaching different areas and ages from 4 years up to 25. [The Bell Foundation - Changing lives and overcoming exclusion through language education \(bell-foundation.org.uk\)](https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk)

Key Contacts at the Virtual School

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Training

Understanding and supporting young people who experience anxiety

This course is relevant to all D.Ts, safeguarding leads or any school staff who want to learn more about anxiety and approaches to supporting children and young people's wellbeing within their setting. It is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI.

This course will:

- Develop an understanding of anxiety through psychological theory
- Explore how anxiety may present in children and young people
- To consider strategies of support and specific interventions at different levels (whole school, group and individual)



Leader: Dr Aimee Cole—Educational Psychologist

Thursday 8th June 2023 9:30 - 12:00 This will be in person at the PDC

Inside I am hurting

This course is suitable for anyone wanting to learn more about how to settle a troubled child to learn. It is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI.

It is intended to inspire those who attend, enabling them to realize that they can all contribute and make a difference whatever their role or responsibility. The day will also encourage alternative practices in schools by using an attachment aware and trauma informed framework to understand behaviour as communication.

Leader: Louise Kilshaw

15th June, 29th June, 6th July 3.30—5.00 This is a three part on line course

N.B. there are limited places on this course

To book, please open this link: [CPD Strand-doc v3.9c \(schoolcircular.co.uk\)](https://schoolcircular.co.uk)

Scroll to the bottom to find Virtual School Training

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