

Recognising and supporting student anxiety for secondary school teachers



Anxiety can take different forms, and some students will show symptoms of a number of types of anxiety. All students will have times when they feel anxious. However, some students' anxious thoughts and feelings will stop them from participating or enjoying themselves. This form can help you reflect and learn about a student's anxiety and consider ways to identify triggers and provide support.

This form is designed to help you identify when a student might be feeling anxious. Talking with families about their observations will help you develop a shared understanding about the student's anxiety. Involving students in recognising signs that lead to them feeling worried or anxious can also play an important role in helping them build autonomy and confidence in managing their worries. You can do so with AllPlay Learn's student version of this form.

Where possible, separate early signs of anxiety from later indicators, so that you can respond quickly to provide supports or intervention. Consider sharing these indicators with other teachers involved in a student's care, including casual relief teachers.

Student's name:

When

(insert student's name)

is feeling anxious, I might see:

Body language

Tense shoulders, closed body language, lack of eye contact, tearfulness

Physical symptoms

Feeling unwell, sweaty palms, flushed face, racing heart, trouble breathing, sweating, trembling, dizziness, panic attacks

Emotions

Anger, frustration, fear, panicked, crying, teary, embarrassed/self-conscious, depression/mood swings, euphoria

Disruptions to daily life

Difficulty sleeping, fatigue, may skip meals, frequent headaches/stomachaches



Behaviour

Overplanning, lack of compromise, too compliant, acting out/oppositional, avoidance, little or no communication, self-conscious, irritability, restlessness, extreme shyness, school refusal, meltdowns, withdrawal, regression, avoidance

Schoolwork

Thoughts racing, lack of concentration, validation/reassurance seeking, negative thinking, perfectionism, procrastination.

Other

(describe other indicators you have noticed)

Highlight any early signs of anxiety observed in one colour; and later signs that anxiety is escalating in another colour.

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Think about the strengths and strategies a student already has that helps them calm down, laugh, or feel grounded and connected.

When I first notice signs of anxiety, some strategies that may help include:

When I notice the student's anxiety escalating, some strategies that may help include:

Some situations or stimuli that may contribute to the student's anxiety include:

For more helpful resources, visit: [AllPlay Learn's Professional Learning Courses](#) and [Teachers' strategy page on anxiety](#).