

# Is Your Child Missing School Due to Anxiety?

## Understanding Anxiety:

Anxiety is a feeling of fear or uneasiness about everyday situations. While it's normal and temporary for most, persistent anxiety can affect relationships, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance.

## Recognizing Symptoms

Anxiety can manifest in various ways. Watch for:

- Fatigue, irritability, or tearfulness
- Trouble separating from parents
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Reluctance to get out of bed or dressed for school
- Lack of appetite
- Trouble concentrating or completing tasks
- Physical symptoms like stomachaches or headaches
- Avoidance of previously enjoyed activities
- Persistent negative thoughts

## What Can Families Do?

- Don't punish: Avoid punishing your child for school refusal.
- Encourage attendance: Staying home can worsen anxiety and disconnect your child from school.
- Communicate: Talk with your child to understand their concerns.
- Support: Make it clear you're there to help, and believe in their ability to overcome anxiety.

## School Resources:

- School staff: Consult with the school nurse, counselor, or psychologist to create a return-to-school plan.
- Gradual return: Some students may need a gradual reintroduction to school.
- 504/IEP plans: If necessary, explore a 504 plan or IEP for additional support.

## Seek Professional Help:

If anxiety persists or is severe, it may be linked to a behavioral health disorder or an undiagnosed condition. Consult your child's medical provider.

## Self-Care for Parents:

Remember to care for your own physical and emotional well-being too!

## School Counselors

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## Social Workers

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**Middle School - Pattie Pritchard:** pritchard@skschools.org

**High School - Keely Sawyer:** sawyer@skschools.org

## Local Resources

**Kitsap Mental Health:**

<https://www.kitsapmentalhealth.org/>

**Multicare Behavioral Health:**

<https://www.multicare.org/>