

# THE ANXIETY JARGON BUSTER

Terminology	Meaning in plain English	Example
<b>Anxiety intervention</b>	A planned form of support to help a child manage anxiety, reduce distress, or cope better in daily life.	A child is getting help for worries that are affecting attendance and class participation.
<b>CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)</b>	A structured therapy that helps a child notice links between thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, and learn ways to respond differently.	A pupil learns to spot thoughts like "I'll get this wrong" and practise a calmer response.
<b>Guided self-help</b>	Anxiety support using structured materials, often with support from a practitioner.	A child works through a workbook or online programme with check-ins from a clinician.
<b>Bibliotherapy</b>	Evidence-based self-help reading or workbook materials used to support anxiety.	A parent or practitioner uses an anxiety workbook with a child between sessions.
<b>Psychoeducation</b>	Teaching a child or family what anxiety is, how it works, and what can help.	A practitioner explains that anxiety can show up in thoughts, body feelings, and behaviour.
<b>Mindfulness</b>	Learning to focus attention on the present moment instead of getting pulled fully into worries.	A class does a short notice-your-breath or notice-five-things-you-can-see activity.
<b>Relaxation skills</b>	Techniques that help the body calm down when stress or anxiety rises.	A teacher reminds a pupil to use a breathing exercise before a presentation.
<b>Breathing exercises</b>	Slow, controlled breathing used to reduce physical signs of anxiety.	A child breathes in slowly and breathes out even more slowly before starting a task.
<b>Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)</b>	A technique where a person tenses and then relaxes muscles to notice and release tension.	A pupil learns to tighten shoulders for a moment, then release them and notice the difference.
<b>Behavioural intervention</b>	Support that focuses on what a child does, especially patterns like avoidance.	A child practises entering assembly in small, manageable steps instead of avoiding it completely.
<b>Graded exposure</b>	Gradually facing a feared situation step by step, rather than all at once.	A pupil anxious about reading aloud starts by reading to the teacher, then a small group, then the class.
<b>Facing fears</b>	A simpler phrase often used for graded exposure.	Instead of skipping group work, a child is supported to join for two minutes, then five, then longer.
<b>Avoidance</b>	Staying away from something because it feels scary or overwhelming. This can reduce anxiety briefly but often keeps it going over time.	A pupil keeps going to the toilet just before every class discussion to avoid speaking.
<b>Reassurance seeking</b>	Repeatedly asking if things are okay because of anxiety.	A child keeps asking, "Are you sure this is right?" or "Will my mum definitely come back?"
<b>Unhelpful thoughts</b>	Thoughts that make anxiety worse, such as worst-case assumptions.	"Everyone will laugh at me" or "If I get one answer wrong, I'll fail."
<b>Reframing unhelpful thoughts</b>	Learning to question anxious thoughts and replace them with more balanced ones.	A child changes "I can't do this" to "This is hard, but I can try one step at a time."
<b>Thought record</b>	A CBT tool used to write down a situation, thoughts, feelings, and evidence for or against the thought.	A young person writes down what happened before a panic moment and what they were telling themselves.
<b>Worry time</b>	A strategy where worries are set aside for a planned time, rather than taking over the whole day.	A child writes worries down and discusses them later with a trusted adult instead of during maths.
<b>Problem solving</b>	Breaking down a practical worry into manageable steps and possible solutions.	A pupil worried about getting lost on a trip makes a simple plan with staff beforehand.
<b>Daily schedule</b>	A clear routine used to make the day feel more predictable and less overwhelming.	A teacher shows the class plan visually so a pupil knows what is coming next.
<b>Workload modification</b>	Adjusting work demands when anxiety is getting in the way of functioning.	A pupil completes fewer questions or gets extra time during a highly anxious period.
<b>Frequent breaks</b>	Planned short pauses to help a child regulate and return to learning.	A pupil uses a short movement or quiet break after a difficult transition.
<b>Exercise</b>	Physical activity used as part of wellbeing support, which can help regulate stress and anxiety.	A child benefits from movement before a lesson where they usually feel tense.
<b>Medication</b>	Medicine prescribed by a doctor or specialist to help manage anxiety in some cases.	A parent mentions that the child is under medical care for anxiety alongside therapy.
<b>Whole-school support</b>	Support for anxiety that is not left to one person alone, but built into school systems and routines.	The SENCO, class teacher, family, and outside practitioner all use the same agreed support plan.