

Who to contact in a crisis

If you think your child is experiencing a mental health crisis, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option to speak to an NHS professional.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 999

Other useful resources

Keep your head - information on mental health and wellbeing for children, young people, adults, professionals and schools: <https://keep-your-head.com/>

Kooth - free, safe and anonymous support: <https://www.kooth.com/>

Young Minds - free help and advice: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

MindEd - a free educational resource on children, young people, adults and older people's mental health: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

YOUnited - self-referral for children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health: <https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/younited/>

Text **HEAR to 85258** to start a conversation. The service provides real-time support to people of all ages who are struggling with their mental health.



Mental Health Support Teams

Supporting the transition home from school



Mental Health Support Teams can offer support to children/young people, who may be struggling with low mood, anxiety or behavioural issues, and their parents/carer's

For more information, or to access our service, please speak to your child's class teacher or school mental health lead.

Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust: delivering excellence in children and young people's services.

Many children can find the transition between home and school tricky, which can result in 'meltdowns' or strong outbursts of emotions at home.

This leaflet provides some information on why children might find it hard to transition home after school and gives some suggestions for strategies to support you and your child with this transition and its effects.



www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk



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Why can the transition home be tricky?

The transition between home and school can be difficult for some children.

Children may demonstrate emotional/behavioural outbursts or 'meltdowns' once they get home from school or on the journey home. This is sometimes referred to as 'after school restraint collapse'.



What this can look like:

- Shouting and screaming
- Crying or being very emotional
- Lashing out
- Getting physical with you or people in your household
- Withdrawing or taking themselves away from people
- Minimal or no communication with other people
- Not listening to people, refusal to follow instructions
- Difficulties making decisions
- Frustrated or irritable
- Getting bothered or upset by sensory input(s)

Supporting yourself

- Before pick up, take a deep breath and ready yourself to meet their emotions.
- Take time for yourself. Start by trying to give yourself 5-10 minutes each day where you can just relax, maybe have a hot drink.
- Remember you can say no to things. Just like your children, it can be harder to do things when you are tired, so don't feel guilty for saying no to things and setting boundaries with other people.
- Try and stay connected with others. If you can't meet face-to-face, schedule a phone call at a time that works for you.
- Use a breathing or mindfulness strategy to calm yourselves in a tricky time or whenever you have a spare minute to alleviate intense emotions and stress. Here are some ideas:

Deep Breathing

Inhale for 4 counts



Hold for 7 counts



Exhale for 8 counts



Repeat

Positive Thoughts

Notice any negative thoughts you might be having. Would you say this to a friend?

Challenge this thought, and reframe it into a positive one.

"I'm a bad parent"



"I'm doing my best and learning as a parent"

54321 Grounding

Looking around you, acknowledge...

5 things you can **see**
4 things you can **touch**
3 things you can **hear**
2 things you can **smell**
1 thing you can **taste**

In the moment strategies

- Ask your child what they need or what will help them to re-regulate their emotions.
- Validate how they are feeling; reassure them that their feelings are ok to be having, but their actions may not be. You can always address their actions later once they are in a calmer headspace.
- If it's safe to do so, give them space. Let them know you are there for them when they are ready.
- Make suggestions on how to get their big feelings out, e.g., stomping, jumping, shouting into a pillow, writing them down.
- Think about their sensory needs, such as receiving pressure through a squeeze, being in comfy clothes, having some time in the dark.
- Help them to use some breathing or grounding exercises:

Finger Breathing

Start at your thumb.
Trace your fingers,
breathing in going up, and
breathing out going down,



Rainbow Grounding

Look at a rainbow.

Name different objects
around you that are the
different colours.



6

Dragon Breathing

1. Deep breath in through nose.
2. Breath out through mouth, pretending you are blowing out fire.
3. You could lift your arms up and down like you are flying too.

Why might they happen?

There are many reasons for why your child(ren) might display these emotional outbursts. It's important to acknowledge they aren't always negative reasons.

- They feel safe at home and with a safe person so are comfortable to openly and freely express how they are feeling.
- They are emotionally, physically, mentally exhausted from their day at school.
- They've had difficulties at school which haven't been resolved.
- School can place many demands on children: learning, behavioural and social expectations, getting feedback from teachers and peers, feeling under pressure etc.
- If they find separation from you tricky, reuniting can be emotionally overwhelming and they might not know how to deal with these strong emotions.
- Neurodivergent young people can find school especially tiring: masking (trying to fit in social norms), dealing with sensory difficulties and trying to contain their emotions.
- Older children generally need more space and time after school to decompress.

After school restraint collapse is a **normal** and **healthy** thing for children to display as it's their way of being able to release their emotions and in a place they feel safe.

3

Making the transition easier for you and your child

When children and young people are tired or have been bottling emotions up all day, having demands placed on them, such as engaging in conversations or dealing with uncomfortable environmental factors (e.g., loud noise), can result in them having an after school restraint collapse.



These can be tough to handle and they can impact both you and your child's wellbeing and energy levels.

Therefore, finding some useful strategies to both prevent these/reduce their intensity or to use in moments of strong emotion can be helpful, both for you and your child.



We don't want to stop these completely, as they are a way of your child(ren) expressing their emotions, which is healthy for them. However, if they occur often or are very intense (for them and you), we might want to put in place strategies that will hopefully reduce the frequency and/or intensity of them.

Prevention strategies

- Work with school to communicate any issues that have happened during day, such as in a communication book or a hand-over talk.
- Allow your child to have decompression and downtime, e.g., having a run around outside, quite time to relax or listen to music, time to themselves.



- Avoid asking questions. Instead, communicate with some supportive words that don't necessarily require an answer.
- Build in some time before school to connect together; let them know you are looking forward to seeing them after school. If they find it hard to separate from you, leaving a note or an object of yours in their bag might help.



- Have a snack and drink ready for your child(ren) for when they get home or out of school.
- Have a clear and visual routine; create predictability.
- Have conversations about emotions at home. This can help build up their resilience and problem solving skills to address and deal with different feelings and situations.