



PARENT TOOLKIT

After School Meltdowns



Many children come home from school feeling tired, overwhelmed, and emotional. It's very common for them to "hold it together" all day and then have a **big meltdown** once they're home — where they feel more comfortable/free.

You're not alone, and this is part of how children process their day. Here are some tips that can help.

Understand What's Happening

- School takes a lot of emotional and mental energy — following rules, listening, sharing, coping with noise and routines.
- When they get home, children often release the feelings they've been holding in all day.
- It's not a sign of bad behaviour

Create a Calm "Landing" Time

- Try not to ask too many questions straight away ("How was your day?" can wait!).
- Offer a **snack and a drink** — hunger and tiredness make big feelings even harder to manage.

- Keep things quiet for a little while — some children need space, others like a cuddle or time on the sofa.
- Consider activities like Sensory Circuits to regulate them physically as well as emotionally

Stay Calm During a Meltdown

- Keep your voice soft and your body language relaxed.
- Avoid reasoning or consequences in the moment — wait until your child is calm.
- Offer reassurance: *“You’re safe. I can see you’ve had a hard day.”*
- Remember: your calm helps their calm.
- Give them space/time

Talk and Reflect Later

- When things are calm, gently talk about what might have been hard that day. Remember – they may not be as calm as they appear. Try to give them a little bit of extra time.
- Help your child name their feelings: *“It sounds like you felt really frustrated when that happened.”*
- Problem-solve together for next time — focus on support, not blame.
- School can provide you with resources to help with this.

Build Routines That Help

- Keep after-school time predictable — snack, quiet time, play, then homework or tea.

- Include something relaxing: drawing, reading, outdoor play, or music.
- Prioritise **sleep** and **morning routines** to make the next day smoother.

Ask for Help if You Need It

If meltdowns are happening very often or feel hard to manage, you're not alone.

Please speak to:

- Your child's **class teacher** or **Family Support Worker**
- The **school's SENCO**
- Your **GP** or local **parent support service**
- Educational Psychology Parent Helpline – 01256 814835

Together, we can help your child feel supported both at school and at home.

Big feelings don't mean bad behaviour — they're a child's way of saying, "I've had enough today, and I need your help to feel safe again."