

Secondary School and Me: My Brain Won't Stop Thinking “What If?”



● Meet Sand



I'm Sand.
I'm the **Controller**.

My job is to help you understand your **emotions**, **worries** and **anxieties**.

When big feelings start to take over, I'll help you **take back control**, one step at a time.

In this guide, I'm going to show you how to manage your worries and help your brain feel calmer.

I'm here to help you:



Understand what happens in your brain and body



Know what to do when worries show up



Take control and make helpful choices



You're not alone. We'll work together to understand the "what ifs" and turn them into "what's possible".



Hi there,

So, secondary school is just around the corner.

I bet it feels like everyone is talking about schools, visiting new buildings, buying uniforms, and getting ready for September.

But whilst everyone else is busy talking about all of that, your brain is busy thinking about all the "what ifs".

What if I get lost?

What if I don't make friends?

What if nobody likes me?

What if I end up in the wrong classroom?

Sometimes it can feel like your brain won't stop asking questions.

Welcome to the world of the busy minds.

A busy mind is always trying to think ahead and work out what might happen next.





Here's something important to remember.

Just because your brain thinks something, it doesn't make it true.

"What if" thoughts are just ideas about what might happen.

Nobody knows exactly what will happen when they start secondary school.

Let's take a closer look at worry and why our brains ask so many "what if" questions.





What is worry?

A worry is a thought about something that has not happened yet.

Your brain is trying to think ahead and work out what might happen next.

The tricky part is that your brain cannot always tell the difference between:



Thought: "What if I get lost?"



Fact: "I am lost."

One is a thought.

One is a fact.



Remember:

A thought is not a fact.





Why Am I Thinking So Much?

Starting secondary school is a big change.

When something new is about to happen, our brains often start thinking about all the different things that could happen.

Sometimes this helps us get ready.

But sometimes our brains get so busy thinking about the “what's ifs” that they start making us feel worried.



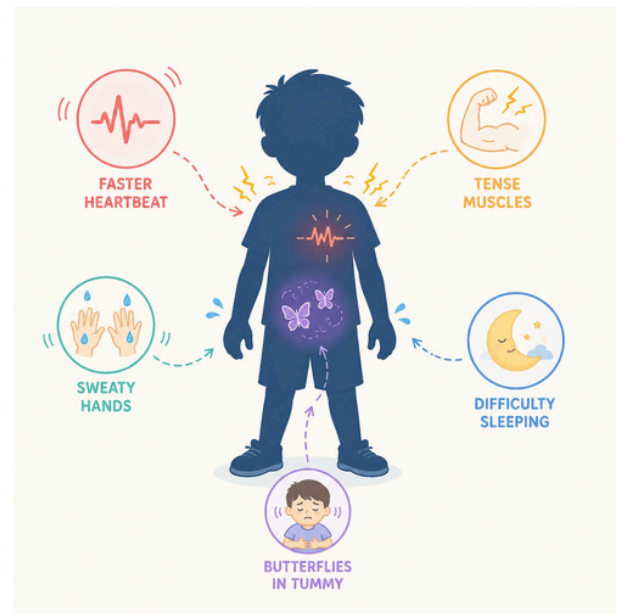


What Happens To My Body?

When we worry, our body can react too.

You might notice:

- A funny feeling in your stomach
- Sweaty hands
- A faster heartbeat
- Feeling tense
- Finding it hard to sleep
- Feeling restless



These feelings can be uncomfortable, but they often happen when we worry.



Meet the What Ifs?

Sometimes, when our brains are worried about something new, they start asking lots of questions.



When you're facing something new, the 'What Ifs' show up. They can make your worries feel louder and louder, shouting worst-case scenarios so loudly you can't think straight."



Lets imagine these questions
as a little character called **The**
What ifs.

The what ifs



When worries feel big, they can
seem huge and overwhelming.

But when we stop and look at them
more closely, they often become
much smaller."



The What Ifs just keep asking questions.

That's why we don't have to believe everything they say

When the "What Ifs" fill your mind, they can make everything feel much bigger than it really is.

★ **Just Remember**

They have one big weakness...

They don't know what will actually happen.





Here's my favourite trick...

Whenever the what ifs start filling my mind...

I don't get stressed.

I stop.....

★ ...and I do a **Fact Check Flip!**

Let's try one together.



Sand's Fact Check Flip

When The **What ifs** pop into your mind, try this...

Step 1: **SPOT IT**

Catch yourself thinking.



Can you hear your brain saying...

 "What if...?"

If you can, you've spotted a **What If**.

■ Step 2: CHECK IT

Ask yourself:

"Is this actually true right now?"
Or is it something that might happen?



Remember:

A "What If" is a question, not a fact.



■ Step 3: **FLIP IT**

If the worry doesn't pass the fact check...

Flip it!

Stop asking:

💭 "What if...?"

Start asking:

"What do I know right now?"

Think about the facts.

What do you know is true?

That's your brain's starting point.



Let's Practise the Fact Check Flip Together!

The What if:

"What if nobody likes me?"

Fact Check: That might happen...but I don't know that yet



Flip It:

- I don't need everyone to like me.
- I know I already have people who care about me.
- I will take one small step and look for one kind friendly face.

The What If: "What if i get lost and end up in the wrong classroom?"

Fact Check:

I know I will have a timetable.

I know there will be teachers I can ask for help.

I know lots of children get lost at first.

I know it gets easier with time.

Flip It:

- I know I'm not the only one starting secondary school we may all find it hard to get around at first



Sand's Fact Check Flip

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is a question,
not a fact.

SEE IT → CHECK IT → FLIP IT

1

SPOT IT



Catch yourself thinking.
Can you hear your brain
saying...

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If you can,
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2

CHECK IT

Ask yourself:

"Is this actually
true right now?"
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🟢 **Remember:**
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3

FLIP IT

If the worry doesn't
pass the fact check...

Flip it!

💭 Stop asking:
"What if...?"

💡 Start asking:
"What do I know
right now?"



Think about the facts.
What do you know is true?
That's your brain's
starting point.



See it.

Check it.

Flip it.

| You've got this!



The what ifs might visit from time to time...
But now you know what to do.

Spot it. Check it. Flip it.
You've Got this!

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