

Children's Mental Health Week

9-15 February 2026



February marks Children's Mental Health Week across the UK.

The week provides an opportunity to empower and give a voice to all children and young people.

This year's theme, **This is My Place**, is all about belonging. It explores what it means to feel part of something, whether that is family life, school, friendships or a wider community.

When children and young people feel that they belong, it can have a positive impact on their mental health and how they see themselves – helping them to thrive, both in and beyond school and college.

We all have a role to play in creating a culture rooted in kindness and inclusion, where belonging has the space to flourish.

Together, we can help every child and young person know this is their place.



Exploring the theme in your school or college

This toolkit brings together practical resources and ideas to help you explore the theme of belonging in your setting and strengthen positive connections across your community throughout the year.

You can use this toolkit to:

- ▶ help students explore what belonging means for their mental health
- ▶ support a school culture where kindness and inclusion are part of everyday life
- ▶ encourage students to reflect on where they feel connected and valued
- ▶ strengthen feelings of safety and wellbeing across your setting.

Planning with care

Talking about belonging may bring up different feelings for children and young people. Some may want to share their experiences openly, while others may feel unsure or prefer quieter ways to take part.

For some, feelings about belonging may be closely connected to their lived experiences, which may be difficult to talk about.

If a discussion raises concerns, let students know they can speak to a trusted adult or a member of the pastoral or safeguarding team for further support.



Primary resources

Support pupils to reflect on identity and belonging in ways that help them feel valued and understood.



[Children's Mental Health Week 2026 | Place2be](#)

The official primary school pack for Children's Mental Health Week 2026, including classroom activities and guidance for staff.



[Creating an inclusive school | Diversity Role Models](#)

A flexible resource for students aged 9+, using real-life stories from inspiring role models to support conversations about identity, belonging and inclusion.



[Top tips for making friends | Childline](#)

Webpage of advice for children on forming and developing friendships.



[Talking Mental Health | Anna Freud](#)

Animation and accompanying teacher toolkit designed to help begin conversations about mental health in the classroom and beyond.

Activity idea

Invite pupils to help build a classroom or school library that reflects a wide range of experiences, cultures and identities.

Encourage them and their families to suggest or contribute books that feel meaningful to them. Create opportunities for pupils to share why these stories matter. Use the collection to support discussions about inclusion and what it means to belong.



Secondary and FE resources

Support students to understand feelings linked to belonging and anxiety, helping them recognise supportive ways to ask for help.



[Children's Mental Health Week 2026 | Place2be](#)

The official secondary school pack for Children's Mental Health Week 2026, including classroom activities and guidance for staff.



[Finding our connections to feel less lonely | Mental Health Foundation](#)

A lesson and assembly with supporting guidance, exploring loneliness and its impact on mental health.



[Asking for help: a guide for young people | Charlie Waller](#)

A booklet for young people offering advice about asking for help with their mental health when they need it.



[Let's talk about anxiety | Anna Freud](#)

A short animation and accompanying resources for teachers, exploring the topic of anxiety with secondary school students aged 11 to 13.

Activity idea

Ask students to think about different spaces in their school or college, such as classrooms, corridors and social areas. Which spaces already feel welcoming, and where could small changes help people feel more included?

As a group, bring ideas together and look for common themes. Support students to agree one or two small, realistic changes that could make a positive difference. Let students know how their ideas will be shared or reviewed so they can see how their input contributes to change.



Resources for staff

Foster a sense of belonging for children and young people by strengthening inclusive practice and staff wellbeing.



[How to create a sense of belonging in schools | Thrive](#)

Free webinar and guide that explores the importance of belonging in schools and provides practical activities to help staff create inclusive, supportive environments.



[Peer support for mental wellbeing in schools and colleges | Anna Freud](#)

A practical guide to help schools and colleges develop structured, peer-led programmes to support student mental wellbeing.



[Student resilience survey | Anna Freud](#)

Survey to measure students' perceptions of their individual characteristics, as well as the environmental factors around them.



[Psychological safety in further education settings | Education & Training Foundation](#)

A practical guide for FE leaders to create psychologically safe workplaces that support staff wellbeing and build a strong culture.

Activity idea

Education staff play a vital role in helping children and young people feel that they belong. When staff feel supported and included themselves, this can shape a more connected and caring community.

Agree, as a staff group, one regular moment that is protected for connection, such as a shared break or a short end-of-week check-in.

Keeping this time consistent and optional can provide a reliable opportunity for staff to connect, without pressure to contribute beyond being present.



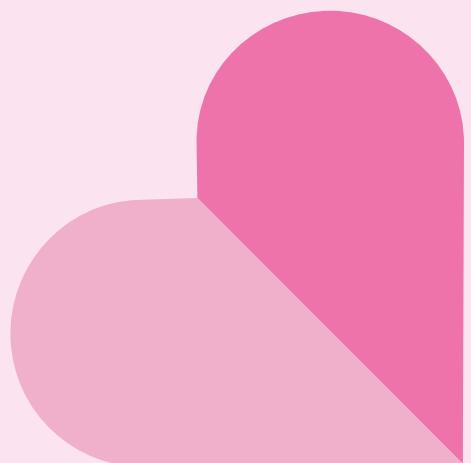
A place to belong



A mentally healthy school or college understands that wellbeing is shaped by how included and valued people feel in their everyday environment.

Taking time to reflect on how your setting supports belonging can be a helpful starting point:

- Do children and young people feel able to share their experiences and be themselves?
- Are staff supported to build positive, trusting relationships with students over time?
- Does student voice influence decision-making and help shape everyday culture?
- Do everyday routines and spaces help children and young people feel welcome and included?
- Are differences recognised and respected in ways that feel meaningful to students?
- Does your approach to belonging involve families and the wider community?



Belonging helps children and young people feel safe enough to learn, explore and try new things, knowing they are accepted for who they are.



Anna Freud
Mentally Healthy Schools