



Place2Be's

**CHILDREN'S
MENTAL HEALTH
WEEK**

**THIS IS
MY PLACE**

Secondary School Pack

9-15 February 2026

Everything you need to get your school involved in
Children's Mental Health Week 2026

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2026



THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2026

We're so delighted that you've decided to take part in Children's Mental Health Week 2026. As the largest children's mental health charity operating in schools across the UK, Place2Be created the week to empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK. This year's theme is **THIS IS MY PLACE.**

This pack contains everything you need to take part in the week – from group activities, top tips and an assembly guide, to information on how to take part in raising vital funds for children's mental health. However you take part, we're so grateful for your support.

WHY DOES BELONGING MATTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH?

Our mental health flourishes when we feel connected and valued. When children and young people have a strong sense of belonging, they:

Feel more confident to be themselves and try new things.

Develop resilience to cope with challenges and setbacks.

Build stronger relationships and communication skills.

Experience less anxiety and loneliness.

Have better self-esteem and understand their own worth.

Feel motivated to contribute positively to their communities.

When we don't feel like we belong, it can leave us feeling isolated, anxious, or like we need to hide parts of ourselves to fit in. That's why nurturing belonging is so crucial for every child's mental health and wellbeing.



5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE WEEK

TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS –

1

Visit page 4 to read some tips from children and young people we spoke to about what they need from schools.

RUN AN ASSEMBLY –

2

Get your whole school (or year group) thinking about mental health, and how they can use their voices. ***View our assembly slides.***

CLASS ACTIVITIES –

3

Split by age group, these activities can help you get your class or group using their voices, and understanding the importance of listening too.

FUNDRAISE –

4

Get creative and raise money whilst exploring the idea of belonging. Visit page 10 for lots of fundraising ideas for your school.

SPREAD THE WORD AND ADD YOURSELF TO OUR MAP –

5

We'd love to know what your plans are for the week. Let us - and other schools around the UK - know by adding your school to the map.

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THIS IS MY PLACE

The theme for this year's Children's Mental Health Week is **THIS IS MY PLACE**.

We know that our sense of belonging as individuals, in our friendships, in school and in communities plays a vital role in our mental health and wellbeing.

To know our place and really feel part of our environment is a basic human need. It can have powerful and long-lasting impacts in lots of areas of our lives, including our physical and mental health, education, employment and relationships. When we feel that we belong, it empowers us to contribute to the world and make a real difference.

This year, Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week will aim to support the groups and systems surrounding our children. We'll encourage peers, families, schools and communities to create inclusive and nurturing environments, where children and young people feel they belong and can say **THIS IS MY PLACE**.

SUPPORT THE PUPILS IN YOUR SCHOOL

We spoke with secondary schools to ask students what they wanted from the week – to help shape the activities, messaging, tips and advice we provide.

It felt particularly important, with this year's theme, to include our children and young people in secondary settings around the UK and use their voices to:

- **Define** what belonging means to them
- **Suggest** how we can foster belonging and acceptance in ourselves
- **Offer** their thoughts on how we can help others feel they belong
- **Give** their ideas on how adults at home, school and in the community can help

So, we asked them and this is what they had to say.



TOP TIPS: WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THEY NEED FROM SCHOOLS

DEFINING BELONGING

THIS IS MY PLACE is all about belonging. We asked them what they thought belonging meant:

- 'Feeling that you have a place where you are always welcome and valued as either place or set of people.'
- 'It's like a place, your home, you belong with your family and friends.'
- 'Belonging means feeling a connection with something, feeling like I am meant to be there with no stresses or worries.'
- 'Feeling like you fit in and feeling comfortable.'
- 'Having friends, being part of local clubs and groups.'
- 'Belonging means people love you unconditionally.'

EMOTIONAL CORE:

As our children and young people say, belonging provides a feeling of security, support, and acceptance that allows an individual to feel comfortable being their authentic self, without needing to hide parts of who they are.

TWO-WAY PROCESS:

Belonging is built on relationships and felt when you experience that others care about your well-being as much as you care about their own.

MORE THAN "FITTING IN":

True belonging doesn't require a person to change to be accepted. Authentic belonging is being valued for who you are, including our differences as well as similarities.

DIVERSE PLACES:

Belonging shows up in all areas of life, including social groups, family, culture and physical places. The sense of belonging we feel can be shaped by our environment and interactions.

PROMOTING BELONGING:

To do this we need to create safe environments where children and young people feel seen, respected, and valued for their unique contributions. This is grown through intentional, consistent, authentic interactions and relationships.



HELPING OTHERS WHO MAY BE FEELING LEFT OUT:

Notice and include others.

Pay attention to children and young people who seem lonely or left out. Inviting them to play a game, asking their opinion, or inviting them to sit with you can make a huge difference.

Practice kindness and empathy.

Be curious about other children and young people, get to know them better and really listen.

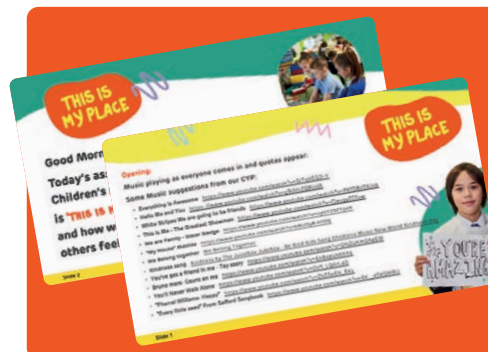
Celebrate differences as well as similarities.

Recognise and appreciate what makes each of us unique (cultures, backgrounds and experiences etc). Be respectful through our language and actions to include others.

Speak with other children and young people who are struggling with feeling they belong and encourage them to speak with a trusted person to support them.

TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS FROM OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Make us feel important and included
- Be happy, friendly and welcoming
- Ask students if they are okay
- Talking to a teacher or staff helps us feel more connected and feel like we belong.
- Creating activities to help us engage with others and establish friendships
- Making people aware that asking for help and talking to someone isn't scary and is actually really beneficial.
- Drop-in sessions at break and lunch in the library with snacks and stations for people that want to talk about how they're feeling, draw, read, play board games etc.



ASSEMBLY SLIDES

– see here for links

CLASS ACTIVITIES

THIS IS MY PLACE ART ACTIVITY

Click here to
access the NEW
Art Activity
for 2026



ADDITIONAL CLASS ACTIVITY KEY STAGE 3

IDENTITY GALLERY WALK

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Pupils explore what makes them feel they belong, practise respectful listening, and identify simple actions that increase inclusion.

MATERIALS

- Large paper or A3 card (one per pupil)
- Markers, coloured pencils, stickers
- Tape or Blu-Tack to display cards on walls
- Sticky notes for comments

SETUP

Clear wall space so pupils can stick their cards around the room. Arrange pupils into mixed groups of 4–6 for the gallery phase.



30–40
mins



STEPS

1. WARM-UP (5 minutes)

Quick circle: each pupil says their name and one thing that makes them feel included (one sentence). Teacher models first.

2. CREATE AN IDENTITY CARD (10-12 minutes)

Each pupil decorates their card with:
a) their name; b) two things that matter to them (hobbies, family, beliefs, culture); c) one way others can help them feel included. Encourage images, words and symbols.

3. GALLERY WALK (8-10 minutes)

Pupils form mixed groups and quietly walk the gallery. Each person reads cards in their group and writes one kind, specific comment on a sticky note for three different peers (e.g., "I like your idea" or "I'd love to hear more about your football team"). No negative comments.

4. SHARE AND ACT (5 minutes)

Back in their groups, pupils pick one idea from the cards they want to try that week (an invite, a shared activity, a supportive phrase). Each group shares their chosen action with the class.

5. CLOSURE (2-3 minutes)

Teacher highlights examples of inclusive actions and reminds pupils to try at least one chosen action this week.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Provide sentence starters on a board for pupils who need help expressing ideas (e.g., "I feel included when...").
- Allow pupils to draw or use images instead of writing

FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

- Display the gallery for the week and add a running "We tried this" box where pupils tick actions they attempted.
- Run a one-week challenge: each pupil records one inclusion action they did and shares in class.
- Repeat the activity to celebrate improvements.

OTHER ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- 'You could get everyone to draw themselves holding the earth and then draw important people on the earth like all your friends'
- 'Perhaps trust building activities for pupils to do in their friendship groups, trust fall challenge etc'
- 'Drawing hands and joining them together'
- 'Drawing two halves of a face- different people, or two different seasons to show that you could try connecting with someone different but actually you find you make something good together'
- 'Maybe making video which gets the message across but in a fun way or do something outside for fun'

ADDITIONAL CLASS ACTIVITY KEY STAGE 4

BELONGING ACTION LAB

(Ages 15-18)



40-50 mins

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Young people identify barriers to belonging, design a short practical intervention, and practise leadership, collaboration, and reflection.

MATERIALS

- Flipchart paper or large Post-its
- Pens, sticky notes
- Timer or phone for timekeeping
- Optional: camera or phone to record short clips of interventions

OVERVIEW

Students work in small mixed groups to identify a real belonging issue, design an intervention, run the intervention for 5–10 minutes, and reflect on impact. The activity promotes experimentation and accountability.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Provide sentence starters: "Hi, I'm ___, would you like to join our ___?"
- Allow quieter students to take observer/recorder roles and present findings.
- For students with mobility or sensory needs, adapt interventions to digital invites or quiet one-to-one check-ins.

FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

- Compile group notes and run a class vote on one idea to scale for the week.
- Repeat the lab weekly and celebrate wins on a "Belonging Board."
- Encourage groups to test a revised version of their intervention after feedback.

QUICK REFLECTION PROMPTS FOR TEACHERS/TUTORS

- Whose responsibility is belonging here and how can we share it evenly?
- What small action from today can you try this week to make someone feel seen?

STEPS

1. FRAME AND CONTRACT

(5 minutes)

Explain the goal: make one small change today that helps someone feel more included. Contract: listen, respect, try one idea, record outcomes.

2. IDENTIFY

(6 minutes)

In groups of 3–5, list quick observations of who might feel excluded and why. Use two columns: "What we see" and "Why it happens." 3 observations per group.

3. PICK ONE AND DESIGN INTERVENTION

(8 minutes)

Choose one observation and design a short intervention that can be run immediately or the same day. Keep it simple, safe, and reversible. Examples: a lunchtime "open table" sign and rota; a one-minute announcement inviting new people to a club; a quick postcard inviting someone to join a group/project.

4. PLAN

(5 minutes)

Decide roles (leader, inviter, observer, recorder), script one short sentence each person will use, pick location and exact time, and set what success looks like (e.g., one new person joins, two invites given).

5. RUN THE INTERVENTION

(10 minutes)

Carry out the plan. Observers note who responds and any practical barriers. Record a short note or a 30-second clip summarising what happened.

6. DEBRIEF AND REFLECT

(6–8 minutes)

Groups answer 3 prompts on sticky notes: What happened, What worked, What would we change. Share one insight with the whole class.

FUNDRAISE AND TRANSFORM LIVES

We are so grateful that your school is joining the Children's Mental Health Week 2026 community!

By getting involved and raising money you can support Place2Be and help ensure that no child has to face mental health problems alone.

THANK YOU!

HOW YOUR FUNDRAISING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

£54

could pay for a child struggling with trauma to have a 50-minute one-to-one session with a counsellor.

£252

could pay for four specialised parent coaching sessions for a parent and child to have together.

£500

could allow over 31 children to speak to a counsellor about their worries in a lunchtime session.

£1,080

could help fund a full programme of one-to-one counselling sessions for two vulnerable children.

"Since coming to Place2Be, I feel a lot more safe and adjusted to my surroundings. I've also learnt it's OK to not be OK and that I matter."

Secondary school pupil



FABULOUS FUNDRAISING IDEAS

This year's theme **THIS IS MY PLACE** encourages you to get creative and fundraise in a way that allows you to explore the idea of belonging. We invite you to support us in a way that encourages your whole school community to get together and reflect on what makes their school a safe and welcoming place for all.

There are countless ways to fundraise that enable every young person to feel proud of their place in their school community. Here are some of our favourite ideas for a Fundraising Friday at your school (or any day that works for you)!



'COME AS YOURSELF' DAY

Encourage everyone to donate a suggested £2 to wear an outfit which makes them feel most comfortable, confident, and like they truly belong —whether that's cosy clothes, cultural dress, favourite colours, or something totally unique. Celebrate what makes you, *you*!



HOST AN EVENT

Organise a lunchtime or after-school games or quiz event – charge a small entry fee, offer exciting prizes and come together with your school club or form to compete against others as a team. Let the best team win!



BAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Get students, parents, and staff together to showcase their baking talents by bringing in homemade goodies for a school bake sale.

Why not include an extra prize for the best decorated cake?



ENTERPRISE FAIR

Host an enterprise fair where students create and sell products that celebrate community and belonging. It's a brilliant way to showcase creativity, build entrepreneurial skills, and raise funds whilst promoting what it means to belong.

KICKSTART YOUR FUNDRAISING JOURNEY!

By fundraising for Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week, you are helping to give a voice to children across the UK, and we are so grateful.

Follow our easy-to-use checklist to organise your fundraiser and make it a huge success!



CHOOSE YOUR FUNDRAISER

Your school wants to get involved and now for the fun part – deciding what to do! Set your date and start planning. If you're looking for inspiration, you'll find lots of ideas on the previous page.



SET UP YOUR JUSTGIVING PAGE

Tell people about your fundraising event, set a target and personalise your page with pictures and videos! Follow the step by step guide on page 12 to get started!



SPREAD THE WORD!

Use our posters to spread the word – and don't forget to share the fun on social media using *#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek*. Check out page 15 for more information.



RAISE MONEY

Every pound your school raise will take us one step closer to a future where no child has to face mental health problems alone.



SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Share your photos and stories with us—we'd love to shine a spotlight on your amazing efforts and brilliant involvement!



PAY IN YOUR FANTASTIC FUNDS

Check out 'Paying in your funds' on page 13 to find out how.

Free resources
If you haven't signed up to
fundraise yet, visit
www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk
to receive your fundraising
materials

SET UP YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE

The easiest way to collect your donations is to set up a JustGiving page. Head to www.justgiving.com/campaign/cmhw2026 (or scan the QR code) and select 'Start Fundraising'. Then follow our simple tips below to be on your way to fundraising success!



DID YOU KNOW?

Fundraising pages with a personalised story raise a whopping 65% more!

Personalise your page with photos and a special message

- Say why your school are raising money for Place2Be
- Fundraising pages with pictures or videos raise 13% more per photo!

Set a fundraising goal

- Don't be afraid to go big! Fundraisers with a target raise up to 17% more

Share, Share, Share

- Share the link with the school community, friends and family via email, social media, and newsletters. Once a donation is made, it comes straight to Place2Be.

Thank your community

- A simple thank you can go a long way, make sure you thank everyone who donates to your fundraiser.



Scan here to set up your JustGiving page.

For even more success check out **JustGiving Top Ten tips** -

www.justgiving.com/for-fundraising/top-10-fundraising-tips



PAYING IN YOUR FANTASTIC FUNDS

There are several ways you can send us any money you raise during Children's Mental Health Week, and the sooner you're able to send it in, the sooner we can put it to work giving a voice to children and young people across the UK.

ONLINE FUNDRAISING PAGE

You can set up a JustGiving page to collect and pay in any cash donations you receive.

Visit justgiving.com/campaign/cmhw2026 to get started. All donations made to your fundraising page come straight to us, making it super easy for you.

DONATE ONLINE

You can transfer any money raised online at www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk



BY POST

Cheques and CAF vouchers can be made payable to Place2Be and sent to: Children's Mental Health Week Team, Place2Be, 175 St John Street, London, EC1V 4LW

Don't Forget! Please include a note with your name as well as your school's name (if applicable) with any cheques or CAF vouchers. **Do not send cash in the post.**

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR INCREDIBLE
SUPPORT!**



Meet Anna*



Anna experiences anxiety. Often, she did not have a narrative to explain why she felt anxious. Her experience of anxiety was physical rather than cognitive. When our Mental Health Practitioner explored this, Anna described sensations such as tingling in her hands and feet, feeling sick in her stomach, and tightness in her chest. She found it even more frightening because she didn't understand why it was happening. When people asked what was wrong, she was unable to explain.

When working with children and young people, we explore who their safe person is and identify their safe place where they feel relaxed, happy, and content; a place they go to feel calm.

After assessing Anna, our MHP decided a cognitive approach was not going to support her; instead, we needed ways to help calm Anna's nervous system. One approach we used was to help Anna connect with a place that she loved—a place that made her feel calm. Since physically being in that place wasn't always possible, we used her imagination.

Together, we created a script. After taking some long, deep breaths, Anna would bring her safe place to mind. Going through each of her senses, she described what she could see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Then, she reflected on how she felt. Once Anna felt calm, she would open her eyes and carry that sense of calm into her day.

Anna chose the harbour in her hometown as her safe place.



*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the children and families we support.

Donate Today

Can't hold an event? You can still donate so no child should have to face mental health problems alone.

🔗 bit.ly/3ZZL7Bu
Or by scanning the QR code.





**SPREAD
THE WORD**

IMPORTANT INFO

TAG US

When posting on social media, tag us so we can see and share your amazing efforts!

USE OUR HASHTAG

Don't forget to use **#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek** to join the conversation and have an even bigger impact.

 [@Place2Be](https://www.linkedin.com/company/place2be)

 [@Place2BeCharity](https://www.facebook.com/Place2BeCharity)

 [@_Place2Be](https://www.instagram.com/_Place2Be)

 [@Place2Be](https://twitter.com/Place2Be)



By helping us spread the word, your school is playing a vital role in building a future where every child has access to the mental health support they need.

Thank you for making children's mental health a priority.



**WE'D LOVE TO
HEAR ABOUT
YOUR PLANS!
GET IN TOUCH.**

**Contact the Children's Mental
Health Week team**

hello@childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

020 7923 5000

childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

Place2Be is a charity registered in England and Wales (1040756) and Scotland (SC038649), a Company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (02876150), registered office: 175 St. John Street, London, England, EC1V 4LW



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for generations

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