



Spring Term 2024

Children's Mental Health Week 2024 will take place from 5th –11th February. This year's theme is 'My Voice Matters'. My Voice Matters is about empowering children by providing them with the tools they need to express themselves. I'm sure you will agree, that it is important we all support young people to ensure they feel they can talk about how they are feeling to encourage positive mental health.



What is mental health and why is it important?

Mental health in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones, learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Mental health is as important to a child's safety and wellbeing as their physical health. It can impact on all aspects of their life, including their educational attainment, relationships and physical wellbeing. Mental health can change over time for different reasons and children may need support.

Signs a child might be struggling

- Significant changes in behaviour.
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Loss of interest in family and friends.
- Not wanting to do things they usually like.
- Excessive fears and worries.
- Loss of appetite and weight changes.



Speak to school.
See your GP.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/mental-health-support/>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/supporting-your-child-s-mental-health/>

How can we support children?

As parents and carers, there are a number of ways we can support our children to give them the best chance to stay mentally healthy. Encouraging children to think about their own mental health and wellbeing is an important skill you can teach them from a young age. Ways you can support:



Be there to listen—Ask your child how they are doing/feeling. This will get them use to talking about their feelings and know there is always someone ready to listen.



Stay involved in their life—Show interest in what's important to them. This will help them feel valued and make it easier for you to spot problems and support them when needed.



Encourage their interests— Encourage your child to explore their interests. Being active, creative, learning new things and being part of a team boosts our mental wellbeing.



Build positive routines—Try and have structure around regular routines such as healthy eating, exercise and sleep. A good night's sleep is important to wellbeing, so have a fixed time for going to bed and getting up.



Support your child through difficulties— Pay attention to how your child is feeling or behaving and try and help them work through difficulties. Sometimes a child may find talking uncomfortable therefore communicate through behaviour. It may not be easy facing challenging behaviour, but try help your child understand what they are feeling and why.