



We all have mental health and, just like our physical health, it needs looking after. Mental and emotional health issues are disturbances in the way in which people think, feel and behave. One in four adults will experience a mental health issue in any year.

Key facts relating to children and mental health.

- About 10% of young children aged 8-15 experience a low sense of wellbeing.
- In an average classroom, ten children will have witnessed their parents separate, eight will have experienced severe physical violence, sexual abuse or neglect, one will have experienced the death of a parent, and seven will have been bullied.
- In 2017, 0.3% of 5–10-year-old children met clinical criteria for depression.
- In 2017, 3.9% of 5–10-year-old children had an anxiety disorder.
- 18,778 children and young children were admitted to hospital for self-harm in England and Wales in 2015/16, a 14% rise from 2013/14.
- 0.4% of 5-19 year olds experience symptoms of an eating disorder.

Over the past 20 years the importance of improving the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of children and young people has been a strong theme of government policy. In general, common strategic goals aim to:

- Safeguard, promote and improve children’s psychological, emotional, physical and mental health and well-being.
- Improve child safety.
- Prevent mental and emotional health issues.
- Support a better quality of life.
- Improve access to appropriate care and support.

As a school community, we are making a positive change to conversations around mental health.

As part of the Government’s commitment to the statements above, they have funded the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) into school programmes. This programme aims to bring Mental Health First Aid skills into every state school, training at least one person per school.

Mental health first aid is the help given to a young person experiencing a mental health issue before professional help is obtained. The aims of Youth MHFA are to

1. preserve life where a person may be in danger to themselves or others.

2. Provide help to prevent the emotional or mental health issue developing into a more serious state.
3. Promote the recovery of good mental health.
4. Provide comfort to a young person experiencing a mental health issue.
5. Raise awareness of mental health issues in the community.
6. Reduce stigma and discrimination.

Top tips to support children and young people (taken from nhs. Uk)



Be there to listen

Regularly ask how they're doing so they get used to talking about their feelings and know there's always someone to listen if they want it. Find out how to create a space where they will open up.



Support them through difficulties

Pay attention to their emotions and behaviour, and try to help them work through difficulties. It's not always easy when faced with challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.



Stay involved in their life

Show interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.



Encourage their interests

Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.



Take what they say seriously

Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.



Build positive routines

We know it still may not be easy, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

Helpful Resources:

[Young minds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

UK's leading charity committed to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

[Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Counselling service for parents, children and young people. Help and advice is free and confidential.

[Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Provides free online support for young people, delivered by qualified counsellors via chat based services.

[Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

National mental health charity, which offers an excellent range of materials on all aspects of mental health.

Useful apps

Dragon in the attic (for children)

Developed by GPS, aims to teach 8-12- year-olds how to make healthy choices for their mind and body. It is a game where children use a pet dragon to look after to build confidence and educate children about issues such as mental health and bullying.

[Headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)

This app teaches mindfulness meditation principles to improve wellbeing.