



Place2Be's

CHILDREN'S  
MENTAL HEALTH  
WEEK

# PRIMARY SCHOOL PACK

5-11 FEBRUARY 2024

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET YOUR SCHOOL  
INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2024



# THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2024

## We're delighted that you're taking part in Children's Mental Health Week 2024.

Launched in 2015, the week exists to **empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK**. This year's theme is *My Voice Matters*. (Read more on page 4)

1 in 6 children and young people now have a diagnosable mental health condition. By taking part in Children's Mental Health Week 2024, you can help us to ensure that children and young people across the UK feel listened to, and know that they're not alone.

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 **Express Yourself** and raise vital funds for children's mental health. However you take part, we're so grateful for your support.

## 5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE WEEK



### Ask children for their thoughts and ideas

**(it's their week!)** Visit page 5 to read some tips from children and young people we spoke to about what they need from schools.



### Express Yourself

Express Yourself allows children and young people to celebrate what makes them unique. Find out more on page 12.





3



### Class activities

Split by age group, these activities can help you get your class or group using their voices, and understanding the importance of listening too. Visit page 8 to read more.

4



### Run an assembly

Get your whole school (or year group) thinking about mental health, and how they can use their voices. Visit page 6 to see our assembly guide.

5



### Share with families

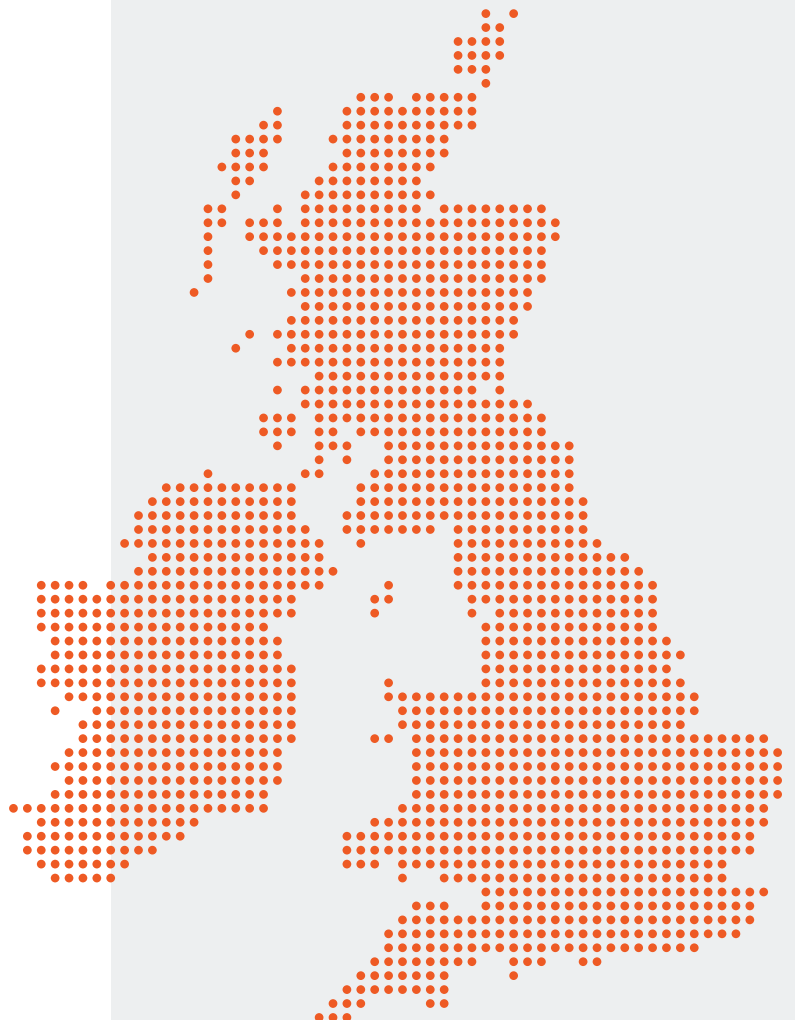
Families play a vital role in a child's mental health. Print and share our tips for families on page 16 (written by children) so they can also take part in the week.

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## ADD YOURSELF TO OUR MAP!

We'd love to know what your plans are for the week. Add yourself to our map to let us – and other schools around the UK – know you're taking part in the week. [bit.ly/46l4npP](https://bit.ly/46l4npP)





# MY VOICE MATTERS

**"I think there should be more opportunities to talk about our feelings, like lessons or special assemblies."**  
Primary school student

## **This year's Children's Mental Health Week theme is My Voice Matters.**

**Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.\***

As adults, we should empower children and young people, and provide them with time, space, and opportunities to express themselves. We must also ensure they have opportunities to influence aspects of their worlds that directly - or indirectly - affect their wellbeing.

Empowering children and young people can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, children and young people who feel that their voices are heard - and that what they say makes a difference - have higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem. They also have a greater sense of community - and as people become empowered, they can work together to create positive changes for themselves and for others.

There are some children and young people whose voices are marginalised. For example, those who have a special educational need or disability, those who are care-experienced, those who are part of the LGBTQI+ community, and those from racially minoritised groups. This Children's Mental Health Week we want all children and young people, whoever they are, and wherever they are in the world, to be able to say - and believe - "My Voice Matters".



**Watch our theme video**  
([bit.ly/45bNC4F](https://bit.ly/45bNC4F)) to hear more about the theme, directly from children and young people.

## **EXPRESS YOURSELF**

Help children's voices to shine through and empower them to tell their own stories by organising an **Express Yourself** day. Learn more on page 12!



## **How could you involve students in your plans for the week?**

Ask them for their ideas on how to mark the week - perhaps they'd like to lead an assembly or class session, or organise an Express Yourself day for the school.

\* The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



# TOP TIPS

## What children and young people say they need from schools

### Would you like to do more to support the pupils in your school?

**This Children's Mental Health Week we want all children and young people, whoever they are, and wherever they are in the world, to be able to say – and believe - "My Voice Matters".**

We visited primary and secondary schools to ask students what they wanted from the week – to help shape the activities we create for schools, the messaging we give to teachers, the tips we give to other children, and the advice we give to parents, carers and families.

### How do you listen to the pupils in your school?

Take a look at our 'How well do we listen?' resource and consider what more you could be doing to get feedback and input from the children you work with.



### Here's what young people told us they need from their schools:

- ① We want mental health to be talked about more in school to remove the taboo around it– not just one-off assemblies or PSHE lessons.
- ② We want you to acknowledge our mental health – not just mention it once in assembly. Sometimes we say we're stressed with homework and it seems like all our teachers care about is the deadline, not how we're feeling.
- ③ If you're talking about mental health, make it clear that mental health isn't a bad thing.
- ④ We want to know more about specific themes on mental health – men's mental health, teenage mental health etc.
- ⑤ Try not to make it sound so scary. Language like 'you have to tell someone' puts pressure on us, and can put us off – even if you don't mean to.
- ⑥ Make our assemblies or lessons on mental health more interactive – let us ask more questions, do a quiz, role play – then we'll want to engage more.
- ⑦ Give us opportunities to lead lessons on mental health ourselves. We have lots of ideas, and might know more than you think – we also have lots of advice to give.
- ⑧ If you're planning an assembly (on mental health, or anything else!) keep it short, active, play music, involve us in it.
- ⑨ Stop making out like social media is responsible for all of our problems. We know there are challenges with social media, but when we use it carefully it can help us connect with friends and find advice and support when we're struggling.
- ⑩ If we're being bullied or having issues with friends, don't just focus on punishing the other person or fixing it. Excluding someone might punish them, but it doesn't help with the way we feel about what has happened. Make the time to talk about our feelings too, if we need to.



# ASSEMBLY GUIDE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Visit [bit.ly/3PVkxpz](https://bit.ly/3PVkxpz) to download our free editable primary assembly slides.

If you're running this assembly on your **Express Yourself** day, you may also want to use it as an opportunity for children to share their stories. Visit page 12 for more ideas.

## AIM:

To introduce children to the idea that their voices matter.

**YOU WILL NEED:** Laptop / projector, story book to read

### Slide 1

Good Morning/Afternoon everyone. Today's assembly has been inspired by Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week. The theme this year is 'My Voice Matters'.

### Slide 2

Play theme video.

### Slide 3

But what does that mean? Did you know that, all children have special rights? Children's rights are written in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Let's look at some of those rights now...

Let's look at article 12. It says that all children (so that includes you!) have the right to have a view or opinion about something, and that grown-ups should listen to you and take your views and opinions seriously. Did you know that?

Is there something that you feel strongly about that you would like to share now? (May have to prompt with a local issue eg 'what do you think about.....closure of a swimming pool or park, littering, an environmental issue, road crossing safety etc)

When we have an opinion about something, we can tell other people and use our voice to create the change we want to see. Sometimes we can use our voice to make a big difference in the world, but equally important is the way we use our voice to make a difference in small, everyday ways. We are now going to learn about how a young person spoke up and used their voice to make a difference to something that mattered to them.

### Slide 4

Read a book to the children about an inspiring child/young person who uses their voice to make a difference. Take a look at our suggested books on page 7. Having read the story, ask the children questions, such as:

- What did you think of the character and what they did?
- Were they brave or foolish to speak up and make a stand?
- What would you have done in a similar situation?
- Is it always easy to speak out when you think something is wrong?
- Have you had a time when you felt like you've not been listened to – like your voice has not mattered?

Is it only people with big, loud voices that we need to hear? What about people who are shy? What about those that use a different language? What about those who prefer to communicate by writing things down or through dancing or music?





## Slide 5

Although each and every one of you has an individual voice that matters, sometimes when we join together we can make the biggest impact.

Read this quote from footballer Marcus Rashford:

**"Finding your voice and purpose in life is one thing, but, very often, when it is time to use that voice and make a change, you will need a bit of teamwork to make things happen"** (from *You Can do It; How to find your voice and make a difference*, 2022).

## Slide 6

### What could we do as a team to make something happen in our school?

Prompt children with things that are relevant to your school community (e.g. the state of the playground, clubs and extra-curricular activities, their local environment). Ask children to put their hands up and vote for the focus that's most important to them.

(**Note:** this slide is editable so you can add your own ideas. Please ensure this is followed up so the children realise that their voices do matter, and that they have effected change).

## Slide 6

Your Voice Matters: in our school we do things together. We learn, we laugh, we share our worries, we cheer each other on. Let's sing this song together....can we start off with just one person and then all gradually join in?

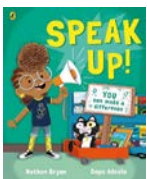
- Whose foot is tapping?!
- Who is trying not to smile?!
- Who is trying not to sing?!

### Note to teachers:

As a follow up, you might want to do the 'Listen Up' activity on page 11 in class.



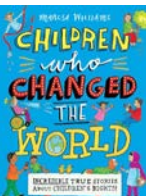
## Suggested books on this topic



### 4-7 year olds

**Speak Up! You can make a difference** by Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola.

This book features a child called Rocket who uses her voice to raise awareness of the local library closing.



### 7-11 year olds

**Children who changed the world. Incredible true stories about children's rights** by Marcia Williams.

This book features the true stories of children who have made a stand for children's rights. Choose one of the stories you think would most appeal to the children.

### Other books that may be useful

- **I can be heard. Brave activists that stood up for their beliefs** by Shalini Vallepur.
- **Youthquake: 50 Children and Young People that Shook the World** by Tom Adams.
- **Young fearless, awesome. 25 young people who changed the world** by Stella Caldwell.



# BAFTA

## MORE INSPIRATION FROM YOUNG BAFTA

Young BAFTA will be supporting Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week with a series of short films fronted by their Young Presenters, highlighting the importance of why everyone's voice matters. Follow us on social media (or sign up to our newsletter) to be the first to hear when these videos are available - or follow @YoungBAFTA on YouTube.



# ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR 4-7 YEAR OLDS

These activities are designed for **4-7 year olds**. To differentiate or extend the content, take a look at our activities for 7-11 year olds on page 10.

## WHAT MATTERS TO YOU? CREATIVE VIDEO ACTIVITY FOR 4-11 YEAR OLDS

This wellbeing activity can help children think about and share what matters to them.

[bit.ly/3PzCG18](https://bit.ly/3PzCG18)

## Are you listening carefully?

Listening carefully to others involves more than just our ears - we also listen and take in information in other ways.

**Aim:** To introduce the idea of the importance of careful listening to each other's voices

### Starter: The Whisper Game

Sit children in a circle and play The Whisper Game. Whisper a message into the ear of the child next to them, then ask the child to whisper the message as they have heard it to the next child (and so on). They are not allowed to repeat the message once it has been said. The message gets passed around the circle from child to child back to the teacher who states the final message.

### Discussion points

- Did we end up with the same message as we started with?
- Why not?
- What do we need to do to listen to each other really well? (e.g. eye contact, focussed attention)

### Main activity: Making and using a string telephone

For this activity, split the class into pairs. Each pair will need: 2 paper cups, string, 2 paperclips. Pierce the base of each cup with a sharp pencil and thread the string through the hole. Tie the string to a paperclip inside the cup. Pull the string tight to hear another person speak into their cup.

### Discussion points

- What can you hear?
- What happens when the string goes loose?
- Does it help to see the other child to hear them better?
- What are the best ways to listen to someone else?

**Optional follow-up activity:** How important is eye contact? Play The Eye Signal game. Demonstrate with a small group standing a few feet in front of you. Signal to them with only your eyes to: move to the left (by looking to the left), move to the right (by looking to the right), stepping back (eyes up), or taking a step forward (one blink).





## These things are important to me

These activities will help give younger children the opportunity to share what they like (and don't like) and to be heard. They will start to see that we all like different things and that their ideas, thoughts and views matter.

### My favourite...

- Watch Signing with Lucinda's Makaton for 'Favourite' [bit.ly/45XuZSV](https://bit.ly/45XuZSV) with children and practise signing 'favourite'.
- Ask children to share their favourite animals, colours, food etc. Can the children also ask others about their favourites (e.g. 'what's your favourite book?')
- Children could also share their least favourite.

### Do you like it?

- Watch this video [bit.ly/3Z1wU6t](https://bit.ly/3Z1wU6t)
- Pause after each picture and ask the children if they like or don't like each one. This could also be more active, getting the children to move around with likes to the left and dislikes to the right and not sure in the middle. This will be a good demonstration of how we can think differently and that is okay.
- The children could make up their own "Do You Like It?" verses. They could even make their own video, focusing on things they like and don't like about school.
- Consider making a display entitled 'My voice matters – what I like and don't like' that captures what the children have explored and expressed. This could also include concrete objects, photographs, drawings and visual symbols.

## Celebrating ourselves and each other

Celebrations are not just for birthdays or holidays, and we don't always need a party in order to celebrate. Simply sharing something we are proud of can help us celebrate ourselves and each other. We are going to think about ourselves and celebrate something important to us. It does not have to be a big thing.... It only matters that it is important to you.

- As a class, watch Sesame Street's 'Elmo Feels Proud' video [bit.ly/3Ltonnx](https://bit.ly/3Ltonnx).
- **Ask children to think about something they've done in the last week that they are proud of.** Pride is a feeling that makes you puff out your chest! Do you have something to celebrate like.... You tried a new vegetable? You managed a piece of work that was tricky for you? You spoke to someone new on the playground?
- Ask children to keep a Celebration Diary for the week. Can they find one thing a day that made them feel proud? Or something that has made people around them feel proud of them? Download our Feeling Proud worksheet at [bit.ly/3PVkxpz](https://bit.ly/3PVkxpz).

This activity will work with all age groups - including grown-ups!

# EXPRESS YOURSELF

Keep the celebrations going!  
**Express Yourself** empowers everyone to celebrate what makes you.... you.  
(That includes the grown-ups!).  
Go to page 12 to find out more.





# ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR 7-11 YEAR OLDS

These ideas are designed for 7-11 year olds. To differentiate or extend the content, download our secondary-age group school pack. [bit.ly/46yMGZf](https://bit.ly/46yMGZf)



## Do you know that each and every one of you matters?

**Aim:** To introduce 'mattering' and explore the idea that every child matters

### I know I matter...

- Talk to children about needs. We all have needs that we share including the need for food, rest, play, respect, care etc. When our needs are met, we can feel joy or satisfaction, happiness, or contentment. When needs are not met, we can feel uncomfortable, sad, hurt, or angry.
- Ask children to think about right now, sitting here in school, what needs of theirs are met? Learning? Warmth? Friends? Having something to eat or drink? Knowing about our needs helps us to know ourselves and to do more things to meet them so we can thrive and grow.
- Ask children to think about the things that people do to show them they matter. E.g. What happens on your birthday? /What do we do in school that shows you that you matter?/Can you think of a time when you felt important – like you matter?

{If talking about birthdays be aware some pupils may not have received presents and that the gift of time and attention are also valuable}

- Ask the children how they feel when they feel like they matter?
- What about the things around us that matter to us – like our environment? Watch this video from WWF: I Matter ([bit.ly/3Plt3xO](https://bit.ly/3Plt3xO)). Ask the children if they can remember what mattered to the children in the video
- Ask children to write or draw a picture about or act out their 'dream' day – full of things that matter to them. Make a display of 'These things matter to us'.

### I know you matter, too!

Talk to the children about how they can show others that they matter. Consider both verbal and non-verbal ways of showing others that they matter eg smiling, nodding, giving a high-5, paying attention, as well as asking questions and showing an interest.

- Ask children to write a letter of gratitude to someone in the class (top tip: pair children up, to ensure every child gets a letter). You might find it helpful to use our Letter of Gratitude template ([bit.ly/3PVkxpz](https://bit.ly/3PVkxpz))
- In their pairs, ask children to read their letters to each other. As a whole class, you could then discuss what it was like to give, and receive, gratitude.



## Let's talk this through

Prepare some questions on separate pieces of paper. Focus on something that you know concerns the children, or ask them for suggestions. Conversation starter ideas might be: 'what's the best thing about being in this class' or 'If you were Head teacher for the day what would you change?' Then use question-cups or Jenga conversations to explore the questions together.

### Question cups

Place the written questions or conversation starters in 4-6 cups. Arrange the cups at the end of a table, and in small groups take it in turns to bounce a ping pong ball into a cup. When a ball lands in a cup, the corresponding question or conversation starters are discussed as a group.

### Jenga conversations

Write a different number directly on each Jenga block and set up a regular game of Jenga. Prepare a list of questions or conversation starters that the children might want to explore and number them. As a block is taken out and placed on top, read and answer the corresponding question.

## Listen up!\*

Set up a listening lab in your classroom. This should be in a quieter area or a separate room or booth if possible. Using the available technology—a desktop, laptop or tablet - ask children to make a video or audio recording about 'things that are important to me'.

## See the world through my eyes\*

Give the children access to a camera (disposable, tablet, phone, digital camera) and ask them to photograph what is important to them at school. This could be things they like, don't like, want more or less of, feel threatened or inspired by. Print or show the photos and discuss.

### \*Notes for teachers:

After doing any of these activities, consider how you will ensure that the children know that their voices matter. Talk to the children about what you have understood them to be saying. Ask them who else in the school they could share their opinions with - the Head Teacher? The School Council? Parents and carers? Consider helping the children to make a display entitled 'My Voice Matters'.

If different year groups do these activities— do you see any trends or changes as the children get older? What key messages can the adults around the children take away? How will things change in light of what the children have said?





# YOUR EXPRESS YOURSELF DAY

We are so grateful that you are joining the Children's Mental Health Week 2024 community. By taking part, you are helping to give a voice to children across the UK. Organising an Express Yourself fundraiser is easy peasy.

## ① Choose a date

Why not join thousands of schools across the country and **Express Yourself** on Friday 9 February? If this day doesn't work, you can hold your fundraiser at any point.

## ② Spread the word

Make sure nobody misses out on the fun! Use our posters and email templates to spread the word – and don't forget to share the **Express Yourself** fun on social media using #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek.

## ③ Raise money

Every pound raised will help take a step closer to a future where no child has to face mental health problems alone. Check out the ideas on page 14 to help kickstart your fundraising.

## ④ Set up a JustGiving page

By setting up a JustGiving page, your friends, family, colleagues and students can make a donation to your **Express Yourself** day. Setting up a fundraising page is super easy:

1. Create your fundraising page at [justgiving.com/campaign/CMHW2024](https://justgiving.com/campaign/CMHW2024)
2. Personalise your page with photos and a special message to say why you're raising money for Place2Be.
3. Share your JustGiving link with friends and family. Once a donation is made, it comes straight to Place2Be!

## ⑤ Send in your fundraising

Pay in your fundraising by Friday 29 March to be automatically entered into a free prize draw to win an Amazon voucher. More information on how to bank your funds can be found on page 19. Terms and conditions for the free prize draw can be found on our website.





# LET YOUR IMAGINATIONS RUN WILD

**We're all different – we all have different things that make us tick and that bring a smile to our face.**

Express Yourself allows children and young people to celebrate what makes them unique with an incredibly fun dress-up day – this could be sharing their favourite hobby, such as skateboarding or dancing, or wearing their favourite colour or accessory. Or it could just be coming in as themselves.

Express Yourself is about letting children's voice shine through and empowering them to tell their own stories! If you need a little inspiration, here are some ideas on the right to get you started!

①

Let your inner disco diva shine on the dance floor

②

Let your personality shine through with your favourite colours

③

Embrace your creative side and unleash your artistic energy

④

Show off your team spirit with your favourite team's kit

⑤

Take the stage as the coolest rockstar in town

⑥

Come as you are and wear your comfiest clothes!

⑦

Bring the cool energy of the skate park to the playground

⑧

Share what makes you... you and celebrate what sets you apart.







# MEET JASMINE

Over the past few years, 7-year-old Jasmine has been spreading all kinds of Children's Mental Health Week positivity. From helping her friends improve their mental health at Brownies via an 'affirmation station' to placing kindness-inspired post-it notes around her school, to raising money with a sponsored swim and climbing Mount Snowdon. Jasmine's amazing efforts have not gone unnoticed.



In 2023, Jasmine swam as far as she could during Children's Mental Health Week and raised a sensational £245. This could pay for more than 15 children to speak to a qualified counsellor about their worries in a Place2Be lunchtime session. At her Brownies' Express Yourself day, Jasmine also fittingly chose to dress as the iconic Superwoman, striking a pose alongside her colorfully dressed pals.



## EXPRESS YOURSELF & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Whether providing counselling and support to children when they need it most, working with parents who may be struggling or providing invaluable mental health training to teachers and school staff – every single pound you raise during Children's Mental Health Week will help ensure no child has to face mental health problems alone. For example...

**£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 4 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.

**£1080**

could help fund a full round of one-to-one counselling sessions for 2 vulnerable children.





# SPREAD THE WORD

We'd love your support to help us spread the word and raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health. We've created assets, example tweets and posts, to make it as easy as possible for you to shout about the week. Feel free to adapt the content according to your needs, or develop your own.

## Key information

Please help spread the news about Children's Mental Health Week on social media by tagging Place2Be in all of your posts and use #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek.



@Place2Be



@\_Place2Be



@Place2Be



@Place2BeCharity

## Suggested copy for social media

This copy has been written for X (formerly Twitter), but could be adapted for use on other channels or your email newsletters. Graphics to accompany your posts can be downloaded from the Children's Mental Health Week website [bit.ly/46qJChG](https://bit.ly/46qJChG)

We're proud to be taking part in @Place2Be's #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek (5-11 February 2024). This year's theme is My Voice Matters, and @Place2Be hopes to empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK. Learn more, and join us: [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](https://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)

1 in 6 children and young people have a diagnosable mental health condition. In February, we're supporting @Place2Be's #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek – raising awareness of the importance of children and young people's mental health. Learn more: [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](https://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)

<INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL> is proud to be taking part in @Place2Be's #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek in February. Join us and help shine a light on the importance of children and young people's #mentalhealth. Find out more and get involved: [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](https://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)

Express Yourself this #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek! From 5-11 February 2024, @Place2Be is encouraging schools and youth groups to let children's voice shine through and empower young people to tell their own stories. Get involved: [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](https://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)

This year's #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek (5-11 February 2024) theme is 'My Voice Matters'. @Place2Be's free resources can help schools to empower children and young people, and provide them with time, space, and opportunities to express themselves. Learn more: [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](https://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)







Place2Be's

CHILDREN'S  
MENTAL HEALTH  
WEEK



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 5500

childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

**place2be.org.uk**

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