

Wellbeing Inset day toolkit



From speaking to many of you, we know that one of your primary concerns on welcoming children back to school in the autumn is mental health and wellbeing. An Inset day before the start of term is a great opportunity for all school staff to come together to focus on wellbeing, ready for the term ahead.

This toolkit is designed to be a guided Inset day for schools to work through, focused on wellbeing. It is split into four sections:

- 1. Auditing your school**
- 2. Planning for potential separation anxiety**
- 3. Supporting staff wellbeing**
- 4. Improving the school environment**

We have also included some suggested resources to use in the first weeks of term.

You can use this toolkit in whatever way works best for you – you could pick individual sections to complete, or you could follow the full plan across the day.



1. Auditing your school

Before you start addressing mental health and wellbeing in your school, it's important to know how things currently stand. Beginning your Inset day by evaluating your current provision will help you identify areas for improvement, and involve all staff in the process.

You won't be able to complete a full audit on your Inset day, but there are some simple tools you can use to get everyone thinking about next steps.

CARE Animation - Anna Freud Centre

This animation, designed to be used on a school training day, can be a great way to spark conversations amongst staff about ways to improve wellbeing in your school. You can use the [additional guidance](#) notes to help prompt discussions.

[Go to resource](#)

Pyramid of need – YoungMinds

The pyramid of need is a tool designed to help you map the different levels of need in your school. Use existing data you have on pupils to fill out the pyramid and get a clearer picture of which children will need more support than others. [See how a school in Brighton has been using it.](#)

[Go to resource](#)

Resilience Zap – Boingboing

Resilience is a key emotional skill for your pupils and staff. Use this resilience presentation and plan to get school staff thinking about how resilient your school currently is, and how to foster a culture of resilience going forwards.

[Go to resource](#)

Reset, recover, rebuild – UAE Southbank

Many schools are thinking about the concept of a ‘recovery curriculum’ and how to implement it in their schools. Use this roadmap’s discussion points and example actions to open up a discussion with colleagues.

[Go to resource](#)



2. Planning for potential separation anxiety

We’ve heard from many of you that separation anxiety during the full return to school is a key concern. Children may be anxious being separated from their parents, and parents may also feel anxious about their child returning to school after so long.

Separation anxiety action plan – Mentally Healthy Schools

Work through this action plan with your colleagues to identify how separation anxiety may present itself in the school community, and come up with solutions for tackling it.

[Go to resource](#)

Managing children's separation anxiety plan – Mentally Healthy Schools

Once you've completed the action plan above, staff may want to use this plan to focus on individual children and families, and come up with tailored solutions to lessen separation anxiety.

[Go to resource](#)

Mindfulness calendar – Mentally Healthy Schools

Try out some of these mindfulness activities during your Inset day, for teachers to then repeat with pupils once they return. This two-week calendar suggests a different mindfulness activity to use each day to help children feel calmer in the classroom.

[Go to resource](#)



3. Support staff wellbeing

Supporting staff wellbeing is a vital part of any whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Take some time during your Inset day to focus on school staff and their mental health with these resources.

10 steps towards school staff wellbeing – Anna Freud Centre

This report on school staff wellbeing contains useful steps and action points for things schools should consider, and could make a good conversation starter during your Inset day.

[Go to resource](#)

Wheel of Life – Education Support

A Wheel of Life is a useful tool to help staff assess their own wellbeing and their work/life balance. You can print this template and ask staff to take some time to each complete it. You could discuss any thoughts this exercise has brought up afterwards, identifying areas for improvement, but this activity also works as a private reflective exercise for staff.

[Go to resource](#)

ABC model to help manage stress – Education Support

For this exercise, staff could split into pairs and use this ABC tool to work through a potential stress-inducing situation together. Reflecting on stressful situations with this tool can help people to regulate their emotions the next time a difficult situation arises.

[Go to resource](#)



4. Improve the school environment

Ensure the school environment feels welcoming and pupils feel supported when they return with these resources.

Safe space guidance – Headstart Kent

You may want to consider creating a designated 'safe space' in your school where pupils can go if they feel overwhelmed and need some time out. This guidance explains what to take into consideration when setting one up.

[Go to resource](#)

Seven days of kindness calendar – Mentally Healthy Schools

This week-long kindness calendar gives prompts for kind things to do each day of the week, both to other people and to ourselves. Print it and display it on noticeboards in classrooms or hallways, encouraging pupils to follow it for the first week back.

[Go to resource](#)

Wellbeing poster for pupils – Mentally Healthy Schools

Having posters around the school focusing on children's wellbeing can be a simple way of helping them feel supported. This poster suggests things they can do to help themselves feel better.

[Go to resource](#)



Resources to use in the first weeks of term

Focusing on mental health and wellbeing during your Inset day is a great place to start, and once pupils return you can put the things you've discussed and learnt into practice. Here are some great resources for helping you do that.

Return to school resources – Place2Be

Choose from four different wellbeing-themed assemblies to deliver to pupils as they return to school.

[Go to resource](#)

Emotional check-in – Mentally Healthy Schools

The return to school may be stressful for children. This emotional check-in resource helps children to better identify and express how they are feeling.

[Go to resource](#)

Appreciation circles – Mentally Healthy Schools

This appreciation circle activity encourages children to appreciate positive attributes and qualities in each other, and would make a good start-of-term activity to help build positive relationships.

[Go to resource](#)

Self-reflection questions – Nurture UK

Encourage children to think about the things that are most important to them, then share their answers to these questions with a classmate.

[Go to resource](#)

Helplines

SHOUT - text 'Shout' to 85258 for 24/7 crisis text support

Childline - under 19s can call 0800 1111 for free support

Education Support - school staff can call 08000 562 561 or text 07909 341229 for 24/7 help and advice

YoungMinds parents helpline - 0808 802 5544, Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

Autism helpline - call 0808 800 4104, Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm