

## Safeguarding Snapshot - 09.10.26

### World Mental Health Day 'Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices Real Change'

As part of our commitment to supporting the well-being of our students and school community, we are writing to share details about **World Mental Health Day** (10th October) and Mental Health Awareness activities across our school.

This year's official theme, set by the World Federation for Mental Health, is:

**"Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change."**

This theme highlights a vital truth: when young people are given the opportunity to share their personal stories and feel truly listened to, it creates positive, lasting change in their emotional well-being and confidence.

As parents, carers and teachers, we spend a lot of time listening to our children/students. However, there is a subtle but powerful difference between listening and ensuring a young person feels heard:

- Listening is about receiving information. It happens when we absorb the words being spoken, but our minds might still be focused on solving the problem, giving quick advice, or managing busy routines.
- Being heard is a feeling. It happens when a child senses that their emotions, thoughts, and lived experiences are genuinely understood, validated, and taken seriously, without judgment or immediate correction.

When children feel truly *heard*, it creates emotional safety, builds self-worth, and strengthens their confidence to speak openly about their mental health.

### Top tips to be better listeners

To help put this into practice, here are the 5 official listening tips from the Mental Health Foundation:

#### 1. Find a Good Time and Space

- *If you want to talk or notice your child needs support, choose a time when you won't be rushed, and a space where you won't be interrupted or distracted.*

#### 2. Listen to Understand

- *Focus on listening to understand, not to respond. This can make a big difference in making your child feel genuinely heard rather than answered to.*

### **3. Actively Listen**

- *Show them that you're listening by facing them, making eye contact, and not interrupting. If you ask questions, keep them open and aimed at clarifying what they mean.*

### **4. Ask, Don't Tell**

- *Don't rush to offer a solution. Instead, try asking what you can do to help. They might want practical support, or they may simply want a supportive listening ear.*

### **5. Check In**

- *Keep checking in with them over time so they know they can come back to you again. If you're worried that they need extra support, encourage them to talk to their GP or contact a mental health service.*

Creating an environment where young people's real voices lead to positive change starts with everyday conversations at home and in school.

If you ever have concerns about your child's emotional well-being, please contact your child's tutor or Year Leader via the school office or Contact Us page on the website, so we can work together to support them.

## **Additional resources**

- [Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Mental Health UK](#)