

Supporting the Mental Health and Well-Being of our School Community

At Green Ridge Primary Academy, we are committed to supporting children, staff and parents in their well-being and mental health. We know that well-being, physical and mental health are all essential to positive learning experiences and future successes.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week runs from 9-15 May to raise awareness of mental health. The week, which is hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, has a theme of 'loneliness'.

Why loneliness?

Loneliness is affecting more and more of us in the UK and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic. Our connection to other people and our community is fundamental to protecting our mental health and we need to find better ways of tackling the epidemic of loneliness.

Having this as a theme raises awareness of the impact of loneliness on our mental wellbeing and the practical steps we can take to address it. (Mental Health Foundation)



**Mental Health
Awareness Week**

9 - 15 May 2022

Together we can
tackle loneliness



What is loneliness?

Loneliness is a common human experience.

Loneliness is something we can all experience from time-to-time, throughout our lives, and will be unique to each individual.

Loneliness is the negative feeling we have when there is a difference between the relationships we have and those that we want.

How can loneliness affect our mental health?

Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, mood, and behaviour. We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health.

Although loneliness is not a mental health problem, it is an experience that can affect our mental health.

Long-term experiences of loneliness can increase the risk of:

- Low mood
- Low self-esteem
- Poor sleep
- Increased anxiety
- Increased stress

Children and young people often go through many changes during their time at school and at home, that can be lonely experiences.

Sometimes, if children and young people are already experiencing poor mental health, there is an increased risk of feeling lonely.

This can be related to misunderstood, which can make it difficult to ask for help.

Spotting when your child or young person feels lonely

It may not be easy to spot the signs of when your child is feeling lonely. They may find it difficult to reach out and share what they are feeling.

Here are some changes to look out for:

Social withdrawal

Are they as sociable as they usually are?

It can take time to find people we connect with. Remind your child or young person that there will be many opportunities in life to meet new people and build healthy relationships with those who make us feel like we belong.

Trouble sleeping

Are they noticeably more tired than usual?

Check out the [Mental Health Foundation's Parent Guide on Sleep](#).

Low self-esteem or a loss of confidence

Has their engagement with the things they enjoyed changed?

Read [Young Mind's parent guide](#) on how to support your child or young person with their self esteem.

Feeling frustrated

Has the way they react to day-to-day situations and people at home changed?

If you are worried about your child or young person, speak to [Young Mind's Parent Helpline and Webchat](#).

Ideas to Support Mental Health and Well-Being linked to Loneliness

Emotional loneliness is feeling a lack or loss of a meaningful relationship

Put in time for activities together.



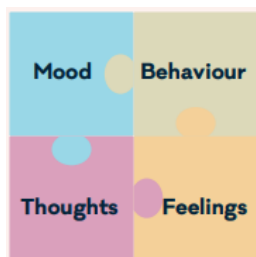
Activities where your child or young person can feel comfortable and supported to share how they are feeling could include, going for a walk, playing a game or cooking together.

Model healthy emotional behaviours.

By sharing how you are feeling, you can positively reinforce that it is ok to share your thoughts and feelings.

Be mindful that behind every behaviour is a feeling.

Look out for any significant changes in their behaviour that may suggest they are in need of more support.



Look at [Young Mind's tips and activity ideas](#) for opening up a conversation with your child or young person.

Existential loneliness means feeling disconnected from the world around us

This can contribute to having a lack of purpose in life.

Talk to your child about what they enjoy doing.

By exploring together their interests and what makes them feel happy, you can remind them to do these when they are feeling lonely, to connect with the world around them.

Sign up to volunteer opportunities.

Encourage your child or young person to sign up to volunteer opportunities within the local community.

Volunteering can help your child or young person to create their sense of purpose.

Encourage your child to express gratitude.

By finding moments to reflect on what they have, children and young people can form a good understanding of the people and things they can look to for support when feeling lonely.

Explore together if there are clubs or community groups that your child could join.

Looking for free practical advice to help you support your child?

[Parenting Smart](#), Place2Be's site for parents and carers, is full of expert advice and tips on supporting the emotional well-being and growth of primary-age children.

parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk



Places to go for Support and Advice
[Healthy Minds Bucks](#)

Self-refer by calling 01865 901600 or submit an online referral [here](#).

[Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(CAMHS Oxford Health\)](#)

01865901951 or [click here](#) for a referral form and more information.

[NHS Every Mind Matters](#) (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>)

[Child Bereavement Support](#)

Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 or visit:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

[Communicate your concerns with school](#)

If you have any concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or well-being, please let school know. You can also talk to your GP for advice.