



Circles for Learning

SEPTEMBER

MHWP Newsletter

www.circlesforlearning.co.uk



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A new academic year brings fresh opportunities to learn, connect & grow. September is a time of new beginnings as children settle into new classes, build relationships & embrace new experiences. This month's theme, Growing Together, reminds us that everyone grows in different ways & at different times. By supporting one another & celebrating our unique strengths, we create school communities where every child can learn, belong & thrive.

In this edition, we explore some of the themes that matter most at the start of the school year. We look at building a sense of belonging, supporting children through transitions & strengthening the relationships that underpin emotional wellbeing & successful learning. The first few weeks of term provide a valuable opportunity to create classrooms where children feel safe, understood & valued.

We hope this month's newsletter offers practical ideas, evidence-informed insights & useful resources to support your work throughout the new term. Wishing you & your pupils a happy, successful & rewarding start to the new academic year.



NEW Autumn Term Mental Health Awareness Calendar

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness Calendar for Schools is designed to help educators embed emotional wellbeing into the life of the school year. Aligned with national awareness days and campaigns, it provides a term by term guide full of trusted links, resources and practical ideas to support mental health education across the whole school community.

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

Growing Together Resource Bundle for schools.

Looking for an assembly and resources to help you Support children settle and build new relationships.

Download our Growing Together: resource bundle for schools.

[Click here.](#)

What is Circles for Learning?

Watch our animation and see [Click HERE](#)

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook and watch Circles for Learning in action.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Circles for Learning:

Circles for Learning is an exciting and powerful programme which introduces a parent and their young child to a class of KS1-KS3 children once a month. These amazing visits help children to watch emotions and how they affect our behaviour, relationships in action and the ups and downs of learning. These fun filled sessions are then followed up with activities that help develop emotional literacy, resilience, self-awareness, tolerance, relational understanding and so



much more. Circles for Learning is a unique, evidence-based programme that brings wellbeing to life in the classroom. It has demonstrated a 75% increase in emotional literacy and 74% in social skills. What teachers found After running the Circles for Learning program: * Emotional literacy increased by 86%. Children were much more able to talk about how they felt and link this to how they behaved. * Self-regulation improved by 86%. Children learnt a range of strategies to help them regulate how they felt. They also became supportive of other children. * Social skills improved by 91%. Children became far more tolerant and supportive towards each other and worked hard on understanding and building better relationships * Empathy grew by 87%. Children listened to each other more and had a better understanding of how our thoughts, feelings, and emotions affect our behaviour

[Click to book an introduction call](#)

[Click to download information](#)

We are really excited to be launching the Circles for Learning Licensed Practitioner training. Our first online training will be in October. It will be for a limited Number of practitioners If you're interested, Or want to talk about it, contact

alisonwaterhouse@circlesforlearning.co.uk



[Click to watch Circles for Learning in action](#)

Circles for Learning in Action: Top Tips for Helping children to settle after the summer break.

All teachers who have introduced Circles for Learning into their classrooms have Highlighted how well it builds positive relationships and enables children to become more supportive of each other

The beginning of a new school year provides a unique opportunity to build the relationships that will shape children's learning, wellbeing & sense of belonging throughout the months ahead. Research consistently shows that when children feel safe, known & valued by their teachers & peers, they are more likely to engage in learning, persevere through challenges & develop confidence in themselves

1. Prioritise Connection Before Curriculum

Spend the first few days getting to know your pupils rather than rushing into content. Learn their names quickly, greet each child personally, show genuine curiosity about their interests.

2. Create Predictable Routines Together

Children settle more easily when they know what to expect. Introduce classroom routines gradually, explain the reasons behind them and involve pupils in creating class agreements based on kindness, respect and cooperation.

3. Notice Strengths Every Day

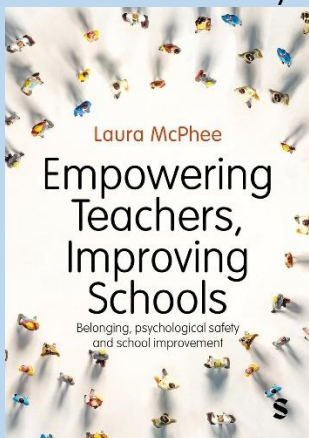
Look for opportunities to recognise each child's strengths, effort and acts of kindness. Rather than simply praising outcomes, describe what you have noticed: "I noticed how patiently you helped your partner," These small moments of recognition build confidence

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch Circles for Learning supporting children

Staff book recommendation

Empowering Teachers, Improving Schools

By Laura McPhee



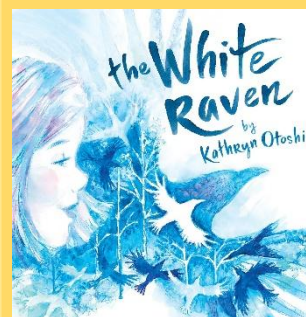
What if schools were environments where staff feel trusted, valued and safe? Where they understand their individual contribution to the success of the whole. Where they are supported to prioritise their own wellbeing, to share challenges with colleagues, innovate and learn from mistakes.

In *Empowering Teachers, Improving Schools*, educationalist Laura McPhee shares her approach to school leadership. An approach that harnesses the power of belonging and psychological safety to empower educators. Laura explores the research evidence and outlines how organisations that promote psychological safety and accountability demonstrate improved performance. This is a practical guide for school leaders enabling them to shape schools into spaces where staff are able to question, provide supportive challenge and think critically.

Children & young people book recommendation.

The White Raven

by Kathryn Otoshi



A lyrical and deeply moving picture book that asks powerful questions about identity, empathy, and acceptance. When a raven is born different, it must navigate the fear and loneliness of being

Cast out—but with a child's kindness and a resilient spirit, this white raven discovers what it means to be seen, loved, and free. Through evocative prose and timeless themes, *The White Raven* gently invites readers of all ages to reflect on what it truly means to belong and the healing power of compassion.

Small Clips, Big Impact: Understanding What Shapes Pupil Wellbeing

This month, we're excited to share another series of short video clips designed to deepen educators' understanding of the key factors that influence children's and young people's

RELATIONSHIPS

[How some friendships last](#)

[Making Friends at School Explained | Small Steps to Friendship](#)

[How to Manage Conflict](#)

[Restorative Practices for Schools](#)

[Creating a Safe Environment](#)

[Building a Belonging Classroom](#)

[The Power of Relationships in Schools](#)

CPD Opportunities for Staff



[ESBD Conference: Thursday 15th October online.](#)

[Adaptive strategies for a neurodiverse friendly classroom: Tuesday 3rd November Online](#)

[Advanced School Mental Health Lead: 18th February 2027 Online](#)

[Adverse Childhood Experiences: Wednesday 7th October Online](#)

[An Anxious Child is not a Learning Child! Wednesday 4th November Online](#)

[Building Resilient Pupils! Turning Everyday Classroom Pressure into Consistent Practice and Culture: Wednesday 30th September Online](#)



Podcast: [Validation, Expression, and Storytelling: Shifting Emotional Literacy from Control to Connection](#)

Video:

[Educating everyone video:](#) Anthony Benedict and Alan Braven argues that schools are most inclusive and effective when they place relationships, compassion and an understanding of behaviour at the heart of teaching.

Blog:

[From Uncertainty to Connection: Supporting Emotional Wellbeing During Transitions.](#)

Whole school resource:

[School attendance and mental wellbeing:](#)

This resource highlights that improving school attendance depends on supporting children's mental wellbeing, fostering positive relationships and creating a strong sense of safety, belonging and connection



Helping your child with their social skills

Helping your child with their social skills is key in their development. By doing this, you are helping them to communicate and interact with others. We use social skills every day, and by modelling these in a positive way you will prepare your child to make friendships and handle different social situations.

[Resources for parents of 5-7yr olds](#)

[Resources for parents of 7-11yr olds](#)

[Resources for parents of Teens](#)

FREE Resources for teachers.

Just click on them and they will take you to the resource

Circles for Learning mental health and wellbeing resources: The Circles for Learning Resources page provides a range of free, practical resources to support schools in developing children's mental health and wellbeing.

Growing Together bundle for schools: Assemblies for Year 7 as well as a variety of lesson plans and resources to support Children to settle into their new classrooms or schools and to build positive relationships

Dealing with change and transitions toolkit Primary This toolkit contains resources to help primary pupils deal with change and prepare for the summer break. Also included are resources for those pupils who will be leaving school, to help them feel more settled and prepared.

Dealing with change and transitions toolkit Secondary and FE This toolkit contains resources to help older students deal with change and prepare for the summer break. Also included are resources for those students who will be leaving school or college

Adapting to Change KS2/3 Lesson Plan: A great lesson to help CYP adapt and manage change.

Celebrating Difference KS2/3 Lesson Plan: This lesson helps children recognise, appreciate and celebrate individual differences, developing empathy, respect and an understanding that diversity strengthens communities and helps everyone feel they belong.

Welcome to the roller coaster transition assembly for Year 7:

Notes for assembly.

Creating an Inclusive School: This resource helps pupils explore diversity, challenge stereotypes and build empathy, encouraging them to create a school where everyone feels respected, included and that they truly belong.

Let's talk about healthy relationships: friendships and conflict: This four-part lesson toolkit, assembly, teacher guidance, and parent/carer guidance supports primary-aged pupils to develop the skills and understanding they need to build healthy friendships and manage conflict in ways that support their mental wellbeing.

Mental health lessons bundle: This free lesson series helps young people develop mental health literacy, build healthy coping strategies, strengthen supportive relationships and increase confidence in seeking help for themselves and others.

Primary School Mental Health Resource Pack: This free CAMHS resource pack provides practical, engaging activities that help primary-aged children develop emotional literacy, resilience, self-esteem, coping skills and supportive friendships

Mental Health Posters Pack of 4

Download our Schools Mental Awareness Calendar
highlighting the days throughout the year when mental health and wellbeing
can be celebrated and promoted



Staff Wellbeing

This month to support our theme Growing Together we have a range of resources to support teachers as they return to work after the summer break and get ready for the academic year. This quote is particularly relevant as we return to school because it reminds us that teachers' emotional wellbeing directly influences the emotional climate of the classroom.

"It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather." *Dr Haim Ginott, Between Teacher and Child*

The state of teacher wellbeing in schools in 2026: The article argues that improving teacher wellbeing requires whole-school leadership, manageable workloads, supportive relationships and cultures where staff feel valued—not simply encouraging individual resilience.

Gratitude cards for staff: More than a wellbeing activity, the cards provide an opportunity for staff to cultivate a mindset that values relationships, recognises strengths, and promotes a positive school culture.

Teacher weekly well-being calendar: Start the term by building in small moments that look after your well-being each week by using this wellbeing weekly planner.

Microjoys: by Cyndie Spiegel: How noticing life's small, everyday moments of joy can help us build hope, resilience and emotional wellbeing,

Articles for Teachers

Belonging by design: Supporting neurodivergent students in the secondary school: The article argues that neurodivergent pupils are most likely to thrive when schools move beyond simply providing accommodations and instead create a genuine culture of belonging, where differences are understood, valued and supported through inclusive relationships, environments and everyday practice.

Hidden Measures of Success: How Schools Shape Self-Worth, Identity, and Human Value: The article argues that schools shape far more than academic achievement—they also shape children's identity and sense of self-worth, and the healthiest school communities are those that foster belonging, agency and contribution rather than encouraging students to base their value on comparison, performance or external validation.

The impact of introducing relational approaches into four primary schools: This two-year study found that investing in whole-school relational approaches—including attachment-informed practice, nurture principles and emotion coaching—led to significant improvements in pupils' social and emotional development, calmer and more nurturing school environments, more positive adult-child interactions, and improved staff wellbeing, highlighting the value of relationship-based practice in schools.

Building an Emotionally Available School: The Emotionally Available School approach argues that children thrive when schools prioritise emotionally available relationships, belonging, inclusion and psychological safety, creating environments where every child feels seen, valued and supported to learn, rather than focusing solely on behaviour or academic outcomes.

Beyond attendance: Listening to children and families about the mental health support needs of young people not in school: The blog argues that improving school attendance begins with creating a strong sense of belonging, as children are far more likely to attend, engage and succeed when they feel safe, valued and connected within their school community.

Wired for Social Connection: What the Adolescent Brain Needs to Thrive: The article explains that adolescents are biologically wired for social connection, and when they experience genuine belonging and trusted relationships, their brains are better to regulate emotions, engage in learning and thrive

Coming in October.

FOR TEACHERS. FOR WELLBEING. FOR EVERY CHILD. ♥

CIRCLES FOR LEARNING PRACTITIONERS TRAINING

BECAUSE RELATIONSHIPS SIT AT THE HEART OF LEARNING ♥



BRING EMPATHY, CONNECTION AND EMOTIONAL INSIGHT
into the heart of your classroom.



PRACTICAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT BEHAVIOUR, WELLBEING AND RELATIONSHIPS
in a meaningful, lasting way.



TRANSFORM CLASSROOM CULTURE THROUGH RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING
and emotional development.

IDEAL FOR TEACHERS, TA'S, THRIVE PRACTITIONERS, ELSA'S, NURTURE TEACHERS, SENCOs, PASTORAL LEADS AND SCHOOL STAFF WHO WANT TO MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE TO PUPILS' WELLBEING AND READINESS TO LEARN.

- ✓ Practical.
- ✓ Relational.
- ✓ Transformational.



INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS. ► TRANSFORM LIVES. ► CHANGE FUTURES. ♥

 **CONTACT:** alisonwaterhouse@circlesforlearning.co.uk |  **VISIT:** www.circlesforlearning.co.uk

Train as a Licensed Circles for Learning Practitioner and bring emotional literacy, connection and relational understanding into the heart of your school.

Circles for Learning is an evidence-informed, year-long programme for children and young people across KS1, KS2 and KS3. Through monthly observations of a parent and young child, followed by carefully planned classroom activities, pupils develop stronger foundations for positive mental health, self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, relationships and learning.

The online practitioner training provides the knowledge, planning and support needed to deliver the programme, alongside coaching throughout your first year. It is suitable for teachers, teaching assistants, ELSAs, SENCOs, pastoral staff, learning mentors, nurture staff and Thrive practitioners who want to make relational and preventative practice part of everyday school life.