

Belonging and Attending Framework

A graduated approach to supporting attendance by increasing a sense of belonging



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This framework is designed to help schools and settings reflect on how they are supporting pupils' sense of belonging, a key driver for attendance (and achievement). It is structured to around the factors that influence a sense of school belonging as identified in National Children's Bureau 2024 literature review - [Understanding and enhancing school belonging](#).












The framework includes factors to consider at the universal, targeted and specialist level and provides links to relevant tools and wider resources that may be useful in areas identified for development.

- Universal: Whole-school preventative approaches that promote good attendance for all pupils.
- Targeted: Strategies and support for groups of pupils identified as being at risk of non-attendance (consider Ordinarily Available Provision and reasonable adjustments).
- Specialist: For individual pupils who are not attending or whose attendance is causing significant concern.

An accompanying [auditing tool](#) is available to help identify areas for development.

All resources are accessible via the supporting [Padlet](#). Each page includes a link at the top to its corresponding Padlet section.

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Why focus on belonging?

ImpactEd's 2024 Understanding Attendance report (drawing on survey responses from 30,000 young people and attendance data from over 200,000 pupils) found that a sense of school belonging is a key driver of attendance across all contexts. Pupils with higher attendance consistently report stronger feelings of school membership than those who are persistently absent.

Findings from the Department for Education's annual survey echo this relationship. In May 2025, only 69% of pupils reported feeling that they belong in school on most or every day, this is an improvement of 12 percentage points from the previous year, but still highlights a significant proportion who feel disconnected. Similarly, 57% of pupils said there is often or always an adult in school who "really cares about me" (up 7 percentage points from 2024), and 61% reported that an adult "listens to me" (a 5-percentage-point increase). The survey also highlighted notable disparities: girls were less likely to report feelings of belonging, and differences were also evident by free school meal eligibility and SEND status.

A clear definition of belonging within a school context is provided by School Belonging: The Importance of Pupil and Teacher Relationships (Allen et al., 2021). The authors describe belonging '**as the extent to which pupils feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported within the school's social environment**'— encompassing relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults. The breadth of factors that influence a sense of school belonging as identified in National Children's Bureau 2024 literature review - [Understanding and enhancing school belonging](#) inform this framework.

In 2025, the Pull Up a Chair project shed light on the experiences of Northumberland young people who were not attending school and their experience of belonging. The film capturing their voices can be viewed [here](#).



We want your child to feel a sense of belonging in their school - **Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow, Attendance Matters**

If a child is not in school, then where are they, and are they safe? Everyone has a part to play in improving school attendance and keeping children safe in education.

1. Awareness and understanding of risk and resilience factors impacting on attendance

UNIVERSAL

Schools/settings are aware of the [Northumberland Attendance Strategy](#) and overall correlation between attendance and achievement.

School Attendance Lead to access support, advice, and best practice at Attendance Network Meetings ([page 10](#)).

All staff are aware of risk and resilience factors that can increase the probability of a child/young person developing emotional/behavioural difficulties and/or mental health difficulties, thus potentially impacting attendance.

- [Child factors](#)
- [Peer factors](#)
- [School factors](#)
- [Parent/carers and family factors](#)
- [Social and community factors](#)
- [Case study example](#)

All staff aware of [pushes and pulls](#)/ Consideration of different approaches to attendance using a [reflection and planning tool](#).

TARGETED

Use of [Profile of Risk Factors](#) to identify and increase awareness of specific pupil groups with concerning attendance profiles (See more detailed tool [here](#)).

Consideration of preventative intervention targeted at pupils with concerning attendance profiles.

Use of strategies/tools such as [Pupil Passport template](#) to share important information, and to support staff to understand individual pupil's risk and resilience factors e.g., spotlight on a pupil during staff briefings.

Consideration of the pushes and pull factors for Young Carers and the [support available](#).

Schools can request training with [parents from the Education Welfare Team](#). Contact your EWO or michelle.clapperton@northumberland.gov.uk

SPECIALIST

Complete the [Formulation and Action Planning Tool](#) with information gathered from the pupil, parents/carers and staff who know the pupil well. The following resources will be useful as part of this formulation process:

- [Profile of Risk Factors](#)
- [Push and Pull Factors](#)
- [Protective Factors](#)
- [Intervention Grid](#)

Use of an [Assessment Template](#) to highlight young person's needs and provider wider context to share with staff.

Training available from EP team as part of SLA psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk.

Use of [Belonging Support and Action Plan](#) to plan interventions aimed at teaching skills in identified areas of need.

UNIVERSAL

Whole school EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance) training offered by the Education Welfare team or the Virtual School.
Contact educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.

TARGETED

SPECIALIST

2. Knowledge of sources of support

Knowledge of available support relating to belonging and attendance e.g. NCC/Be You, Early Help:

- [Northumberland Education](#)
- [Be You](#)
- [Northumberland's Early Help](#)

Consideration of [Northumberland's Ordinarily Available Provision](#) / [Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision](#).

[Northumberland SEND local offer](#).

Access to NCC and NHS consultation lines for advice and further support:

- Emotional Wellbeing Behaviour Support Team [HINT Consultations](#)
- Primary Mental Health 0191 2933012 (phone admin team who arrange a time)

Consideration of [Northumberland's Ordinarily Available Provision](#) / [Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision](#).

[Northumberland SEND local offer](#),

Referral for individual support for specific need e.g. mental health; learning needs.

- [NCC Children's Services](#)
- [Be You \(Mental Health Support Team\)](#)
- [Early Help Assessment - MARF form](#)

Contact with available support services via [Support Directory for Schools](#).

3. Safeguarding

All staff are aware of child exploitation and safeguarding procedures.

- [Child exploitation: key definitions | Catch22](#)
- [Child Exploitation Padlet](#)

All staff aware [Operation Endeavour](#) and [Operation Encompass](#)

[Helplines, Apps and Websites for young people](#).

[SORTED](#) For advice, guidance, and intervention around substance misuse (including training):

- [SORTED leaflet](#)
- [SORTED drugs resources](#)
- sorted@northumberland.gov.uk

[Resources for 1-1 work around child exploitation](#).

UNIVERSAL

TARGETED

SPECIALIST

Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) resources for group work:

- [Child exploitation resource pack](#)
- [Resource for group work: 'So you got naked online'](#)
- [Resource for group work: 'Sex, the Internet and You'](#)
- [Barnardo's Be Smart, Be Safe resource pack](#)

Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) resources for professionals:

- [Information for professionals delivering 'Send me a pic'](#)



A positive school climate that attends to psychological safety, sensory and physical needs helps pupils feel secure, valued, and emotionally comfortable. Fair policies and supportive teacher interactions foster trust and understanding, while calm, predictable environments and sensory-friendly spaces promote emotional regulation and connection. Accessible, supervised safe spaces further encourage social interaction and regular attendance, reinforcing pupils' sense of belonging and engagement with school.

1. Physical environment (Supporting pupils to navigate the environment; 'safe' spaces'; physical accessibility)

UNIVERSAL

The environment promotes a sense of safety, belonging and inclusivity (e.g. appropriately decorated corridors/communal spaces, consideration of accessibility for pupils, e.g. ramps etc.).

Access to staff training to support pupils with [mobility difficulties in the classroom](#).

Access to staff training to promote [inclusivity in the classroom](#).

[Learning walk](#) around school considering what makes the school/setting a welcoming and supportive place to be for both staff and pupils.

[Staff training](#) to understand the importance of play, leisure and social opportunities within school. This includes creating appropriate spaces and enough time for these. To show awareness of how students may play or socialise differently based on their cultural background or if they have additional needs.

[Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision guidance](#) on Enabling Environment (pg. 35).

TARGETED

Individual classrooms are free from clutter and are well organised.

A [designated calm space](#) for students to access when feeling overwhelmed.

Providing a map of the school for pupils who find the environment difficult to navigate.

Rating areas or colour coding the map with how comfortable a child feels in those areas:

- [Scaling](#)
- [Blob tree](#)
- [Blob classroom](#)
- [Blob playground](#)

Consideration of [Northumberland's Ordinarily Available Provision](#) / [Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision](#).

SPECIALIST

Pupil input around what constitutes a safe space for them (person-centred at point of reintegration).

Providing a map of the school for pupils who find the environment difficult to navigate.

Rating areas or colour coding the map with how comfortable a child feels in those areas:

- [Scaling](#)
- [Blob tree](#)
- [Blob classroom](#)
- [Blob playground](#)

Implementation of reasonable adjustments integrated within both the classroom and in the wider school environment and social groups/contexts.

2. The sensory environment

UNIVERSAL

Sharing of [sensory processing resources](#) to all staff.

Staff access to [Sensory Awareness Training and Sensory Audit](#) and workshops on [sensory processing issues](#).

[Consideration of classroom environments](#) and ideas on the ways in which a setting might be altered if pupils experience sensory processing difficulties and find it hard or very anxiety-provoking to tolerate certain sensations or situations.

[Early Years OAP guidance](#) on Enabling Environment (pg. 35).

TARGETED

[Northumberland Children's Occupational Therapy Service consultation line](#) to access advice and guidance on:

- Clarification of the service eligibility criteria.
- Practical advice on managing children and young people with physical and/or sensory processing difficulties impacting their daily living skills.

[Designated quiet area](#) to access at lunchtimes and break times where pupils can eat, including a list of pupils who require access.

Spaces that promote relaxation and calm.

Staff understanding of [movement breaks](#), who might need them and [how to implement them](#).

Use of a [sensory behaviour checklist](#) to further support understanding of individual pupil sensory needs.

SPECIALIST

Collaborative approach to understanding young person's sensory/environmental needs. Use of [Sensory Processing Profile](#) to identify strengths and areas of need.

[Sensory OT referral for individual pupil](#) (referral required from a medical professional, a health professional, social worker, or HINT).

Map of the school environment, rate the different areas with how comfortable a child feels in those areas:

- [Scaling](#)
- [Blob tree](#)
- [Blob classroom](#)
- [Blob playground](#)

3. Communication supportive environment

A communication supportive environment ([resource library for educators](#)) that ensures that children's speech, language and communication skills are planned for and supported throughout the day.

- [Early years](#)

Pupils assigned a named member of staff to seek direct support from.

Consideration of [means, reasons and opportunities](#) for individual pupils to communicate.

Pupils assigned a named member of staff to seek direct support and communication from even if the young person is non-attending. This communication could support reintegration or signpost activities/events/guidance following the interest of the young person.

UNIVERSAL

- [Primary Schools](#)
- [Checklist](#)

Staff awareness of [communication friendly classrooms](#).

Identifying a [communication champion](#) in school/setting.

Use of [The ShREC approach](#) for high quality interactions.

TARGETED

Range of approaches in place to support communication e.g.:

- Use of [now and then boards](#) to represent a place or activity to help a CYP to understand what is happening first and next.
- [How to guide: Now/Next Boards](#)
- A [visual timetable](#) to represent what is happening throughout a session.
- Red/green cards on the desk.
- Non-verbal ways of communicating, e.g. [Makaton, symbols, choosing board](#)

Staff use of ['Think Time' Rule](#).

SPECIALIST



Quality and consistency in teacher-pupil interactions are essential for building a lasting sense of connection. Friendliness and fairness from teachers are highly valued by pupils and significantly influence their sense of belonging. Supportive and individualised attention from teachers, where pupils feel seen and heard, plays a crucial role in fostering this connection.

1. Relational policy / Staff-pupil relationships

UNIVERSAL

[Development and implementation](#) of relational/behaviour policies designed to support and promote belonging and inclusion, which are reviewed for effectiveness.

Access to Northumberland's Trauma Informed and Attachment Awareness training and/or ['behaviour is communication' workshop](#) – contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.

A focus on developing positive staff-pupil relationships and interactions.

Staff understanding and promoting relational values by using approaches such as:

- [PACE](#)
- [Emotion Coaching Training](#) - This is a costed training package (£200) for school staff and parents. The package includes two staff training sessions, and one parent workshops.
- [Restorative conversations](#)

TARGETED

[Reasonable adjustments](#) made where identified.

Pupils have a named member of staff they know they can turn to.

Identified pupils have a [personal profile](#) (or similar) to support staff to understand their individual needs.

Staff considering what a pupil is [communicating by their behaviour](#) and [reframing behaviour](#).

Pupils complete [self-determination reflection tool](#).

SPECIALIST

Individual arrangements agreed and shared with staff.

Regular check-ins between trusted adults and identified pupils.

Team around the child.

Giving time for respite and recovering to remove the pressure and reconnecting through trusted relationships.

2. Positive Noticing

Regular use of the [positive noticing](#) and rewards systems in school by staff which can also be accessed by parents.

Regular positive communication with home (e.g. phone calls, emails, postcards).

Positive communication and regular opportunities to check in with teachers, even if a pupil is not attending.

3. Staff Wellbeing and Support

UNIVERSAL

Staff wellbeing training (Trailblazer only) contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk.

Regularly measure and monitor staff wellbeing.

A focus on staff wellbeing using action planning resources.

Opportunities for regular supervision for all staff members.

Opportunities for peer supervision / peer support groups.

Development of a staff Wellbeing Policy.

Regular sharing of wellbeing resources with staff:

- Be You resources
- Online resources
- Posters
- Handouts

TARGETED

Reasonable adjustments for staff.

Regular check-ins and recognition of fatigue from providing intensive emotional support over time.

SPECIALIST

A member of SLT to check-in.

1:1 support or coaching if support is requested or a need identified.

4. Staff understanding of individual experiences

Access to Northumberland's Trauma Informed and Attachment Awareness training and/or 'behaviour is communication' workshop – contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.

Regular 'pupil spotlight' time so that staff feel up to date:

Identified staff have full understanding of home context including issues that may impact attendance.

Use of Northumberland Individual Profile of Risks to highlight context and risks.

UNIVERSAL

Access of [training and information](#) to support staff in developing their understanding of ACEs, Trauma, Safeguarding, Trauma and Attachment.

Staff understanding and implementation of relational values using approaches such as:

- [PACE](#)
- [Emotion Coaching Training](#)
- [Restorative Conversation Script](#)
- [Restorative Conversations \(WARM Framework\)](#)

Early Years staff use of [Early Years school readiness passport](#).

Staff considering what a pupil is [communicating by their behaviour](#) and [reframing behaviour](#).

TARGETED

'Pupil spotlight' or similar can be used in staff meetings and briefing to share information on a pupil, or a group of pupils, where staff need to be aware of additional information regarding the pupil/group. This is to support staff to understand individual contexts and potential reasons for behaviours they may see in school.

SPECIALIST

Completion of assessment tools to support staff understanding of the individual's experiences:

- [Pupil Assessment Template](#)
- [Pupil Observation Tool](#)
- ['Pushes and Pulls' \(blank\)](#)
- ['Pushes' and 'Pulls' \(prompt sheet\)](#)



Positive peer relationships play a key role in strengthening a student's sense of belonging at school. When students have friends and feel socially connected, they are more likely to feel safe, accepted, and valued within the school community. These relationships provide emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and increase engagement in school life. As a result, school can be a place where children and young people experience connection and enjoyment. Hence, strong peer relationships foster a welcoming environment that promotes a sense of belonging and engagement in learning.

1. Bullying

UNIVERSAL

Policies are in place to tackle bullying which are reviewed for effectiveness.

- [Design an effective anti-bullying policy.](#)
- [Example of anti-bullying policy statement \(NSPCC\)](#)

Use of '[Bullying Prevention Tool](#)' to consider a whole school approach to bullying and develop a bullying prevention strategy.

Resources for pupils are provided.

- [Primary Poster](#)
- [Top tips](#)

[Workshops/lessons for pupils](#) looking at online bullying.

Bullying UK helpline 0808 800 2222.

TARGETED

Staff awareness of individual pupil dynamics.

Close communication between feeder/receiving schools around transition time regarding individual pupil dynamics.

Sharing of resources with parents:

- [Bullying at school | Bullying advice for parents and children](#)
- [Bullying Advice For Parents & Carers | Help Stop Bullying](#)

[Explore experiences](#) of being a victim of bullying and engaging in bullying behaviour.

Evidence based, in school intervention support, e.g. ELSA, FRIENDS, Thrive.

[HINT EWB Consultations](#) line (school staff only).

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Bespoke support for pupils who have been bullied or for pupils who perceive that they have been bullied.

Appropriate external support services involved at earliest opportunities (e.g. HINT):

- [Form to request individual support](#)
- [Referral forms and checklists](#)

2. Supporting social opportunities and friendships

Inclusive and broad extra-curricular offer to encourage friendships and social opportunities (break and lunchtime opportunities).

[Class activities](#) to support social opportunities and friendships.

Provision of extra-curricular clubs for vulnerable pupils.

Identification of pupils who require additional social support.

Appropriate external support services involved (e.g. HINT):

- [Form to request individual support](#)
- [Referral forms and checklists](#)

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Assemblies focusing on friendships/positive peer relationships:

- [Primary assembly](#)
- [Secondary assembly](#)

TARGETED

Audit social skills using [Social Skills Assessment Form](#) (for use by staff and/or pupils).

Group work activities to develop relationships: [Compliment Circles](#).

Class sessions focusing on friendships/positive peer relationships.

- [Primary session](#)
- [Secondary session](#)

Peer Mentor support for vulnerable pupils. The [Peer Mentor Programme](#) is open to all schools in Northumberland.

[Friendship Programme | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#) (via NCL Padlet).

[What's worrying me](#) mapping tool.

Referral (through [Multi-Agency Referral Form \[MARF\]](#) then triaged) to a 4-week course to develop relationship skills and emotional regulation:

- Charge up (11-16)
- Relax kids (5-10)

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Collaborative approach to understanding young person's social and emotional needs:

- [Emotional Understanding Checklist \(Autism Support Service\)](#)
- [Social Relationships Checklist \(Autism Support Service\)](#)
- [Social Imagination & Flexibility Checklist \(Autism Support Service\)](#)



Family support, including strong home-school relationships, significantly enhances a student's sense of belonging and school attendance. When families are emotionally supportive and engaged with the school, children feel more secure, valued, and connected to their learning environment. This emotional foundation fosters a positive identity and encourages regular attendance. Collaborative relationships between home and school also help identify and address barriers to attendance early, such as health or social concerns. Ultimately, a strong sense of belonging motivates students to attend consistently, and regular attendance further strengthens their connection to the school community.

1. Effective and Accessible Home School Communication

UNIVERSAL

Easy, accessible and well understood communication methods between home and school.

Regular updates via different communication channels to highlight pupil/school achievements (e.g. Newsletters, social media, class charts).

Circulation of [Be You parent newsletters](#) to provide additional information and support to parents.

Provision of regular opportunities for parents to come into school and network with other parents e.g.

- Parent workshops (Be You)
- Coffee mornings

A variety of methods of collecting parent views/feedback e.g. Surveys, post it notes.

TARGETED

Additional support for families to increase school engagement.

Named contact/liaison for parent.

Ongoing targeted invitations / news sharing about school events.

Consider providing Home-school link book to encourage communication.

SPECIALIST

Regular contact from named contact/liaison for parent.

Direct email/telephone conversation with non-attending pupil parent to inform of school events/extra-curricular activities etc. with invite for pupil to attend.

Adaptation of [letter template from DfE](#) with consideration to the individual's circumstances.

2. Support for parents/carers

'No blame' culture around attendance.

Awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences within the local context.

Mental health support for adults accessible via [Qwell](#).

Targeted parental support via Cygnus Support:

- [CYGNUS offer](#)
- [CYGNUS referral form](#)
- [CYGNUS referral information](#)

[Returning to School After Absence](#) Padlet shared with families, including [support for first day back](#) and [questions you may have](#).

UNIVERSAL

[Be You Family Zone](#) and [Be You Whole School Approach Menu of Support](#) offer workshops and leaflet resources for parents in relation to:

- Worry
- Low mood
- Mindfulness
- Emotional regulation
- Resilience
- Self-esteem
- Exam stress
- Transition
- Friendships
- Self-harm
- [Looking after you own emotional wellbeing workshop](#)
- [Looking after your child's emotional wellbeing workshop](#)

Contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.

Sharing of Family Hub resources and information with parents:

- [Family Hub - guide to services](#)
- [Central Northumberland Family Hubs 'What's On' Padlet](#)
- [West Northumberland Family Hubs Padlet List](#)
- [North Northumberland Family Hubs 'What's On' Padlet](#)
- [Strengthening Relationships Padlet](#)

TARGETED

Be You Parent-led CBT programme (1-1 or group). Accessed through direct referral to PMH team (either telephone or school consult).

Rolling parent-led CBT programme through CWP's (Children's Wellbeing Practitioners) - Accessed through MARF.

Targeted [resource sharing](#) with parents who may be struggling.

Consideration of practical barriers e.g. Transportation, housing, routines.

Signposting to [Family Hub: PEEP sessions](#) (for children 5 and under).

Schools can request training with [parents from the Education Welfare Team](#). Contact your EWO or michelle.clapperton@northumberland.gov.uk

[Leaflet](#) for parents and carers of children experiencing challenges, outlining potential barriers and directing them to support.

Resource sharing with parents:

- [Not Fine in School - School Refusal, School Attendance](#)

SPECIALIST

Education Welfare - Provide access to Early Help, Social Care, Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) support etc to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance. Plans will be monitored and reviewed to avoid legal intervention if possible. See [Attendance Strategy](#).

Northumberland [Portage service](#) for young children with SEND who are not attending a nursery or preschool provision.

Shared decision making (parent video) [Tips for parents and carers \(Anna Freud Youtube video\)](#).

Creating a 'back to school plan' (for parents): [Back To School Blues: Supporting school anxiety and reluctant returners with resources by Dr Tina Rae - Positive Young Minds](#).



Recognition and celebration of diversity

Children and young people can offer unique perspectives on what it is like to be a pupil at their school; involving them in decision-making can create meaningful change and better academic outcomes, as well as facilitating a sense of empowerment and inclusion. Schools with a strong commitment to pupil voice have reported many positive outcomes. These include a reduction in exclusions, better behaviour, better relationships across the whole-school community, and improving attainment and attendance. (Anna Freud, Mentally Healthy Schools)

1. Pupil choice

UNIVERSAL

Pupils are given choices where possible and appropriate.

TARGETED

Targeted internal focus groups to seek pupil voice on key issues and feedback on suggested changes. Please see: [Example Questions](#).

SPECIALIST

1:1 pupil views with trusted adult using [Wellbeing Cards](#).

1:1 activity [Ideal Adult](#).

2. Pupil voice

[Guidance](#) for capturing pupil views
Opportunities for pupils to express their views? (e.g. school council, post boxes for concerns).

[Sense of Belonging Pupil Questionnaire](#)
(secondary).

'You said, we did' board – promoting pupil voice.

Student Council that is fully representative of the pupil population.

Tutor group meetings.

Suggestion Boxes that are checked regularly.

Pupils are encouraged to be autonomous (knowing where to get support/staff to seek out/confidence to do this).

Targeted pupils' views to be explored through and actioned when appropriate using a variety of measures (focus groups, surveys):

- [Belonging Art Workshop - Primary](#)
- [Belonging Art Workshop - Secondary](#)

1:1 Sessions / Small Group Activities:

- [Blob Tree](#)
- [Blob Classroom](#)
- [Blob Playground](#)
- [Incredible 5 Point Scale and Anxiety Curve](#)
- [Drawing the Ideal School](#)
- [Backpack tool](#)

Other practical materials may include:

- Scaling
- [Talking Mats](#)
- Conversation Dice
- Strength Cards
- Puppets/dolls/small world toys

[Creative Ways of Collecting Individual Views](#)

Create a [PATH](#) with the young person.

[Mapping the Landscape of Fear](#) - use alongside [Cards](#) (Secondary).

[Mapping the Landscape of Fear](#) (Primary).

[Drawing the Ideal School](#).

3. Inclusive policies and practice

UNIVERSAL

School policies promote anti-discrimination and inclusivity.

[National Awareness Days](#) are scheduled in the school calendar and celebrated where appropriate and possible.

An anti-bullying policy is in place and reflected in school culture.

[Relational Policy Guidance.](#)

Whole school [resources](#) to promote anti racist education.

Whole school [resources](#) to inform a graduated response to gender equality and positive peer cultures.

[Resources](#) to promote inclusive language when working with children and young people.

TARGETED

Targeted group work to explore [Protective Factors](#).

SPECIALIST

Develop a pupil [Reintegration Plan](#) which actively involves the pupil and family.

4. Reasonable adjustments

Staff awareness/training around sensory needs (e.g. sensory methods of gaining control without the need to shout).

[Equality Act 2010: Disability Rights and Education - GOV.UK.](#)

[Training and resources](#) to enable staff to meet sensory needs.

Staff awareness and active use of individual up-to-date pupil passports: [Pupil Passport Template](#).

Safety plan which might be written into a tool such as the zones of regulation or [Incredible 5 Point Scale](#).

Discussion with individuals re what strategies / resources might make a difference – although this might be targeted.

Involvement of OT around individual need:

- [OT consultation line](#)

Use of [Incredible Five Point Scale](#).

Develop a pupil [Reintegration Plan](#) which actively involves the pupil and family.

UNIVERSAL

Current training packages are available via [Occupational Therapy - Be You](#) which may help to support schools to further understand reasonable adjustments.

TARGETED

Understanding how [reasonable adjustments](#) (e.g. ear defenders, fidget toys/blue tac) / alternatives that pupils use in school can support individuals and the context in which they are required. Young people are encouraged to use these independently.

Involvement of OT around individual need:

- Leave early passes, toilet passes, time out cards etc.
- Movement breaks
- Safe space
- Uniform adjustments

[Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision](#)

(OAP): Supporting sensory and/or physical needs, hearing impairments, visual impairments, multisensory needs, gross and fine motor and sensory differences from pg. 37.

EYSTAR funding for children requiring additional support on a short-term basis. [Information and Guidance](#) for pre-reception age.

EYSTAR [Information and Guidance](#) for reception age and above.

Reasonable adjustments are considered in collaboration with parents and pupils where possible.

HINT offer a range of training sessions to help develop understanding of needs.

SPECIALIST



Pupil health and wellbeing are closely linked to both a sense of belonging and school attendance. When children feel physically and emotionally well, they are more likely to engage positively with their peers, teachers, and the wider school environment. Good mental health supports confidence, resilience, and social interaction, all of which contribute to feeling connected and valued at school. Supporting pupil wellbeing through inclusive practices, mental health support, and positive relationships are key to strengthening belonging and improve attendance.

1. Physical health

UNIVERSAL

Opportunities to be physically active throughout the day (e.g. breaks, lunchtimes, within lessons as appropriate/whole class activities).

Consideration of appropriate accessibility arrangements for pupils.

Access to staff training and assemblies focusing on substance misuse provided by SORTED. [See SORTED leaflet](#) and contact email for more information.

Staff training regarding [sensory impairments via LINT](#).

[Be You](#) Occupational Therapy school staff training.

TARGETED

Individual physical needs are understood and considered.

Use of [Occupational Therapy Screening Tool](#) to identify any areas of difficulty and strategies/activities which may help.

Appropriate adjustments are made for pupils with a visual impairment, hearing impairments or multi-sensory impairment. [Contact LINT for advice and guidance](#).

Required building adaptations should be made in advance of a pupil attending the school.

All relevant staff are familiar with any specialist equipment assigned to a pupil, and that the equipment is available when required. This could include mobility equipment (walking frames or wheelchair) equipment to maintain limb position (hand/foot splints), toileting equipment (grab rails/toilet seat), or classroom equipment (adapted pens, chairs, angled boards etc.).

Provision of reasonable adjustments such as short movement breaks during the school day.

SPECIALIST

Schools have a good understanding of the pupil's needs, and management of these, from meeting with parents and pupils.

Individual health care plans in place and followed.

Referral for advice from Occupational Therapy:

- [Be You Occupational Therapy consultations](#)
- [Sensory Processing Service](#)

[Referral for 1:1 support from SORTED regarding substance misuse](#).

UNIVERSAL

TARGETED

SPECIALIST

SORTED For advice, guidance, and intervention around substance misuse (including training):

- [SORTED leaflet](#)
- [SORTED drugs resources](#)
- sorted@northumberland.gov.uk

2. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Development and implementation of a whole school wellbeing policy.

Mental Health and Wellbeing audit - [Emotional Wellbeing & Behaviour Support](#).

Whole school understanding of trauma-informed practice:

- [Emotion Coaching Training](#)
- [Restorative conversations](#)
- Access to Northumberland's Trauma Informed and Attachment Awareness training and/or '[behaviour is communication](#)' [workshop](#) – contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.
- See [Northumberland Schools C.A.R.E. Information, Training and Support Available](#) for more information on support available
- See [Relationships Matters Padlet](#)

[Whole School Approaches to Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing A Good Practice Guide](#).

[Be You Whole School Approach Menu of Support](#) - Class/group sessions:

- Anxiety
- Worry
- Transition
- Exam Stress
- Friendship
- Self-harm
- Mindfulness
- Emotional Regulation
- Resilience
- Sleep Hygiene
- Low mood
- Self-esteem

Internal intervention support e.g.

- [ELSA](#) (Costed, contact psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk for more information regarding ELSA training)
- [Thrive](#) (Costed)
- [FRIENDS](#) Resilience ([FRIENDS information webinar](#)).

[HINT EWB Consultations](#) line (school staff only).

If mental health and wellbeing need identified seek support from appropriate services:

- Telephone consultation (countywide PMHW/EMHP) 0191 2933012 (phone admin team who arrange time)
- School consult (face to face, trailblazer only – direct referral or for advice; phone admin team who arrange time)
- Children and Young People's Intensive Community Treatment Service 01670 502 700
- For urgent or emergency referrals requiring a response within 24 hours call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.
- Urgent helplines: [Urgent help](#) | [Anna Freud](#)

UNIVERSAL

Be You Whole School Approach Menu ofSupport – Assemblies and staff training:

- Anxiety
- Worry
- Transition
- Exam Stress
- Friendship
- Self-harm
- Mindfulness
- Emotional Regulation
- Resilience
- Sleep Hygiene
- Low mood
- Self-esteem

Contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information about policy reviews and how to use Be You resources.

Key stakeholders understanding of [burnout](#).

Regular sharing of mental health and wellbeing resources with pupils, e.g.

- [Self-Care Resources For Young People | Anna Freud](#)
- [Mental Health Resources For Children and Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- [Home - Kooth](#)
- [Toby Henderson Trust](#)

TARGETED

Contact beyou@northumberland.gov.uk for more information about how to use Be You resources.

Leuven scales of wellbeing and involvement.

See Early Years Inclusion Service for more information.

Consideration of [Anxiety mapping tool](#).

HINT training offers such as 'Anxiety & Autism'.

SPECIALIST

3. Developing self-efficacy, resilience and self-esteem

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Support and opportunities to practice the skills needed for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and fostering and maintaining positive relationships.

- [MeLSA approach](#) - for more details please email: MeLSA@Northumberland.gov.uk
- Whole class [FRIENDS Resilience](#).
- [ELSA](#) - for more details please email: ELSA@Northumberland.gov.uk

Regular sharing of resilience and self-esteem resources with pupils, e.g.

- [Confidence and self-esteem tips - for 11-18 year olds | Mind](#)

Be You assemblies, whole class sessions, workshops, training and resources:

- [Resilience](#)
- [Self-esteem](#)

TARGETED

In school group intervention support, such as:

- [ELSA](#) (Costed, contact psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk for more information regarding ELSA training)
- [Thrive](#) (Costed)
- [FRIENDS Resilience](#) ([FRIENDS information webinar](#)).
- [WOWW intervention](#) (Working on What Works, contact psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk for more information)

Awareness of strategies to support key groups of pupils including those with diagnosis e.g. Anxiety, ASD: [Autism Support Team](#).

SPECIALIST

Targeted intervention - Bespoke support, consider making a referral for external support.

- [Form to request individual support](#)
- [Referral forms and checklists](#)

Direct referral to EMHP for self-esteem: Telephone consultation (countywide PMHW/EMHP) 0191 2933012 (phone admin team who arrange time).



Academic achievement can significantly influence a student's sense of belonging and impact school attendance. When students experience success in their learning, they often feel more confident, competent, and valued within the school environment. This sense of accomplishment can strengthen their connection to school, making them feel like they belong and are capable of contributing meaningfully. In turn, this positive self-perception encourages regular attendance, as students are more motivated to engage with their learning and maintain their progress.

1. School understanding learning needs

UNIVERSAL

Appropriate curriculum and differentiation to ensure lessons are accessible:

- [Ordinarily available provision guidance](#)
- [Quality first teaching](#)

Training packages (available to schools in trailblazer areas) offered through [Occupational Therapy - Be You](#) to support the implementation of reasonable adjustments including:

- Inclusivity in the classroom
- Supporting mobility in the classroom
- Behaviour is communication
- Executive Function Skills
- Handwriting in the Classroom
- Supporting Play in School
- Visual Perception

[Whole school request for support](#) to develop inclusive practices through:

- School development work
- Staff training
- Coaching and mentoring

TARGETED

Screening to identify if additional support required:

- [Literacy Support Screening Tool](#)
- [Maths Support Screening Tool](#)

[Strategies](#) to support students with literacy difficulties.

[School consultation booking forms for:](#)

- Autism Support (online)
- Speech and Language Support (telephone)
- Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Support (video or telephone)
- Literacy Support (video or telephone)
- Maths Support (video or telephone)

[Early Years Inclusion & SEND resources](#)

including strategies, 'how to' guides and information about available support for Early Years.

Access to [resources and support](#) from:

- EAL Service
- Portage Service
- Sensory Support Service

[HINT training](#) offers supportive strategies and guidance for using screening tools.

SPECIALIST

Appropriate external support services involved at earliest opportunities (Educational Psychology, EAL, HINT):

- [Form to request individual support](#)
- [Referral forms and checklists](#)

[SpLD Literacy_\(Dyslexia\) Resources](#)

[SpLD Maths \(Dyscalculia\) Resources](#)

[SLCN Supporting Speech, Language and Communication \(SLC\)](#)

2. Learning Skills

UNIVERSAL

Staff promote a growth mindset by helping pupil's to see what can be achieved by effort and perseverance (e.g. whole-school [MeLSA approach](#)). For more details please email: MeLSA@Northumberland.gov.uk.

QAA Scotland [resources](#) and group activities for Higher Education students to develop:

- Academic resilience
- Critical self-reflection
- Mindset
- Self-belief (self-efficacy)
- Self-management of expectations
- Time management for independent learning

TARGETED

Group intervention to learning skills (e.g. delivered by a trained [MeLSA](#)).

Group intervention to support social and emotional needs (e.g. delivered by a trained [ELSA](#)).

For further information regarding MeLSA or ELSA training, please contact psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk.

SPECIALIST

Appropriate external support services involved at earliest opportunities (Educational Psychology, EAL, HINT):

- [Form to request individual support](#)
- [Referral forms and checklists](#)

[SpLD Literacy \(Dyslexia\) Resources](#)

[SpLD Maths \(Dyscalculia\) Resources](#)

[SLCN Supporting Speech, Language and Communication \(SLC\)](#)



Students with clear goals and ambitions often feel more connected to their school environment because they see it as a pathway to achieving their goals. They are therefore more likely to engage with peers and teachers, fostering a stronger sense of community and belonging. Aspirations can also promote positive identity development, which reinforces feelings of inclusion and acceptance.

1. Aspirations

UNIVERSAL

Consideration of support from NCC Early Careers Team (Talent and Experience) who can offer support to your school/setting regarding careers advice, interactive workshops, assemblies, work experience, mock interviews, parents evening stands and career fairs. Please contact apprenticeshipenquiries@northumberland.gov.uk.

School culture that promotes informed career decision making and a wide variety of career opportunities accessible for all.

Advertised open evenings.

Career trips to inspire pupils.

Work experience opportunities within Northumberland County Council – contact: workexperienceenquiries@northumberland.gov.uk

TARGETED

Use of Youth Employment [lesson plans](#) and resources.

[North East Combine Authority](#) ambition resource bank.

[Application](#) support for identified pupils.

Consideration of additional support for young people with [SEND](#).

Completion of [skills assessment](#).

Engagement in programmes run by [NUFC](#).

SPECIALIST

Where appropriate a work experience opportunity within the local community could be arranged following young person's interests.



Participation in extracurricular activities is a key factor in enhancing school belonging. Pupils report positive feelings linked to engaging in activities that contribute to their school community, reinforcing positive mental health outcomes. Even moderate participation in extracurricular activities can yield benefits, with involvement in too many activities not necessarily increasing the sense of belonging further.
[Understanding and enhancing school belonging: Launching our literature review](#)

1. Enrichment

UNIVERSAL

Access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities such as clubs, lunchtime activities and wrap around care.

Opportunities for wider achievements beyond the curriculum e.g. assemblies, performances and celebration days.

Opportunities to attend school trips.

Stay and play sessions offered to Early Years parents/carers.

Signposting families to wider community groups such as [Family Hubs](#) and Library Services.

TARGETED

Consultation with key groups of pupils.

Enrichment focused off-site opportunities for targeted pupils.

Liaison with Early Careers team (workexperienceenquiries@northumberland.gov.uk) to discuss local off-site opportunities (for example - Port of Blyth, Fire service, Quotient Sciences).

Engagement in programmes run by [NUFC](#).

Signposting identified pupils/groups to specific events/groups that may align with their interests or needs.

Contact with [Early Help](#) for support for identified pupils.

Consideration of potential funding options to support young person's interest e.g. small group tuition, equipment and trips.

SPECIALIST

Information given to families even if child or young person is not attending about community groups/activities.

Northumberland [Portage service](#) for young children with SEND who are not attending a nursery or preschool provision.



When transitions are well-supported, students feel welcomed, prepared, and emotionally safe, which helps them build trust in the new environment. This sense of security encourages them to form relationships with peers and staff, fostering a feeling of connection and inclusion. As students begin to feel they belong, they are more likely to engage with school life and attend regularly. The best transition should be thought of in much wider terms. Building resilience, motivation and a sense of school belonging long-term are key to learners feeling settled.

[Transitions in Education: Guidance for Northumberland Schools and Settings](#)

1. Starting Primary School

UNIVERSAL

[Toolkit of advice](#) shared with parents.

[Early Years school readiness passport](#) updated and shared with new provision.

Early Years staff attendance to Early Years Transition events (as advertised on Early Years update/ [Northumberland Education](#)).

[Transition Top Tips](#) (Early Years).

TARGETED

Additional transition arrangements with families, Early Years provisions and new school.

Use of [SEND checker on School Readiness Passport](#) to track concerns and progress for identified children.

Contact Health Visitor (single point of contact number (SPOC): 03003732488.) to discuss concerns and share information from the 2YO check.

SPECIALIST

[Request support from Early Years Inclusion Service](#) via School Readiness Passport.

Use of [Early Years inclusion grid](#) to identify concerns and actions.

2. Transition from one setting to another (Including - mainstream to specialist provision; transition to and from alternative provision)

Good communication links between feeder schools and receiving schools.

Both settings following [Northumberland](#) transition guidance.

Assemblies and class sessions can be delivered to trailblazer schools by [Be You](#).

Transition 'Smooth Moves' workshops available from Educational Welfare Team. Contact educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk for more information.

[Additional transition arrangements](#) for vulnerable groups or identified who struggle with transition (for example - Additional visits, escorted by staff, group sessions).

Use of [Pupil Passport template](#) to identify concerns and actions.

[Teacher toolkit](#) for supporting transition to secondary schools.

[Identification of behaviours, communication and resolutions](#) for pupils identified.

Bespoke transition plan created in collaboration with all parties involved.

Use of [Pupil Passport template](#) to identify concerns and actions.

UNIVERSAL

QAA Scotland [resources](#) and group activities for Higher Education students to develop:

- Academic resilience
- Critical self-reflection
- Mindset
- Self-belief (self-efficacy)
- Self-management of expectations
- Time management for independent learning

TARGETED

1:1 or group work around transition for identified groups. See Anna Freud resources on Padlet for further information and ideas.

SPECIALIST**3. Transition within school**

Staff have an awareness that some children may struggle with times of change and may need additional support.

Transitions are well managed (e.g. clear routes and pathways around classrooms, corridors, form groupings).

Additional transition arrangements for vulnerable groups or those likely to struggle with transition (for example - flexible timings to start/leave lessons).

Support within school for children who struggle at other transition times such as the school holidays.

Bespoke transition plan created in collaboration with all parties involved.

Use of [Pupil Passport template](#) to identify concerns and actions.

We want this to be a living framework that evolves with your input.

If you have any tools, resources, or examples of good practice that you feel would benefit others, we warmly invite you to share them with us. Please email your contributions to psychservices@northumberland.gov.uk. Your insights are invaluable in helping us shape a framework that truly supports our schools.

With thanks to:

Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer

Gill Finch, NCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

Beth Clarke, NCC Early Help

NCC Early Years Team

NCC Virtual School Educational Psychologists

Craig Newbiggin, NCC Social Care – Early Help (SORTED)

Leigh Graham, NCC Risk Outside the Home (ROTH), Team Manager for Safeguarding

Julie McIntosh and Catherine Baird, NCC Early Careers Team

Andrew Elliot, NCC Youth Justice Service – Team Manager

Stuart Cannon, NCC Preparation For Adulthood Lead

Stacey Herberson, NHS Peer Education Worker

Amanda Sayers, CYGNUS Support

NCC Inclusion Team

NCC Educational Psychology Team EPs

NCC HINT

Be You Mental Health Support Team

Primary Mental Health Team