

Creativity in Schools: A Lifeline for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Based on *“Child of the North: An Evidence-Based Approach to Creating a Culture of Inclusive Opportunity through Arts and Creativity”* (2025)

In the aftermath of a pandemic, austerity, and rising inequality, UK schools are facing a crisis of disengagement. In the 2024-25 Autumn term alone, 39,200 children were missing from education. With up to 34% of persistently absent children becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) between ages 16-18, the long-term consequences are stark. Amidst this landscape, one crucial and often overlooked lifeline is being championed: creativity.

The Case for Creativity: What the Evidence Shows
Creativity isn't just for artists and musicians—it's an essential psychological, emotional, and cognitive skill that supports wellbeing, identity, and resilience.

According to the Child of the North report:

- Participation in the arts can boost academic performance by up to 3 months in English, Maths, and Science.
- Schools with higher creative engagement report improved mental health outcomes and increased school belonging.
- Creative education offers an antidote to the current overemphasis on rote knowledge and testing, which many young people find alienating and anxiety-inducing.

Art, drama, music, and storytelling don't just entertain; they enable young people to express difficult emotions, reflect on their experiences, and connect with others.

“We need to move away from the view that creative learning is a bonus. It should be a requisite.” (Dr. Camilla Kingdon, 2025)

In neurodivergent and SEN(D) populations, arts-based approaches are especially powerful. Creative activities have been shown to support emotionally based school avoidance and build self-efficacy among children with complex needs.

Despite the evidence, creative subjects are disappearing from schools:

- 84% of schools no longer offer GCSE Dance
- 42% have dropped GCSE Music
- 41% no longer offer GCSE Drama



The reason? Lack of funding. A staggering 93% of children are now excluded from arts and cultural education in state schools due to financial constraints.

How can Senior Mental Health leads promote the place of creativity in schools?

- Support your creative arts subject leads in raising the profile of the work that they do. Mental Health Awareness week (12th-18th May) is a great opportunity to do this.
- Use arts-based activities to explore the themes of mental health and wellbeing. Place2Be have a few ideas for [Art Room activities](#).
- Make use of extra-curricular activities available in school to develop a sense of belonging in pupils.
- Establish partnerships with local cultural institutions - [Liverpool Education Cultural Partnership](#) exists to support schools to access cultural education.
- Incorporate outdoor arts to build ecological imagination and wellbeing.

[CLICK HERE](#) for further news from Liverpool's Mental Health Support for Children and Young People Partnership.

Termly Event Calendar

The Whole School Approach Partnership have collaborated to produce a termly overview calendar, outlining the key events taking place across the city. Most of the entries have booking links embedded, so you just need to click on them. You can access a copy of the calendar [here](#).



WSA Termly Network Knowledge Exchange

Transition Livestream Events

Our 2025 Transition Live Events will take place on the 24th and 26th June. Year six pupils will be generating the content for these sessions along with some year seven pupils. This year they are developing the sessions in the style of a research project.

When you register for this session you will get the opportunity to give your input into the content that your pupils would like to see. You can register using the following links:

Tuesday 24th June, 10:00-11:00 – [book here](#).

Thursday 26th June, 13:30-14:30 – [book here](#).

Come and join with School Mental Health Leads and Mental Health Service Practitioners to share best practice and knowledge. This cross-phase event will replace our usual WSA network events and is open to all school pastoral staff. It will also generate sessions for our planned WSA conference to be held in October 2025.

We will use a series of breakout spaces to exchange knowledge on a range of topics. As the programme is shaped through your input, the final programme will be confirmed 1 week before the event.

There is no pressure for attendees to speak, but please consider preparing a short presentation on an area of your practice – the more we have, the better the event. This could also include some pre-recorded pupil-voice presentations.

You can book a space [here](#), or use the QR code on the image featured on this page.

Family Support

Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health: The Role of Parents and Carers

The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people are crucial foundations for their overall development, academic success, and long-term happiness. One of the most effective ways to support their mental health is by working closely with parents and carers—the people who know them best and provide consistent care, love, and stability.

Parents and carers play a vital role in recognizing early signs of mental health challenges. Their insight into a child's behaviour, emotions, and routines helps professionals better understand the full picture and tailor support effectively. When educators and mental health professionals collaborate with families, they can build trust and create consistent strategies that work both at home and in school or other settings. Open communication with parents and carers also empowers them to support their child's emotional resilience and coping skills. Through education and guidance, families can learn how to create safe, supportive environments that encourage open discussions about feelings, reduce stigma, and promote positive mental health habits.

In Liverpool there are many agencies working to support parents/carers and families. One of the best ways to link in with what's going on is through engaging with the [family hubs](#).

You can also sign up for the [parent/carers newsletter](#).



Sleep Bitesize

MYA are running a sleep bitesize that both staff and parents/carers are welcome to come onto. These sessions are free and last for an hour. In the bitesize MYA cover information about sleep, reasons young people struggle to sleep and then go over some sources of help and signposting.

The next sleep bitesize is on the 30th April from 12-1pm. The link to book on is here - [The Importance of Sleep - Liverpool CAMHS](#). If this date doesn't suit please look through and see if there is another date coming up that would be better.



The rolling programme of Liverpool Mental Health Support Bitesize Training can be found [here](#).

YPAS Parenting

YPAS offers a variety of different Parenting Programmes if you feel a programme would benefit you or your family then please [make a referral](#) into our Parenting Service. We will complete an assessment alongside yourself and together discuss what programme would be the most appropriate for you and your family.

You can also access this support for families via your MHST practitioner.



MAY BITESIZE TRAINING CALENDAR

Emotionally-Based School Avoidance 12PM-3PM MAY 01	Understanding Low Mood and Depression 12PM-3PM MAY 06	The Importance of Sleep 12PM-3PM MAY 13	Understanding and supporting crisis & risk in schools MAY 14
Child+Adolescent to Parent Violence+Abuse Session (CAPVAS) 11AM-3PM MAY 19	Adolescent Brain Development 9:30AM-10:30AM MAY 21	Cultivating Self-Compassion MAY 21	An Introduction to Eating Disorders 4PM-5PM MAY 21
Body Image 9:00AM-10:00AM MAY 22	Mental Health Support for Children & Young People in Liverpool 2:30PM-4PM MAY 22	Introduction to Self-Harm 10AM-11AM MAY 30	



FREE * Online * One-hour
Parents/carers and professionals welcome
Book online



Talking Teens



Talking Teens

FREE
Parent
Group

Support for parents of teenagers

Fountains Family Hub, Fountains Road, Liverpool, L4 1QH
Call to book your place: 0151 233 4741



Programme Dates (5 sessions):

Wed 30 April – Registration session
Wed 7 May
Wed 14 May
Wed 21 May
Wed 28 May

Time:
5.30-7.30pm



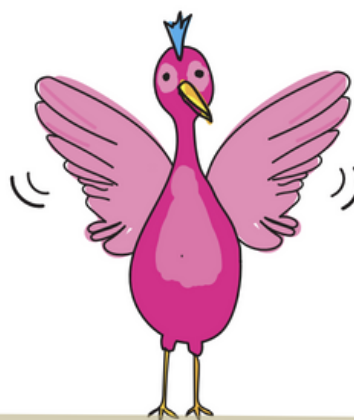
Being a parent of a teenager can be both rewarding and challenging. Talking Teens is a friendly, practical programme designed to help you manage the ups and downs of parenting teens — so you can enjoy a calmer, happier family life.

Over five sessions, we'll explore questions like:

- How can I stop my child always getting the last word?
- Why do they sleep in so late?
- Can I help them argue less?
- Why don't they want to talk about their feelings?

What to expect:

- A relaxed group of 8–10 parents
- Led by two trained parent group leaders
- Refreshments provided
- Come on your own, with a partner or friend



Resilience Sessions

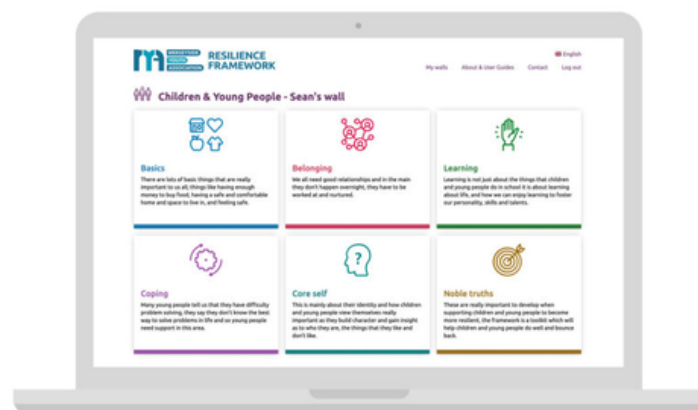
The RAISE Team are offering free resilience sessions to schools across Merseyside.

The session will help students to understand more about what resilience is, how they can build their own resilience and how others can help build their resilience such as friends, family, school and external services. The resilience framework will also be explored which is an evidence based tool developed by professors at Brighton University. The sessions can be offered to year 5 up to year 13 covering a range of topics such as transition and new beginnings, the online world, friendship and exam pressure. They will be 30-40 minutes and can be delivered to suit your assembly times to reach whole year groups.

To better shape the practice of those working with children and young people, to build their resilience, we are collecting resilience and well-being surveys to capture an insight of resilience levels of young people in the city. We will send the survey to you before we come in and collect them on the day we deliver the session or you can complete them online. The session cannot go ahead without the surveys all being ready and completed before. The results from your school can be sent to you. If you are interested in this, please fill out the form and we will be in touch.

Please complete the form [here](#).

Don't forget that the resilience framework tool can be accessed [here](#) by schools, parents/carers and children/young people.



Transition 2025

The transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is a pivotal moment for children and young people, filled with both excitement and anxiety. This move from primary to secondary school involves substantial change (Beaston et al, 2023) that can have lasting effects on students' mental health and wellbeing. Understanding the emotional challenges faced by students during this period is crucial for creating an environment that supports their needs and promotes positive mental health outcomes.

School Mental Health Support Teams, Liverpool City Council, SIL and Liverpool Whole School approach Partners are working together to support year 6 pupils through their transition to secondary school.

Details of support available during this 25/26 academic year can be found [here](#).

Transition Summer School Workshops

Any Secondary schools running yr 6/7 Transition Summer schools can access a fully funded workshop from the Schools' Mental Health Teams. These will be delivered between YPAS and Alder Hey MHST. Please get in contact with Ceri Tinkler as soon as possible - places are going quickly.

Ceri.Tinkler@ypas.org.uk



Liverpool Schools Parliament



The idea to create this event is inspired by Liverpool Schools Parliament members voting Environment to be their top topic of the year. In February 2025 children from St Matthews Catholic Primary, Rice Lane Primary, Garston Primary, Emmaus Catholic and Church of England Primary, Holy Name Catholic Primary, Heygreen Primary and Banks Road Primary schools all came together to support Child Friendly Liverpool to plan and run an Environment themed Schools Parliament session.

The pack has been sent out to head teachers and student voice coordinators to pass on to pupils. You can access it [here](#).

If you require any further information please contact the team at cfc@liverpool.gov.uk

Growing Stronger

There are more dates available for the Growing Stronger ACEs Training. This ACE training is delivered at 3 levels – ACE Aware, ACE skilled and ACE leadership.

- ACE Leadership is a full day face to face training for managers and leaders within organisations. [book here](#)
- ACE Skilled training is a half day, face to face training for professionals that supports a deeper understanding of ACEs. [book here](#).
- The ACE Aware training is a 45 minute webinar that summarises What ACEs Are, Why They Matter and What We Can Do, to prevent, respond and recover. Any adults are welcome to attend. [book here](#).



Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences

