

Back to School Toolkit

Name: _____

Form: _____

Year: _____



A big welcome back from Inspire Cheshire...

Welcome back to school! We hope you've had a fantastic summer.

September can be an exciting time - seeing your friends again, finding out what lessons you have together, and learning new things.

There's lots of things to look forward to, but we know September can also feel like a daunting time as well. Maybe in the last couple of weeks of summer, you've felt a growing sense of dread. Maybe you're starting your GCSEs this year and already feeling the pressure. Or maybe home is your safe place.

However you're feeling about coming back, we hope this toolkit will provide you with some resources and strategies to kickstart this academic year in a happy, healthy way.



Timetable

Your timetable is the most important piece of paper you'll have this year. So make it stylish, make it yours!

Some ideas for personalising your timetable:

- Assign a colour to each subject (e.g. maths = orange, English = blue)



- Draw a small picture to represent the subject (e.g. geography = a globe)

- Highlight lessons where you need to bring equipment (e.g. PE, food tech)



Keeping Organised

With so many things to keep on top of, it's only natural that we forget things from time to time. Use this organiser to create some structure and help you remember. Give yourself a set day and/or time to get things done - and stick to it!

I will pack my bag on/at...

I will get my uniform ready on/at...

I will do my homework on/at...

I will bring my PE kit on...

I will take time for myself on/at...

If you do any activities outside of school, write out when you do them below - this will help you to plan things around them:

Equipment Checklist

Here is a list to remind you what to take in on a day to day basis. Sometimes you may not have everything on this list - and that's okay! If that's the case, think of a staff member you know will lend you equipment.

Things to take in every day:

- Pen
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Calculator
- Rubber
- Sharpener



Things to take in when you have a particular subject:

- PE kit
- Food tech ingredients
- Trainers/trainer socks
- Art pack/supplies



Trusted Staff Members

We all want to have the best time we can at school, but sometimes things can become overwhelming. Think of 5 members of staff you trust and feel able to talk to when this happens. This could be a teacher, teaching assistant, midday staff or pastoral staff - whoever you feel comfortable with.

When things are getting too much, I know I can go to...

Self Care Strategies

School is important, yes. But so is taking time to look after ourselves. A healthy balance is key to succeeding in both our school and personal lives. Take a look at the types of self care strategies below, and choose 5 you can do for yourself.

Physical Self Care

- Bath/ shower
- Skincare session
- Eat nice food
- Exercise
- Go for a walk
- Do your nails
- Boxing
- Punch a pillow
- Gardening
- Drink water
- Walk the dog
- Take a nap

Emotional Self Care

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Fidget toys
- Listen to music
- Arts and crafts
- Journaling
- Paint your feelings
- Breathing exercises
- Mindfulness
- Digital detox
- Make a playlist
- ASMR videos

Social Self Care

- Talk to someone
- Join a club
- Movie night
- Sleepovers
- Days out
- Text a mate
- Bake together
- Game night
- Cuddle a pet
- Video chat
- Study groups
- Family time

Practical Self Care

- Clean your room
- Get up early
- Plan your day
- Do your chores
- Get an early night
- Write a to-do list
- Declutter
- Make your bed
- Cook a meal
- Ask for help
- Dust your room
- Have a shower

My top 5 self care strategies:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

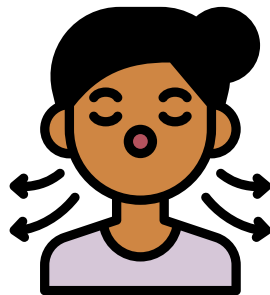
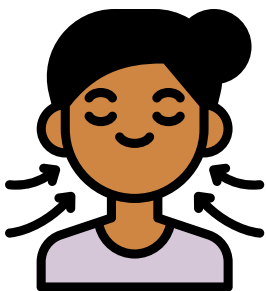
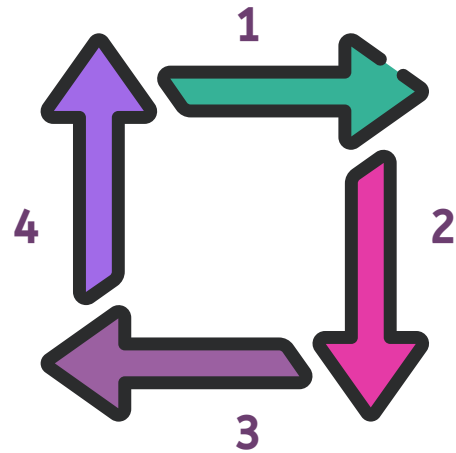
5. _____

Breathing Exercises

If you want to try out some breathing exercises but aren't sure where to start, check out some of these techniques below. Some might work for you, or none at all. What's important is finding strategies that work for YOU.

Square breathing

Breathe in as you count 1, 2, 3, 4
Hold as you count 1, 2, 3, 4
Breathe out as you count 1, 2, 3, 4
Pause as you count 1, 2, 3, 4
Trace your finger in the shape of a square if that helps
Repeat 3 times



Deep breathing

Breathe in through your nose for 3 seconds
Breathe out until your lungs feel empty
Breathe in through your nose for 3 seconds
As you breathe out, let your shoulders drop
Repeat 4 times



Calming breathing

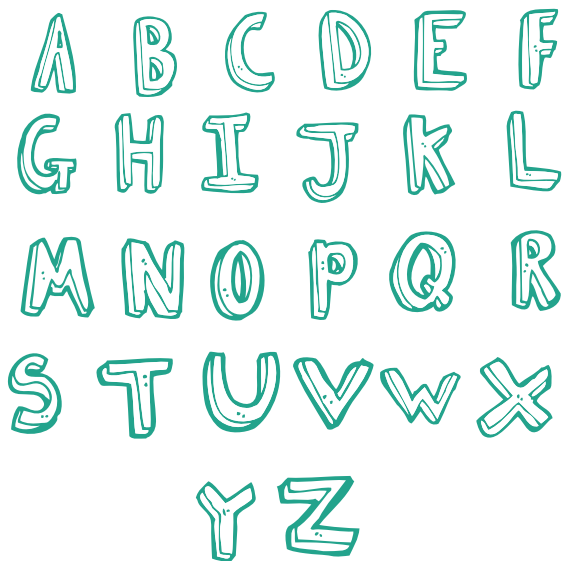
Breathe in while you say to yourself:
"I feel calm."
Breathe out while you say to yourself:
"I let go of stress."
Repeat 3 times

Distraction Techniques

Here are some techniques for you to try out when you're beginning to feel anxious, worried or overwhelmed. The idea is to get your mind focusing on something very specific, to distract from any intrusive thoughts.

Counting backwards

Pick a number, then count backwards from there in a set number. For example: count backwards from 200 in 3s. Go all the way to 0, or as close as you can get.



Alphabet categories

Pick a category such as animals, countries, foods, and think of one for each letter of the alphabet. For example, animals: A = aardvark, B = bear, C = cat. Go all the way from A to Z.

5-4-3-2-1 senses

Acknowledge 5 things you can see
Acknowledge 4 things you can touch
Acknowledge 3 things you can hear
Acknowledge 2 things you can smell
Acknowledge 1 thing you can taste



Anxiety Resources

Here are some step-by-step guides on how to make and use some easy and accessible resources for when you're feeling anxious. Again, this is all about personal choice and what works for you.

Sensory box

Find a box or container you like and put in objects that appeal to your senses. They could have a smell you like, a texture you like the feel of, or make a noise that soothes you. For example: a fidget toy, bubble wrap, a small bottle of bodywash, playdough, a small hourglass.

Keep your box somewhere safe - either at home or at school - and use it whenever you're beginning to feel anxious.



Letting go box

Find a box or container you like and cut a hole in the lid. Whenever you have a thought that is worrying you or keeping you distracted, write it down on a piece of paper, fold it up and put it in the box. Tell yourself you don't need to think about this right now - that you can let go of your worry and leave it in that box.

Be sure to keep your box somewhere private.

My Favourite Things

When we're feeling down or overwhelmed, it can feel hard to do the things we normally enjoy. Use these lists to remind yourself of the things you love.

My favourite songs...

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-
-
-
-

My favourite films...

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-
-
-
-

My favourite TV shows...

-
-
-
-
-

My favourite foods...

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My favourite people...

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-
-
-

My favourite pastimes...

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-
-

Useful Contacts

If you're struggling and need a little extra support, we at Inspire Cheshire are here to help. Below you'll find our contact details along with a few others. It's okay to reach out and ask for help.

Inspire Cheshire - wellbeing and mental health support

Telephone: 01606 557666

Email: inspirecheshire@motherwellcheshirecio.com

Instagram: [@inspirecheshire](https://www.instagram.com/inspirecheshire)

Body Positive - sexual health and LGBT+ support

Telephone: 01270 653150

Email: health@bpcnw.co.uk

Instagram: [@bpcnw](https://www.instagram.com/bpcnw)

CWP Crisis Line - 24/7 mental health crisis support

Telephone: 0800 145 6485

Text line: Text YM to 85258

Samaritans - suicide helpline

Telephone: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Wellbeing Enterprises - mental health and wellbeing signposting

Telephone: 01928 589799

Website: wellbeingenterprises.org.uk

Mid Cheshire Mind - mental health support

Telephone: 01606 863305

Email: office@midcheshiremind.org.uk

