

# Fostering a sense of belonging

## Tips from Thrive's community on settling in or reconnecting after a break

We invited our community to share top tips for supporting children and young people to quickly settle in or reconnect after a break. Could the below spark any additional ideas for fostering a sense of belonging in your setting?

### Notice them

"Notice the haircuts and the new shoes. Remind children of the routines. Classes may have changed but the care has not."

Clare Cousins, Class Teacher

### Have familiar objects

"Have familiar transition toys and objects at hand. We use the book *The Invisible String* to remind children that their carers are keeping them in mind."

Lisa Bowen, School Learning Mentor, St Andrew's Church School



### Set expectations

"Set expectations quickly and with a smile. Allow time to talk, play light-hearted games and then set a routine."

Karen Follows, Acting Head Teacher, Long Mead Community Primary School



### Gain trust

"Help young people to feel important. Gain their trust."

Sonya McIntyre, Teaching Assistant, The John of Gaunt School

### Listen

"Say hello. Ask them how they are. Listen to their responses to show they are important to you."

Dawn Bearby, Teaching Assistant, High Tunstall College of Science



### Validate their feelings

"Be playful and available. Validate their feelings. Arrange to meet children you know will struggle and walk them into class."

Alison Williams, Thrive and mental health and wellbeing practitioner, Pitmaston Primary School

### Meet and greet on the door

"Meet and greet on the door. Have a staggered start for new parents. Make contact with vulnerable pupils or families before they start back."

Charlotte Bowyer, Assistant Headteacher, King Egbert School

### Smile

"Smile! Tell pupils how pleased you are to see them and how special they all are."

Jenny Turner, Thrive Trainer



### Prepare them beforehand

"We prepare them beforehand by providing a transition book and send videos over the holidays."

Bernie Wright, Pastoral Care Worker, St Mary's Catholic Primary School



### Let pupils know the support available

"Let pupils know the support available in school, for example Mental Health First Aiders and Resilience and Wellbeing Mentors."

Kaz Alpnar, Deputy Lead DSL, Saint Georges Church of England All-Through School



[thriveapproach.com](https://thriveapproach.com)

01392 797555

[enquiries@thriveapproach.com](mailto:enquiries@thriveapproach.com)

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tips from our  
community  
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