



Heads Up
Kids

Heads Up Kids®

- Social and emotional wellbeing charity that supports positive mental health for primary school children.
- Our approach is all about making wellbeing education possible in a whole-class environment.
- We have programmes for Reception through to Year 6



Our Mission

We are committed to raising a **generation of children with a positive attitude towards mental health.**

We believe that emotional wellbeing is a **fundamental part of children's education** and we deliver this through our social and emotional wellbeing curriculum, CPD accredited teacher training and support to primary schools and parents.

"We believe that in a classroom where children have the words to express their feelings and feel confident to do so, those children will be more resilient, more able to solve problems, they will have more empathy for others and be better able to work collaboratively."

FOUNDERS

Why we are needed:

- **Children's Mental Health Crisis:** 1 in 5 children have a mental health issue (NHS Digital, 2023)
- **Lack of Mental Health Teacher Training:** Teachers 'significantly' impact children's mental health (Royal Society of Medicine, 2022), but lack skills (Psychology in Schools, 2022)
- **Financial Hardship:** 76% of primary schools in England faced budget deficits in 2025 (School Cuts Coalition).

Why Year 6?

*“School transition is considered to be one of **the most challenging periods for early adolescents** (Evans et al., 2018; Lester et al., 2019), as students are confronted with a variety of challenges. **New friendships must be established**, friend groups have to be managed, and students must cope with a new school environment and requirements (van Rens et al., 2018).”*

*“**Failure to cope** with challenges arising from school transitions can have long-lasting negative impacts on academic success (Coelho & Romão, 2016), as well as **physiological and psychological well-being**” (Evans et al., 2018; ter Bogt et al., 2010).*

*“... Longitudinal studies have shown that children who anticipate issues with the transition or **feel less prepared, feel more anxious about it and appear to experience poorer transitions** and more problems in secondary school (West et al., 2010).”*

Why Year 6?

Data from the Good Childhood report was recently published:

Children aged 10-15 are surveyed on 6 aspects of life. For the first time children's happiness scores were significantly lower than when the study started in 2009.

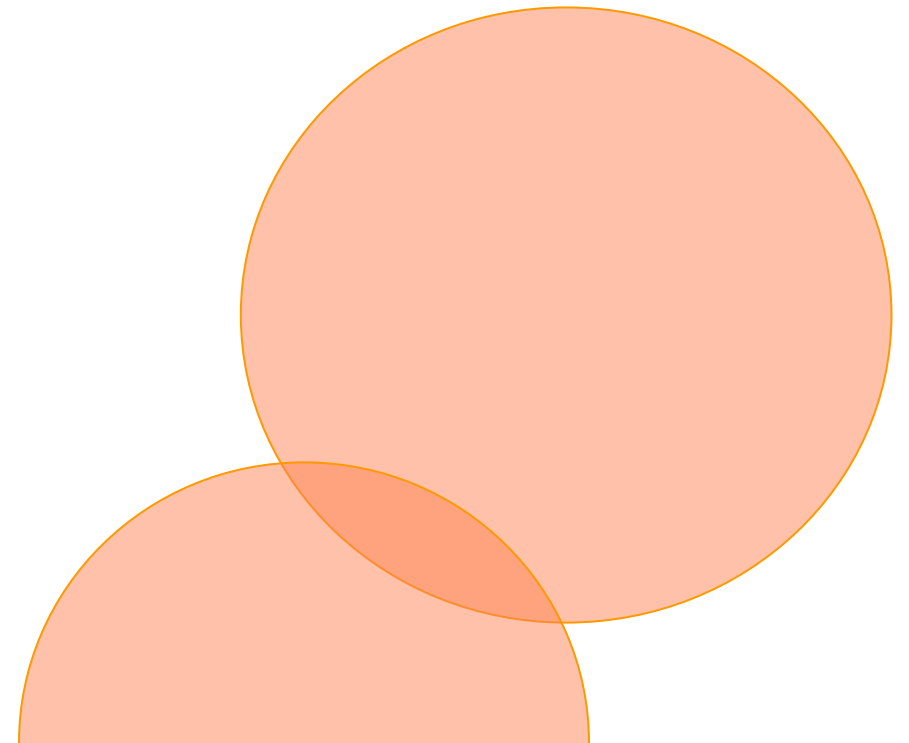
1 in 7 children were unhappy with appearance, schoolwork and school.



Our Focus

The research highlights these important aspects of transition which we will focus on this evening:

- Change
- Worries
- Challenging negative thinking
- Building positivity



Preparing for Transition



Rite of Passage

Transitions are unsettling

It's important that we are mindful that transition is a rite of passage and that any transitions can be unsettling.

It's helpful for us to think about how we can support and prepare children for this whilst also recognising that we can't avoid the transition or take away the challenges that come with it, but we can support them and give them the tools to feel competent and confident.

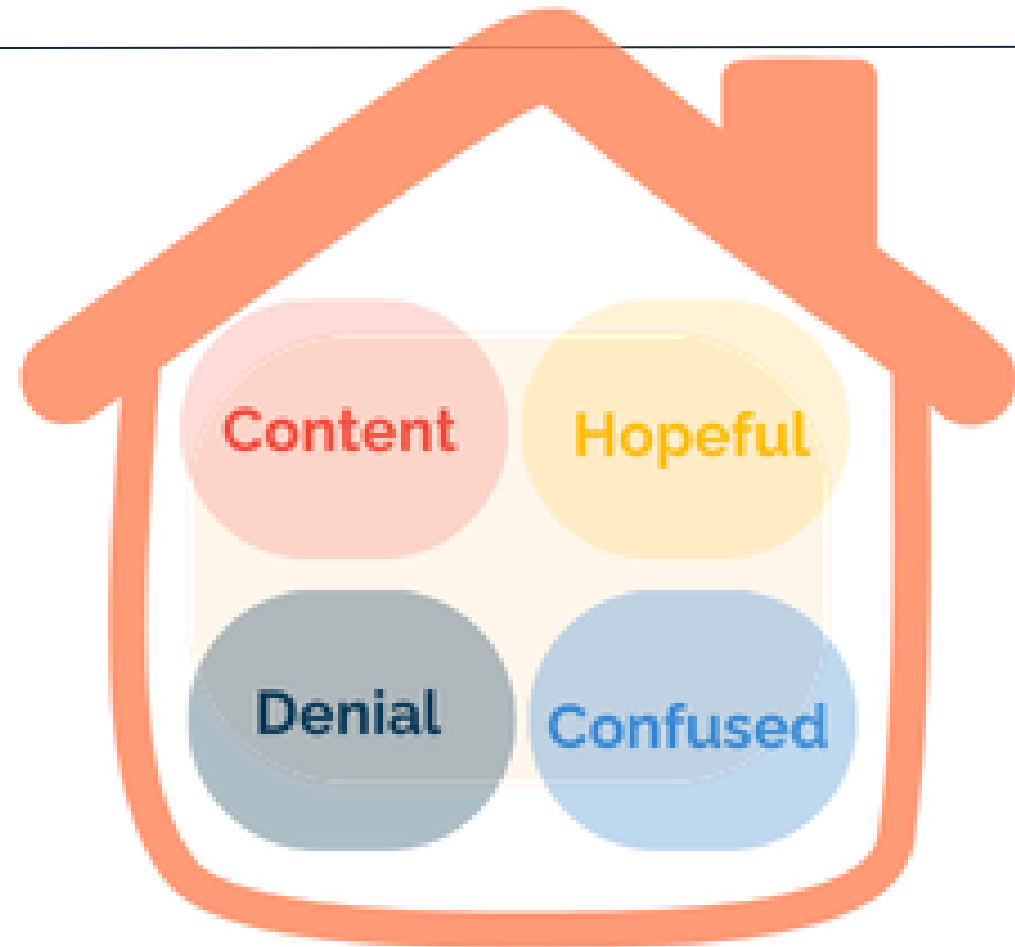
What is Heads Up Kids Year 6 all about?



- Enabling children to process how they think and feel about the changes of transition.
- Giving a framework to actively work with what change feels like, how we respond to change, how change can activate worries, and how it can also bring about changes in our friendships.
- Supporting children to think about how we manage worries and how we ask for help.
- Giving children tips and tools to support their positive mental health
- Challenging some individual negative thoughts.

Rooms of Change

We think about how we often experience these feelings during the process of change and our feelings can keep changing over time.

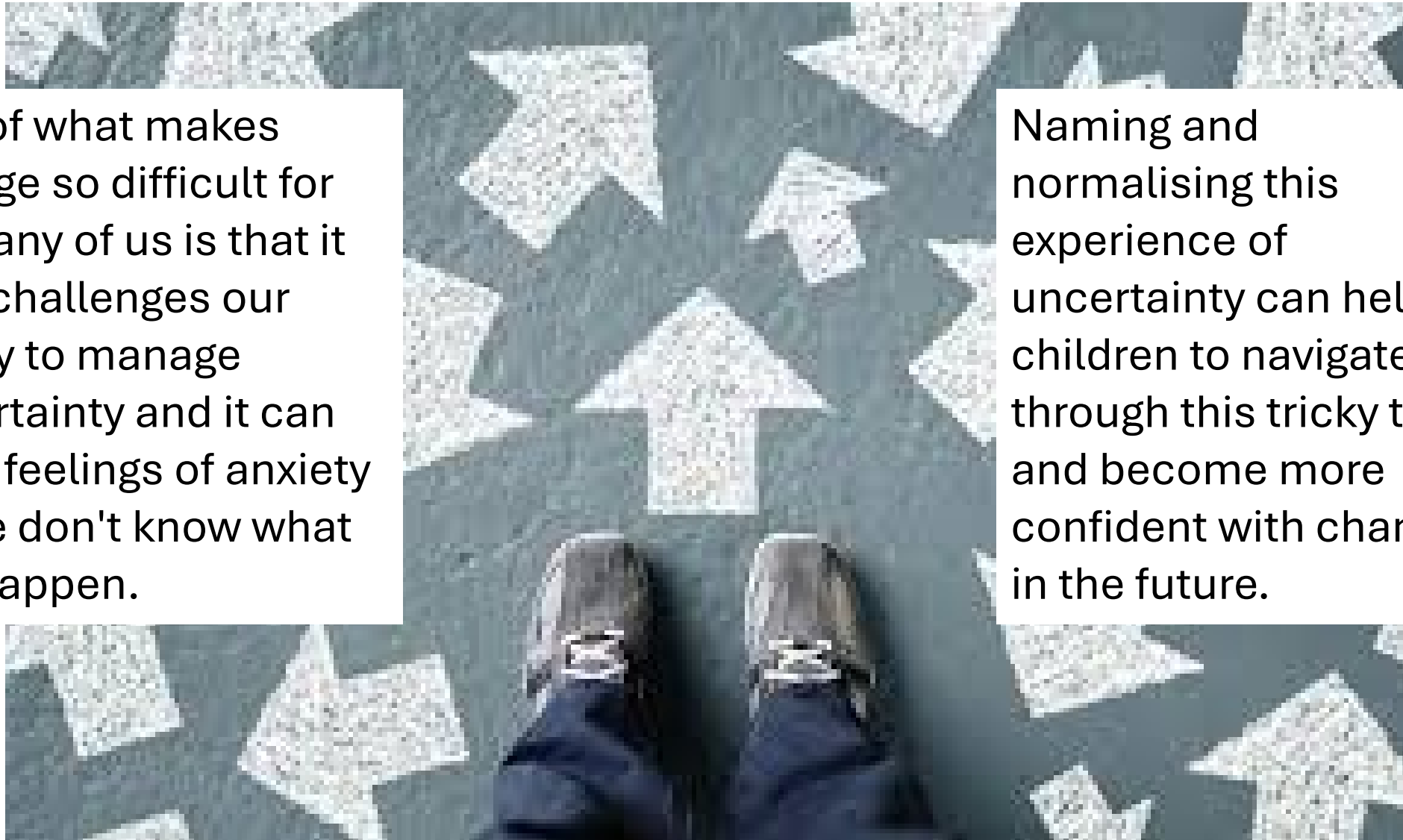


(Based on the 'Four Rooms of Change' model by Claes Janssen, 1975)

Managing Uncertainty

Part of what makes change so difficult for so many of us is that it also challenges our ability to manage uncertainty and it can bring feelings of anxiety as we don't know what will happen.

Naming and normalising this experience of uncertainty can help children to navigate through this tricky time and become more confident with change in the future.



Change – Take Away Message

We can teach children to tolerate uncertainty by acknowledging their feelings and again normalising that we all have feelings like this at times.

We can talk through the process of what we can get ready and control and what we can't control. This will help make the process of uncertainty more manageable.

Thinking About Worries

We know that transition is a time when children might worry more.

We all worry about different things, in different ways and at different times. Worrying is part of the human experience. Worrying is an okay thing to do. This does not mean we are suffering with anxiety. We can teach our children that worries can also be helpful.

Our brains use worries to try to keep us safe and predict what will happen.

It's like an alarm system letting us know that we need to prepare ourselves in some way.

It's important to learn that worrying doesn't mean that something bad WILL happen, it's just our brain's way of helping us to become alert and prepared.

It's when worries become overwhelming or unhelpful we need help to break them down and make them feel more manageable.



Supporting you child with worries

- Firstly, we can normalise worries and we can share our own experiences of managing worries.
- We can also help unpick the worry for a child so that they are more able to make sense of it. Identify what it is that can help them with the worry - This will be different for all of us.
- *Ask: "How can I help you feel better? What do you need from me? What can we do together that might make this worry feel easier for you?"*
- *Or : Who helps you feel better? Is there anybody else that you might want to talk to?*

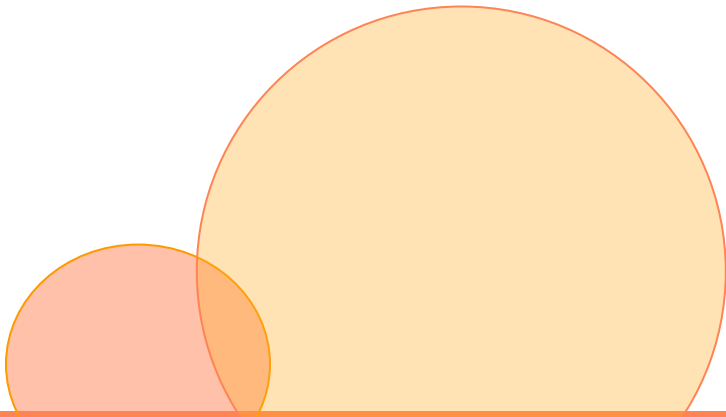
- Take a moment before responding, to validate their feelings without dismissing or trying to take the worry away.
- After acknowledging the worry then offer tools to manage the worry.
- When your child is pushing your buttons, or being unusually short-tempered or rude, stop and take a moment to think about what they might be telling us before we respond.

Worries – Take Away Message

Recognising and not diminishing worries is key – we want to acknowledge them– normalise them – and then support children to find solutions.

Challenging Negative Thinking

- We support children to challenge negative thoughts with our thought catching resource.
- We know that one session on this is not going to change children's thinking, however it introduces the language so that teachers can then begin to use it with their class more generally.



Catch it, Check it, Change it

First **CATCH** a critical thought?
What is it? Is it something negative you say to yourself? Or something you believe others might think of you?

Write the thought in the thought bubble – remember, no one else needs to see it.

Next **CHECK** it

Is it true? Is it helpful to think like that? Is it stopping you from doing something that you want to do?

Write two questions you could ask yourself about this thought inside the magnifying glass. Have a go at answering them

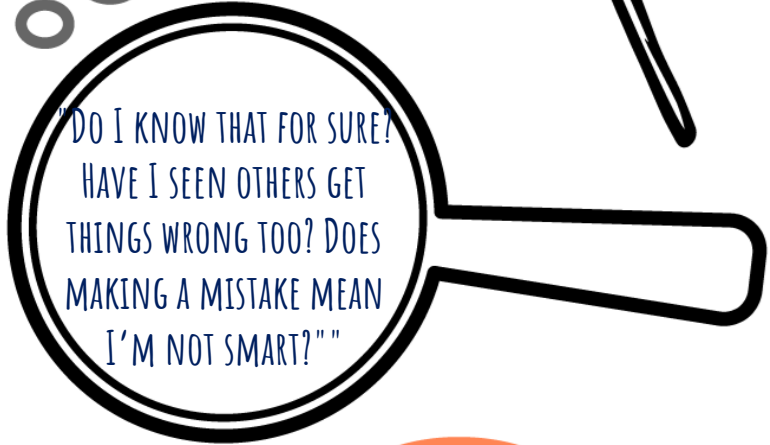
Finally **CHANGE** it?

How could you think differently? Can you change the thought to something more TRUE, more POSITIVE or more HELPFUL

Try writing down a few different ideas of what your new thought could be:



EVERYONE THINKS I'M STUPID.



DO I KNOW THAT FOR SURE?
HAVE I SEEN OTHERS GET THINGS WRONG TOO? DOES MAKING A MISTAKE MEAN I'M NOT SMART?"



IT'S OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES—
THAT'S HOW I LEARN.



LOTS OF KIDS GET ANSWERS
WRONG SOMETIMES.



I DON'T THINK THEY ARE STUPID
IF THEY MAKE A MISTAKE

Thought catching – Take Away Message

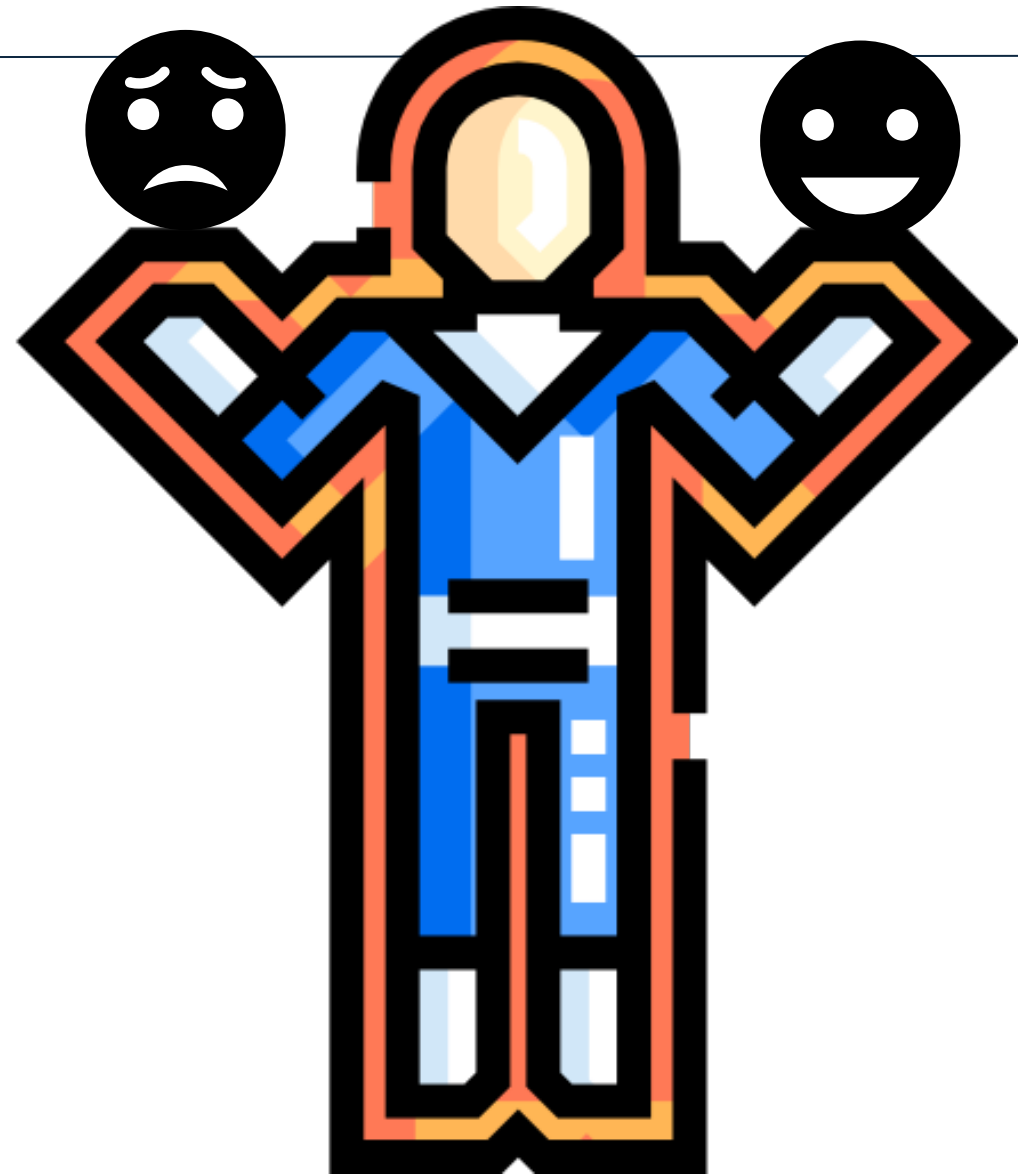
We can continue to gently challenge negative thinking and help children to reframe and focus their attention on solutions.

We can keep reminding them that thoughts are not always facts.

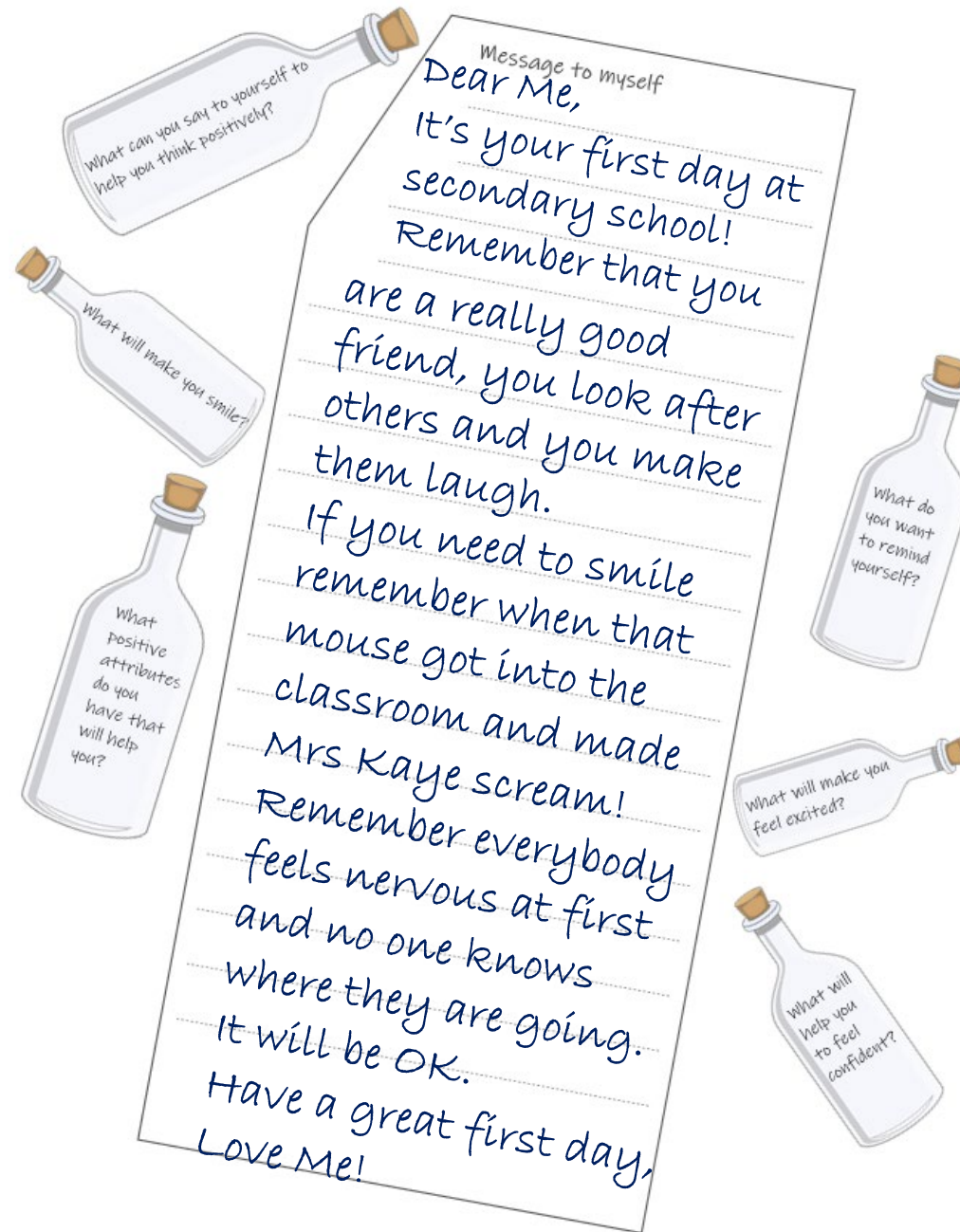
Positive Thinking

We are going to think about how we help our children take their best selves forward to secondary school and how we help them draw on their own individual positives.

We can help children understand that we can have good and difficult feelings at the same time. This balance supports our positive mental health.



Message in a Bottle



Building Positivity – Take Away Message

We can help children understand that we can have good and difficult feelings at the same time.

Our Top Tips

- **Remind yourself to separate out what are yours and what are your child's feelings.**
- **Take a moment before you respond- give yourself time to consider**
- **Remind yourselves that sometimes our children communicate to us through their behaviour**
- **Remember, we all worry (children and adults) and there are things we can all do to support ourselves with managing worries**
- **We can gently challenge negative thinking and help children to remember that thoughts are not always facts.**
- **Help your child to think about all the things that they feel good about – think of it as the vitamins or the healthy food you might feed them.**

Heads Up Kids Charity

Heads Up Kids is committed to ensuring that all children can access wellbeing education in school. We aim to provide all our programmes, training and support free to schools.

We are currently working with over 125 schools reaching nearly 12,000 children.

scan to donate

