

What is mentalization?

Mentalization means trying to see things from somebody else's point of view. The key question to ask is 'what is it like to be you?' Mentalization is not a specialist skill and research suggests that being able to see things from the pupil's perspective is a key principle of good teaching. Mentalizing is particularly important when you are concerned that a child or young person is not achieving as well as they might, or is not enjoying school.

When a child or young person is not thriving at school as well as they might, it may be helpful to try to understand what it is like for them to struggle compared to their peers.



How can school staff mentalize in the classroom?

- 1. Empathise.** If you suspect a pupil in your class has worries which they are not talking about, you could begin a conversation with them by saying something like 'sometimes it seems there is a lot on your mind. Maybe things that you worry about?'



- 2.** When a pupil is struggling with a task, as well as supporting them, make sure that you **show genuine interest** in the person and how they are feeling. For example: 'Sarah, it seems as though you find this a bit hard' or 'tell me how you are finding it?' rather than 'how are you getting on with your work?'

- 3.** **Be open to discovery** about their thoughts and feelings rather than expressing certainty about them.

