

Let's Start the Conversation: Eczema at School

This resource has been developed by National Eczema Society to support teaching and non-teaching staff within an educational environment to proactively support any students under their care that are living with eczema.

Whilst there are many important aspects to consider about a child's eczema care at school, this resource has been created specifically to support the child's mental health. Further resources can be found at eczema.org.

The below suggested questions have been developed to help facilitate conversation about the child's eczema, how they are feeling and how best you can support them.

Starting the conversation

- Conversation to be started by an individual well known to the student, e.g. class teacher or support staff.
- Ensure the child has been notified the conversation will be happening in advance, one week should allow them time to prepare and feel confident in sharing during the conversation.

Discussion

1. Can you tell me about your eczema? I would love to learn about it.
2. How are you feeling today? Give examples e.g. Comfortable, supported, angry, self-conscious, different, frustrated, left out, teased or bullied. Ask them to explain why that is.
3. When you are feeling low, what helps you to feel better? E.g. Talking about it, going outside, journalling, meditation. Establish a plan according to the child.
4. Ask the child if they would like a post-box where they can leave you notes on how they're feeling.
5. Stress management techniques E.g. breathing exercises, meditation or something of their choosing.
6. Would you like your peers to know you have eczema? Focus on normalising, many people live with conditions.
 - What would you like to share with them about it?
 - Would you like me to create a short lesson to teach your friends about eczema?
 - If not, let's decide what to say if people ask. E.g. "Child's name has eczema. They would prefer not to talk about it but thank you for showing that you care."

After the meeting

- Provide the child with an eczema plan based off the conversation, sign and date.
- Show them the box they can share any notes with you if they want to discretely tell you something/how they're feeling.
- Keep an eye on their child to monitor their general mood and mental health. Suggest regular meetings to keep the conversation open and to ensure the child knows they can continue to come to you.

Remember - Eczema is a physical condition, but it can have a big impact on a child's mental health.