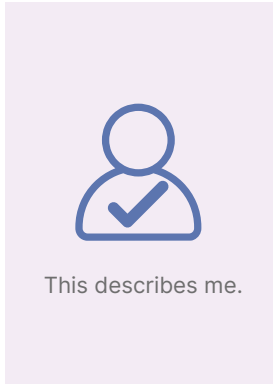
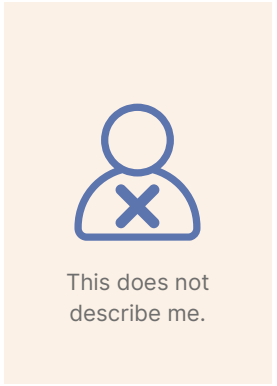
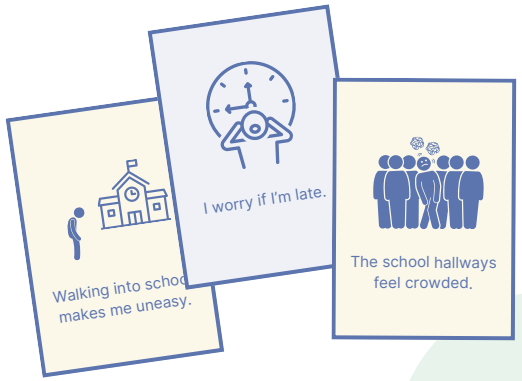
CARD SORT TOOL

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

This card sort tool is designed to help young people explore and reflect on different aspects of school life. It covers topics like getting to school, the school environment, social situations, and more. Everyone's experience at school is different, and this tool helps young people to identify the areas that feel comfortable and those that might be challenging.







HOW TO USE THE TOOL:

1. Print and cut out the cards and the sorting mats.
2. Read each card with the young person and help them to explore whether the statement reflects how they experience school.
3. Sort all the cards into two piles - those which describe the young person's experience, and those that do not.
4. Once you've sorted the cards, take a moment to look at any patterns. Are there certain areas that stand out as more challenging?
5. Next Steps – use the results to create a plan in collaboration with the young person as to what might make school easier for them.

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I feel nervous about getting to school.

Walking into school makes me uneasy.

I worry if I'm late.

The school hallways feel crowded.

The lunch hall is too noisy.

The classroom is hard to focus in.

The toilets make me uncomfortable.

Sitting still for too long is hard.

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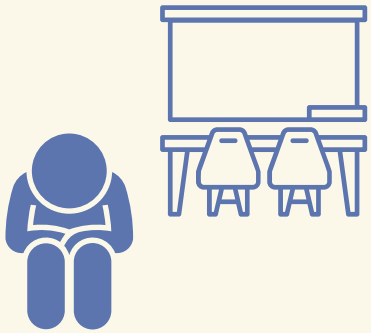
Big groups of people overwhelm me.



I feel stuck at school.

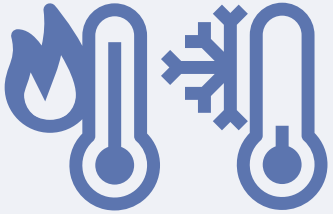
Loud noises (like alarms or shouting) make me scared.

Bright lights hurt my eyes.

Smells at school bother me.

I can't focus with background noises.

My uniform feels uncomfortable.



I feel too hot or too cold sometimes.

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Being close to others makes me uncomfortable.

I don’t like when people touch my stuff.

I don’t always understand what I need to do.

Working alone or in groups is hard for me.

Speaking in front of the class makes me nervous.

I worry about making mistakes.

Deadlines or time limits stress me out.

Homework feels too much sometimes.

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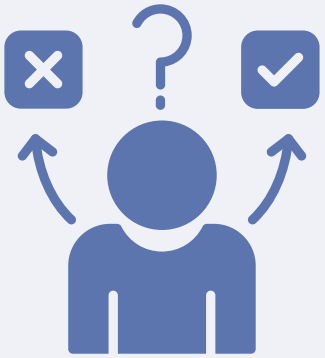
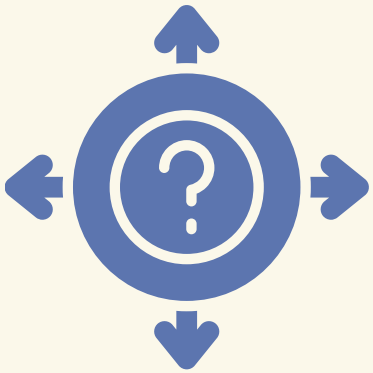
Tests make me anxious.

It’s hard to stay focused for long.



The school rules confuse me.

Sudden changes make me anxious.



I don’t like not knowing what’s coming next.

I don’t like being praised or told off in front of others.

I feel lonely at school.

Starting conversations with others is hard.

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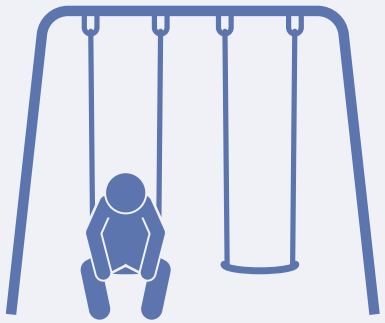

I don't know who to sit with during breaks.

I feel left out sometimes.

I don't always understand jokes.

I worry about fitting in.

I worry about being bullied.

I feel pressured to fit in.

I feel anxious around certain groups of people.

Asking for help makes me uncomfortable.

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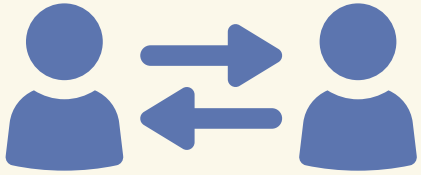
I worry about teachers getting angry with me.



It's hard when I have different teachers.

I worry my support might be taken away.

Break times are hard for me.

I don't feel there's a safe space for me during breaks.

Starting or finishing tasks is difficult.

Talking to reception staff makes me nervous.

Receiving feedback or criticism is stressful.

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I find it hard to refocus after being distracted.

I have health needs that make school difficult for me.

These are left blank in case there are other personalised ones you would like to add.

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This describes me.

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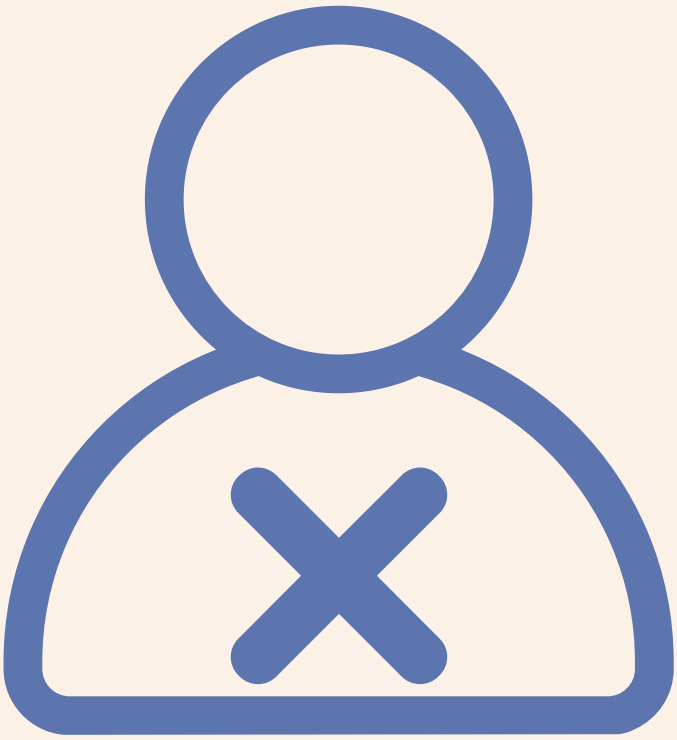

This does not describe me.

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