Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in schools – moving the agenda forwards

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Wellbeing and educational outcomes

Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school, both concurrently and in later years.

Children with better emotional wellbeing make more progress in primary school and are more engaged in secondary school.

Mental health in schools

- An estimated three children in every classroom has a diagnosable mental health problem. This rises to one in four children when we include emotional distress.
- Around one in every twelve young people deliberately self harm though this may rise to almost one in three girls aged 15.
- Recent NHS data shows a 68% rise in hospital admissions because of self harm amongst girls under 17 in the past decade.
- Rates of depression and anxiety in teenagers have increased by 70% in the past 25 years.
- The number of young people calling Childline about mental health problems has risen by 36% in the last four years.
- An ONS study found that children with mental health problems are less likely than there peers to gain academic qualifications, are more likely to have significant time off schools, be excluded or get in trouble with the police.

Risk and protective factors for CYP’s mental health

**RISK FACTORS**
- Genetic influences
- Low IQ and learning disabilities
- Specific development delay
- Communication difficulties
- Difficult temperament
- Physical illness
- Academic failure
- Low self-esteem
- Family disharmony, or break up
- Inconsistent discipline style
- Parents with mental illness or substance abuse
- Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse
- Parental criminality or alcoholism
- Death and loss
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships
- Deviant peer influences
- Peer pressure
- Poor pupil to teacher relationships
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Homelessness
- Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events
- Discrimination
- Other significant life events
- Lack of access to support services

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
- Secure attachment experience
- Good communication skills
- Having a belief in control
- A positive attitude
- Experiences of success and achievement
- Capacity to reflect
- Family harmony and stability
- Supportive parenting
- Strong family values
- Affection
- Clear, consistent discipline
- Support for education
- Positive school climate that enhances belonging and connectedness
- Clear policies on behaviour and bullying
- ‘Open door’ policy for children to raise problems
- A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health
- Wider supportive network
- Good housing
- High standard of living
- Opportunities for valued social roles
- Range of sport/leisure activities
Changing needs in Milton Keynes

- Significant increase and complexity of referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) year on year.
- In 2002 the top four referral categories were:
  - General behaviour
  - Parental/child difficulties
  - Parenting problems
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- In 2014 the top four referral categories were:
  - ADHD
  - Mood disorder (Depression, bipolar, anxiety)
  - Self harm
  - Suicidal thoughts

National and local developments

- At the same time the Department of Health’s, Children and Young People’s Mental Health Task Force, published the outcome of their national review of children’s mental health services in ‘Future in Mind’, Promoting and Improving our Children and Young peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and partners were tasked to develop a local, system wide, transformation plan for 2015-20.
- The National Ambition is to increase the number of Children and Young people with a diagnosable mental health disorder accessing health care from 25%-35%.
- The Milton Keynes Local Transformation Plan was developed by partners in consultation with children, young people and their families, it identified nine key priorities and sets out how these will be addressed over 5 years.
- Delivery of the plan is monitored through the local Transformation Plan Delivery Board which is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board and to the CCG for financial decision making.
• Young people are increasingly using online information and support systems.
• Public Health planning to pilot Mental Health First Aid training in schools.
• Recruiting schools to be part of an arts project to explore children and young people’s understanding of emotional wellbeing and mental health.
• There is a forthcoming Green Paper on mental health and schools.
• And...the Welsh government has announced that 200 schools across Wales will be able to access on-site help as part of a 1.4 million pilot scheme.
What Children and Young People say....

- They feel burdened by their parents difficulties
- They want to talk about their feelings
- They want support to be available early to stop things getting worse
- They want schools to have a programme which includes information about relationships, feelings, friends, partners
- They often hide their feelings because they are ashamed about how they sometimes feel
- Sexual inequality and stereotyping is an issue for them

- **What young people say about services**
  - They want choice and flexibility
  - They want help from people who care and understand them
  - They want information to be easily available through a range of social media
  - They want services to be easily accessible whilst also offering privacy and confidentiality.

Conference feedback and actions

- **Conference background**
- **Feedback – from questionnaire**
- **Working group**
- **Actions to take forward**
  - Booklet for governors
  - Specialist roles governor/ senior leader
  - Training for school staff
A model policy for schools

A hub of information

Eight principles to promote emotional health and wellbeing

The governing board’s role

• As a governing board all governors have a role in:

  – Vision, aims, culture and ethos
  – Policy development, approval and review
  – Monitoring and evaluating the progress of all groups
  – Ensuring a balanced curriculum
  – Providing resources to train staff and to support vulnerable children and young people
  – Auditing the current provision including the views of pupils and taking appropriate action
  – Measuring the outcomes and learning the lessons
• As Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor you will be:

- Championing the cause
- Providing a link between governors and staff
- Contributing to audits and reports
- Taking an interest in relevant national and local initiatives
- Monitoring key aspects of the mental health and wellbeing of the pupils in your school
- The wellbeing of school staff

Activity feedback

What questions might you be asking your headteacher and SLT?
It is widely recognised that a child’s emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development as well as their physical and social health and their mental well being in adulthood.

We all have a role,
but as strategic decision makers in schools –
your role is key and you can make a difference

“I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things” Mother Teresa