

**Educational Psychology & Early Years SEN Support Service**

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**SEMH Audit for schools**

Compiled and developed by **Kirklees Educational Psychology Team** from the following sources:

Mental Health Foundation 1999 and the [DES, HSE, DOH, 2013; and ‘Fail Safe’ project (2015)]

What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools? (by Professor Katherine Weare, NCB)

The view of secondary pupils on how their school can achieve positive social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) for all pupils (by Dr April Frearson)

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|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Evidence |
| **Assessment, intervention and review** | | | | | | |
| Early identification and prompt help ensures that problems can be resolved with the least fuss and disruption |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Where there are concerns a standard instrument such as Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire might be used |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| When a pupil is identified as having difficulties an initial assessment provides an analysis of the pupil’s needs and a plan is draw up outlining support and action plan, followed by regular reviews to assess effectiveness of provision |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interventions are allowed substantial time and regular practice to produce benefits (on average at least 9 months to a year) especially for broader and deeper areas such as well-being, improving behaviour, and preventing mental health issues. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mainstream school staff work alongside specialists (e.g. educational psychologists, mental health practitioners, clinical psychologists, and school nurses etc) and are trained wherever possible to take over interventions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interventions run by staff are continually quality controlled so they can continue to be delivered authentically |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Environment** | | | | | | |
| There is a climate and ethos which supports well-being builds school ‘connectedness’ a feeling of being accepted, respected and bonded to the school environment. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils feel safe in and around school |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Staff** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff have good social and emotional skills (e.g. self-awareness, motivation, optimism, ability to form social relationships and feel empathy and compassion), |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff take account of the stresses their pupils are under, and show understanding and concern for them |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff have a solid grasp of child and adolescent development in order to have a baseline of what is ‘normal’ so they can identify and respond quickly to problems |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff have an awareness of the cultural backgrounds of pupils |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff actively promote well-being and provide support in relation to basic mental health needs of pupils |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff take responsibility for identifying pupils in difficulty, are clear about what is ‘normal’ or a cause for concern and make sure they know the early signs of mental health problems |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are professional development opportunities for staff around well-being and mental health [including for example mindfulness, resilience, anxiety, and self-harm] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff are aware of the impact of loss, separation and trauma on pupils and know how to support them |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Curriculum approaches and strategies** | | | | | | |
| **School as community** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is genuine consultation and authentic involvement of all students in appropriate decision making about their own learning and classroom and school life |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Different cultures are celebrated and acknowledged within school |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School systems encourage pupils to feel as though they belong to school |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Peer education is used to teach social and emotional skills, and to implement interventions and approaches to well-being. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are robust policies that uphold the protected characteristics outlined within the Equalities Act 2010. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Anti-bullying and homophobia policies and practice are strengthened and linked with e-safety policies. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Safety** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Classrooms are considered ‘emotionally safe.’ That is to say appropriate expressions of emotions are encouraged, there is a sense of warmth, supportiveness and responsiveness to students individual needs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Familiar school and class routines help build a sense of security. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School support pupils where attendance problems begin and continue to exist |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Staff well-being** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Input is provided to staff around staff well-being and mental health |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preventative measures to support staff are taken such as regular stress audits and risk assessment are carried out and managers watch out for excessive workloads |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Efforts are made to improve student behaviour and to help staff manage it effectively |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff are able to access staff development and counselling to develop key stress reductions skills such as self-efficacy, assertion, resilience and mindfulness |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff are encouraged to celebrate and share everyday successes and achievements |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff are encouraged to know when to let go, to make more realistic demands on themselves, and have the kind of work-life balance that can help them recover and recuperate from the full on nature of the school day |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Relationships** | | | | | | |
| Staff have positive and nurturing relationships with pupils |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff understand that their relationship with pupils are key to facilitating positive classroom management |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School acknowledges friendship difficulties and supports these appropriately |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils feel well supported and cared for by staff |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff are approachable. They listen to pupils, show interest, empathy and give validation to their feelings |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Transition** | | | | | | |
| Enhanced transition plans are in place for children identified as requiring this |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is help for all children with predictable change and transitions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **School awareness, understanding and knowledge** | | | | | | |
| Promoting well-being and mental health is ‘everyone’s business’ in school and there is genuine involvement of all staff, pupils, governors, parents, the community and outside agencies |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a whole school approach to promoting well-being and mental health with total commitment of the senior leadership team |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of well-being and mental health needs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School have policies related to well-being and social, emotional and mental health |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are protocols in place in schools that all staff are aware of that support pupils who may have poor well-being |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a specific staff team who lead and support on well-being in school |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is specific work around attitudes towards those with mental health problems, addressing prejudice, stigma and the use of language |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a system in place for auditing staff knowledge and understanding of well-being and SEMH |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Classroom management** | | | | | | |
| There are low levels conflict, smooth transitions from one type of activity to another |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Classrooms are environments where everyone feels listened to, understood and empowered. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Responses to behavioural issues provide both clear and rational consequences for poor behaviour and look more deeply to see the whole child behind the behaviour. There is a focus on their strengths and on understanding and addressing the feelings, meanings and attitudes the behaviour represents. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff stay open-minded, calm and reflective and do not take challenges personally |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a graduated and differentiated response to managing behaviour which along with the above minimises the need for exclusions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff understand the psychological implications of exclusion particularly for those who have already experienced trauma and loss |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Teaching & learning** | | | | | | |
| Expectations of high achievement are fostered and opportunities for success are provided |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils are successful in their learning |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils’ achievements in school are recognised and celebrated |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff differentiate appropriately in all lessons for pupils who have additional needs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a social and emotional well-being curriculum in place which all pupils access. This is supported by the rest of the school experience and which is underpinned by complementary work in staff development |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A psychoeducational approach is used at a preventative level in relation to universal issues such as drug-use, exam anxiety and so on |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are well-developed and specific interventions around well-being and mental health that pupils can access |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There are targeted approaches and interventions for higher risk students |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils with greater mental health needs are taught the same core skills as the mainstream but in more targeted, intensive, extensive and explicit ways |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils with greater mental health needs may benefit from working in a small therapeutic group on a particular skill or theme e.g. PATHs and Friends for Life |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nurture groups are used to help more vulnerable pupils develop emotional and social well-being through fostering a sense of safety and belonging |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pastoral systems are well linked with SEN systems within school to ensure effective communication to frontline staff about pupils’ holistic needs and staff involvement in meeting these |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Child & Family Centred Approach** | | | | | | |
| School provides a range of opportunities to pupils depending on their ability and aspirations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils’ achievements out of school are recognised and celebrated |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work with parents and carers aims to help family life reinforce the messages of the school and helps parents and carers develop their own parenting skills and attitudes |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work with parents and carers is put in place to support specific school-based interventions resulting in benefits both family and school life |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parents and carers feel accepted, confident and welcome in school. Their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parents and carers are kept fully informed, so they can participate in decisions taken about their children and are provided with information and support. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School are aware of and proactively seek to remove possible barriers to communication or engagement with parents such as EAL, literacy difficulties, parental illness or mental health needs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a specific staff team who lead and support on supporting families where well-being difficulties arise within the home |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Positive communication with parents, and carers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessing Resources and Support at SEN** | | | | | | |
| **Outside agency support** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Specialists such as psychologists are used for interventions that are in their stages of development, are focused on specific problems such as stress or anxiety, are innovative or short-term. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Specialist staff such as educational psychologists work with the young person at school |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Once a referral to an outside agency has taken place joined-up working ensures a co-ordinated, wrap-around response and care |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Health** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School involves relevant health agencies to support pupils’ well-being. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

For further information and support please contact:

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