



Prospect House

PRIMARY SPECIALIST SUPPORT SCHOOL

Staff

Mental health

and

Wellbeing



Rationale:

How would you describe your mental health and your physical health today? What about yesterday, last week, last month?

Mental health, just like physical health, is infinitely variable, and not reflective of personal strength or weakness. Think about having a physical health issue – say a headache when you wake up in the morning. It might pass in an hour, it might linger and get worse throughout the day, or it might be a symptom of something more serious; a mental health issue is the same.

The stigma that is still sometimes attached to experiencing poor mental health means that people can find it hard to talk about. They might feel ashamed or embarrassed, or worry about being discriminated against at work.

Having good mental health is more than simply an absence of mental illness. It means that you can enjoy life, make the most of your potential, play a full part in your family, workplace and community.

Are you experiencing mental health problems? One in four people do in the UK each year, so you are not alone. And if you're not experiencing mental health problems, you almost certainly know someone who is - colleagues, friends, family - even if they haven't told you.

Recent research indicates that:

- 72% of education professionals describe themselves as stressed.
- 34% of education professionals have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year. Statistically, that is over a third of the people that you work with.
- 69% of education professionals consider they do not have enough guidance about mental health and wellbeing at work.
- 43% of education professionals believed that their institutions did not properly support employees who experienced mental health and wellbeing problems.

In this booklet you will find a number of resources to support yours and others mental health as well as links to other agencies that can



Mental Health Foundation

What we do...

At Prospect House, we have used the '5 ways to wellbeing' as a framework for our approach to Mental health and wellbeing. This comprises of 5 different elements:

Connect - Making time for relationships with friends, family and colleagues and elsewhere within your community.

Be active - Exercising, physical activity and enjoying good health.

Take notice - Being aware of the world around you and reflecting on your experiences.

Keep learning - Trying new things and challenging yourself.

Give - Doing something nice for others, volunteering, making yourself and others happy

Whoever we are and whatever our role, we all need support from the people around us. In a school this includes teachers, senior leaders, support staff, pupils and parents.

Taking a holistic approach means looking after the whole person, respecting and supporting them, and valuing their unique experience and contributions - the opposite of a 'one size fits all' approach.

In practice, this means:

- Providing support for colleagues to meet their individual needs.
- Being a role model for wellbeing wherever possible.
- Removing stigma attached to concern for wellbeing.
- Talking openly about wellbeing and mental health.
- Asking for help and encouraging others to do the same.
- Positive thinking and believing the best about others.





Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a **fundamental** human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are **critical** for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

They can:

- Help you to build a sense of **belonging** and **self-worth**
- Give you an opportunity to share **positive** experiences
- Provide **emotional support** and allow you to support others

Why not try to do something different today and make a connection.

Here are some ideas you could try:

- Make time for relationships with colleagues.
- Take a break in the staffroom so that you interact with other people.
- Greet the people that you meet on your way around the school.
- Join a local club based on your interests (such as a walking group or reading group).
- Find time to spend with family and friends.
- Create a better work-life balance.
- Make concrete plans for meeting up with people so that it is more likely to happen.
- Ring someone or speak to them face to face instead of sending a message



Be Active

Regular **physical** activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. **Exercise** is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting **well-being**.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to **feel good** - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social **interactions** as well providing some level of exercise.

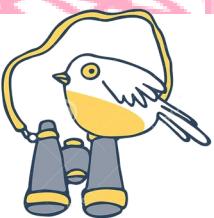
Being active is not only great for your physical **health** and **fitness**. Evidence also shows it can also improve your mental **wellbeing** by:

- **Raising you Self-Esteem**
- Helping you to set goals or challenges and **achieve them**
- Causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to **positively change your mood**

Today, why not get physical?

Here are some ideas you could try:

- Make time for exercise. Find something that you enjoy and that fits in with your lifestyle.
- Be physically active wherever possible; for example, a walk in the evening.
- Walk more. Even a ten-minute walk is good for physical and mental health.
- Try the NHS Active 10 app to motivate yourself towards 10 minutes of brisk walking per day.
- Get enough good quality sleep to give yourself the energy and stamina to stay active.
- Try the NHS Couch to 5k app to motivate yourself towards running for 30 minutes or so.



Take Notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can **strengthen** and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly **enhances** your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your **life priorities**.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make **positive choices** based on your own values and motivations.

**Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment
around you**

Here are some ideas you could try:

- Be aware of the world around you.
- Be outside when you can.
- Reflect on your experiences.
- Consciously relax.
- Try some mindfulness techniques.
- Make time for breaks from the things that cause you stress.
- Keep a mood diary to help establish patterns and find out what might trigger different feelings through the day.
- Try the NHS Feeling Good app to help you establish a positive mindset.



Keep learning

Continued learning through life enhances **self-esteem** and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to **lift** older people out of depression.

The practice of setting **goals**, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of **wellbeing**.

Why not learn something new today?

Here are some ideas you could try:

- Try new things – a hobby, a work task, or simply a new life skill.
- Challenge yourself.
- Learn what makes you feel confident and prepares you for the day ahead.
- Celebrate your successes and build on them.
- Find out something about your colleagues
- Sign up for a class
- Read the news or a book
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Research something you've always wondered about
- Learn a new word.



Give

Participation in **social** and **community** life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in **helping others** are more likely to rate themselves as **happy**.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of **kindness** once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

Why not give something back today?

Here are some ideas you could try:

- Spend time with a friend or a colleague.
- Offer a helping hand; for example, join in with a task in school, or do a favour for a neighbour.
- Find volunteering opportunities doing something that you're interested in.

Your mental health and wellbeing

Why looking after yourself is important

Teaching children is an important job, and looking after yourself helps you do the job well. That's because looking after yourself physically, mentally and emotionally helps you give our students what they need to grow and thrive.

Looking after yourself involves looking after your relationships, your health and your wellbeing. When you're focused on other things, it's easy to forget or run out of time to look after these parts of your life. But looking after yourself is worth it – it's good for you and good for our students.

Three things make a world of difference to your energy levels and ability to help children grow and thrive:

- staying active
- eating healthy food
- getting as much rest as you can.

Regular exercise improves circulation, increases your overall metabolism, boosts the immune system and makes you feel good. A daily walk gets you out of the house and into the fresh air. A change of scenery can do wonders for your mood, or you can just jump around the house listening to your favourite music.

Healthy food gives you energy. Have some simple food on hand, like fresh vegetables cut up ready to eat with dips, fruit, yoghurt and wholegrain bread.

Family life is busy, and it can be easy to lose track of your own priorities. Whether it's attending a gym class, learning something new, reading a magazine or simply relaxing in the bath with a good book, having a few hours for yourself isn't selfish. Children take their cues from their immediate surroundings, so if you feel calm and confident in yourself, the students will reap the benefits, too.

Be realistic and kind to yourself

Things will rarely go according to plan, particularly when all our routines are different. Don't be self-critical. Setting and achieving goals are building blocks to good mental wellbeing. They boost how we feel about ourselves. So feel proud of what you achieve, however small. If we can 'pat ourselves on the back', we feel good about ourselves, happier, and less likely to feel down. Let our students hear that you are proud of your own achievements and theirs. This will help them learn to self-praise too.

Many daily stresses will relate to normal family struggles. Distraction techniques can be a good way to be kind to ourselves, calming us down and improving our sense of wellbeing. This might be through fun activities with other family members, like watching a film together or exercising. The main thing is that it's something you enjoy. Even if you can't easily join in others activities, showing an interest might help them feel closer to you.

Notice what's on your mind

It's sometimes easy not to notice how we're feeling, particularly in the hustle and bustle of family life. You might feel stressed, without having noticed how this started. It's good to do regular 'mind checks' about how you're feeling, but also ask how others in your family are feeling. Have gentle conversations about emotions. Some days will be stressful, when things don't go to plan or arguments erupt. This can't be helped. Instead, when we're feeling stressed, it can help to just accept the feeling and not blame others for it. Let those around you know that we all go up and down a bit in our emotions, and that's OK.

We can all keep turning to the calming activities which work for us. For some people, having a bath, listening to music or going for a walk will help. Find out what works for you. That way, you can begin to let go of some of the more difficult feelings that you may be facing.

Connect with others

This is probably the hardest time any of us have lived through. To support our own wellbeing, regularly talking to friends, family members or professionals has never been more important. Talking with people who are supportive and good at listening (without judging, criticising or competing) is a very human need. While we may miss the face-to-face contact we would usually have with trusted friends, we can still find ways to reach out to them and to support one another.

There isn't much anyone can say at the moment to make it feel less worrying. What's clear is that you are not the only one who feels this way, and we are all finding a way along this new path. Within your own network of family and friends, there will be someone else who is feeling the same difficulties. Reach out to them and problem solve together. Many are finding that online groups can be really supportive in sharing how they feel and suggesting new ideas for activities. When we feel well supported as individuals, the calmer we tend to feel - and the more space we will have in our minds to support others.

Create routine and agree your own rules

Our wellbeing is often nurtured by having a daily routine, a structure to our lives. If the day feels endless and without a plan, anxiety can easily be triggered. Staying focused, knowing what happens next and feeling proud of achieving our goals makes us feel good. But it is not easy. At present, juggling the multiple roles of parenting, home schooling and working can leave you feeling that they are spread too thinly - and that we're not doing a good job at any of our roles.

Try having achievable timetables with attainable goals. Each evening, if we map out the following day, it can help us to feel reassured because we know what we expect to happen. Where possible, if everyone's daily plans work well together, you will also benefit from an agreed time for shared activities or quiet time.

Useful Information:

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health and general wellbeing. Your call will always be answered by a qualified and experienced counsellor who will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgmental manner.

A range of additional support is available as part of your EAP, including: structured telephone counselling and online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). EAP offers support on a variety of issues including:

- Family Issues
- Medical Information
- Lifestyle Addictions
- Gambling
- Financial
- Relationships
- Domestic Abuse
- Insurance Claims
- Consumer Issues
- Debt
- Legal
- Stress
- Childcare
- Work
- Housing

Health Assured can be accessed free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Telephone 0800 030 5182

Useful Information:

THE Health e-Hub APP

- Life support: Unlimited access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured telephone counselling or face-to-face counselling sessions at your convenience.
- Legal information: For any issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, accountancy, lawsuits, consumer disputes, property or neighbour legalities
- Bereavement support: Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief and related stress plus a team of legal advisors to help with legal issues.
- Medical information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer advice on a range of medical or health related issues. They can't diagnose but can offer a sympathetic ear and practical information and advice.
- CBT online: We recognise the value of self-help tools in dealing with a range of issues, which is why we have a range of CBT self-help modules, informative factsheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.
- Interactive health assessments
- Fitness and lifestyle advice
- Personal coaching tools
- Self help programmes
- Work life information
- Mini health checks
- Home life support
- Health calendar
- Newsletter articles
- Budgeting tools
- Webinars

**Username: MCC
Password: Schools**



Useful Information:

BUPA

BUPA Employee Assistance Programme, free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week confidential helpline - Telephone 0330 123 0124 (select option 3)



Optical



Prescriptions



Dental



Therapies



Consultations

Three easy steps to claiming⁺



1.

Have your treatment, pay for it yourself and keep your receipt.



2.

Complete your claim form online at bupa.co.uk/cashplanclaim. Alternatively, download your claim form and post it with a copy of your receipts where applicable.



3.

Bupa will pay the money directly into your nominated bank account.

Useful Information:

Cycle Scheme

We have also recently registered as a Trust with cyclescheme.co.uk so that staff can purchase bikes and cycling equipment through a salary sacrifice scheme. Cycle scheme is a tax-efficient employee benefit that helps you to save money and boost your wellbeing.

Find out more about how the scheme works here:

<https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/how-it-works>

To sign up:

Go to <https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/>

- Select I'M AN EMPLOYEE
- Enter the Prosperc code: 7914596
- You will need your payroll number to start the process, this is on your payslip

As a school we will offer:

- Tea, coffee, snacks etc in the wellbeing box
- Crockery, cutlery, mugs, glasses etc.
- Briefing notes shared with missing staff
- Half termly breakfast
- Feel-good Friday
- A dedicated Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Regular staff wellbeing questionnaires
- An open door policy for all staff
- Termly 'No Meeting' week
- Regular, high quality CPD for all
- Regular visits from the therapy animals!

Useful links

Mind—the mental health charity

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

NHS Mental Health Audio Guides

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

Mood Self-Assessment

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/>

Twinkl and Mind Partnership

<https://bit.ly/2MmfjVR>

School Well—School Staff Wellbeing

<http://schoolwell.co.uk/>

BBC—Support for School Staff

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/teacher-support/new-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-teachers/z4g4scw>

TES—News Hub

<https://www.tes.com/news/hub/teacher-wellbeing>