

**Summary of the wellbeing forum: Thursday 3rd November 2022**

Mr Parker briefly opened the session by outlining some of the things that might be discussed at the meeting, including kind and respectful relationships; intervention and specified pastoral support; resilience and a resilience framework; the crossover of mental health and well-being with SEND, including anxiety; ‘My Happy Mind’; validating children’s emotions; zones of regulation; and the importance of just spending time as parents without children.

A parent opened up the discussion by asking about what school are doing to support children in developing their social skills.m, especially as there seem to be a lot of ‘niggling tensions’ at playtimes. Mr Parker mentioned that Mrs Latham and Mrs Billingsley are both looking into this as PSHE and mental health leads, respectively and have some fantastic ideas moving forward. This includes some degree of cultural change and moving slightly away from a culture of reward and praise and towards one of children seeing the intrinsic value of ‘doing the right thing’ in their eyes, and following our school values because they want to, not because they might get something else out of it.

The language used by adults what is discussed here and the importance of validating children’s emotions.

Mr Parker mentioned an article that staff have read recently about this and how the way adults behave and talk to the children can have a profound impact on their self-worth. Children’s individuality was acknowledged and so was the importance of the awareness needed when considering language used when conversing with the children. Again this is something that is being looked into further, particularly when considering attachment and neuro diversity.

We discussed the importance of children having a sense of pride for the things that they do and talked about rewards evolving into something where children put themselves forward, anonymously, to show the things that they have done that make themselves proud and for not only these to be validated and appreciated but to be positively affirming and self-regulating. The aim of this would be to enhance a culture of self-love, to enhance their own self-esteem and to see the value in what they do, be it for others or themselves, and in celebrating their uniqueness. Mrs Ball, part of our well-being team in school, added that children also celebrate and recognise each other’s kindness, respect and responsibility in class assemblies and the value this has in seeing and valuing each other’s strengths.

It was agreed that whilst our children’s behaviour in school has always been relatively positive, and remains so, many children struggle socially at times and fall out with each other over things which might be deemed relatively minor. This led us on to talk about what resilience was and how the children should know that resilience is not about struggling on regardless, but is a complex set of attitudes and skills which includes everything from acknowledging that we all make mistakes and can learn from them, to realising when things are difficult and knowing who to go to for help. The concept of a resilience framework (which is shared at the bottom of these minutes) was introduced and we might ask parents how they feel this might be used, without being too overwhelming for the children. This will be visited by staff also.

Teaching and support staff were discussed and everyone acknowledged that staff welfare is an extremely important focus and agreed that if staff were not regulated, then they would have far more difficulty in supporting their children emotionally and socially also. Reverend Smith, a governor at the school, mentioned that these things are discussed between him and Mrs Billingsley, in his role as link governor for Mental Health and Well-being.

A discussion was then had on how teachers and support staff might regulate with their children, perhaps by means of breathing activities after play times, etc.

This led to the discussions on, ‘My Happy Mind’, an initiative that UPS are looking into to support children’s mental health and well-being, whilst giving them some logical and scientific explanations for why they may feel a certain way. Mrs Marsland commented on the importance of this element in enabling children’s reflections on their own individual feelings.

Modules on elements such as respectful relationships, kindness, and gratitude, across the whole school, would mean a common language and a common approach to how we support our children in reflecting upon their feelings and emotions.

It was mentioned that it would be useful for parents to take a look and see whether they feel it would be beneficial to the children. There is a link here (<https://myhappymind.org/programmes/school-programme/>) to what ‘My Happy Mind’ is all about and school welcomes parents thoughts on this. There is an app that is linked to this that parents can use and the conversation of too much screen time or pressure on parents in using another online tool, could become overbearing – it would be therefore important that it was made clear that this was something that is there for parents and their children should they feel they need it, rather than expectation.

A school governor, Mrs Smyth, whilst we are on the subject of what was being done at home, brought up homework and help parents feel about expectations here. A parent raised weather there was consistency in how homework was completed. Mr Parker said that whilst it would be wonderful if everyone came up with super projects for topic, the nature of and diversity of home lives means that there will always be inconsistencies and we will not be placing added precious on children and parents regarding topic homework. The emphasis will always be on reading in particular, and spelling, as these are key to the whole curriculum.

It was mentioned that there are a number of links in the SEN section on our website, as well as there being leaflets in our entrance hall with regards to support families on anxiety.

They will also be a meeting at school led by educational psychologist, Sabrina Cummings, at 3:45pm on Monday 5th of December. The focus here will be on zones of regulation. All parents are most welcome. Staff will be present too.

