Happy Classrooms

Positive mental health and wellbeing

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Aim

Consider how to create a mentally healthy classroom using ‘Happy Classrooms’
Objectives

• Understand the current national and local guidance on emotional wellbeing in the classroom

• Know what is included in ‘Happy Classrooms’ and how to use it

• Take away practical ideas to apply in the classroom for a happy environment and emotional literacy

• Reflect on my own mental wellbeing and share strategies for resilience
Introductions

Introductions!

• Choose an object

• Name and school

• What your object says about you
Mental health describes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects our thinking, moods and behaviours. Everyone has mental health, and it is normal for mental health to change during times of stress. Positive mental health does not mean always being happy, but feeling empowered to talk about, cope with and overcome the things we might encounter in life. That way, we recover from our downturns and learn to take care of our minds in the same way we do our bodies.

(www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/jargon-buster)
Reflection - How am I feeling today?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

low                      high
Local Guidance

- Health and Wellbeing Team

- Happy Classrooms – practical guidance to enhance the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and teachers in the primary classroom

- Focuses on emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and teachers through routines, activities and environment
National Guidance

‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ (including ‘mental wellbeing’ statutory from September 2020


- [https://www.islingtoncs.org/2020](https://www.islingtoncs.org/2020)
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<td>• Families and people who care for me</td>
<td>• Families</td>
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<td>• Caring friendships</td>
<td>• Respectful relationships, including friendships</td>
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<td>• Online relationships</td>
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<td>• Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</td>
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<td>• The law about sex, relationships and young people relevant to topics such as: marriage, sexuality, pornography, abortion, violence and exploitation</td>
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### Statutory Guidance

#### ‘Mental Wellbeing’ (primary)

- mental wellbeing is a **normal** part of daily life
- there is a **normal range** of emotions we all experience
- Recognising and talking about their emotions
- Judging appropriate, proportionate feelings and behaviour
- benefits of exercise, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering
- simple **self-care** techniques

#### Continued

- isolation and loneliness – discussing feelings/seeking support
- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support) for self/others
- it is **common** for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

*DfE guidance page 32*
Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others’ mental health.
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

*DfE guidance page 36*
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Keeping children safe in education - statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE 2016), page 5.
Reflecting on my wellbeing and strategies

• Write down at least 4 things you do that make you feel well/happy

• Place your completed sheet on the table

• Choose a new idea to try
Practical ideas to apply in class

www.islingtoncs.org

• Daily routines (a positive start, ready to learn, a positive end)
• Weekly activities (special object, creative play, circle time)
• Classroom environment (display, toys)
• Resources (circle games, planning, evaluations)
Daily routines (Happy Classrooms pages 3 – 5)

- Positive and good start to the day
- Getting ready to learn
- Pupils responsibilities
- Getting pupils’ attention and giving instructions
- Reward, behaviour, feedback
- Positive end to the day
Weekly activities (Happy Classrooms pages 7 – 8)

- Special object
- Special person
- Thought / feeling for the week
- Creative / co-operative playtime
- Mystery drawing/ joke / sentence
- Black hat raffle
- Circle time
- P4C
- Drop everything and read
Effective circle time (Happy Classrooms pages 14 – 22)

• What’s the focus?
• What’s the plan?
• Where? (classroom or other space?)
• What resources? (chairs, floor, cushions, fabric squares?)
• When and how often?

*Takes time and effort to train your class*
Effective circle time (Happy Classrooms pages 14 – 22)

- What’s the focus?
- What’s the plan?
- Where? (classroom or other space?)
- What resources? (chairs, floor, cushions, fabric squares?)
- When and how often?

*Takes time and effort to train your class*
Class environment (Happy Classrooms page 9)

- Book area
- Displays
- Role play areas
- Dressing up box / discovery boxes
- Seasonal display / share table / inventions
- Music
- Soft toys

Tidy? Organised? Purposeful?
Do you want to be in it?
• I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. (Maya Angelou, 1928 - 2014), writer and civil rights activist.

• I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized. (Haim G Ginott, 1922 – 73), teacher, child psychologist, psychotherapist and parent educator)
Your favourite class teacher?

• What do you remember about your favourite class teacher / the class you most enjoyed being in?
Getting to know you

Circle games

You (choose)

Your pupils
Plan an activity to support mental wellbeing

Focus on a theme and include ideas from Happy Classrooms using a circle time template.

Themes (based on primary health curriculum)

• Recognising and talking about emotions
• Simple self-care techniques
• The benefits of exercise and time outdoors
• Where and how to seek support
Choose one idea from today to try in your classroom

• What new idea/activity would you like to try?
• What will you have done by next week?
• What difference do you hope to see and by when?
Reflection - How are you feeling now?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

low               high
Links

• www.islingtoncs.org
• www.annafreud.org.uk
• www.youngminds.org.uk
• www.healthyschools.london.gov.uk
• www.pshe-association.org.uk
• www.nspcc.org.uk
My Takeaway

Something I learned

An action I am now committed to

What else do I need?