Mental wellbeing

Schools hould teach children and young people about their own emotional and mental wellbeing: how to maintain positive mental health, how to make good choices that will support their wellbeing, how to recognise signs of concern in themselves and others, and how to seek support as soon as possible, if needed.

Schools should help pupils to learn self-control and self-regulation skills in response to the increasing demands they experience. Pupils should be able to recognise the range of choices they have in any situation and the critical thinking skills to help them make good decisions. Pupils should learn what happens in the brain when we feel happy and how we can make choices to improve our happiness levels.

The curriculum should teach pupils that everyone's life has ups and downs. Positive coping strategies, the power of optimism, growth mindset and positive psychology all have important skills and approaches to help pupils support and maintain their mental wellbeing. Pupils should be taught to respond calmly and rationally when they experience setbacks, challenges and uncertainty.

Resilience skills will help them recognise when they are catastrophizing a situation and how to break out of this cycle. Adopting approaches where they notice life's positives with gratitude and they celebrate personal growth and improvement will be a great support.

Pupils also need to understand the factors and behaviours that have a negative and potentially lasting impact on mental wellbeing such as isolation, loneliness, bullying and unkind behaviour. All pupils should recognise that they are an important member of their school and community (belonging) and that they can contribute to making a difference to others.

There are many other factors within the control of our pupils (and their families) that can benefit mental wellbeing and happiness. Physical exercise, time spent outdoors, exploring the arts, community participation, voluntary activities, supporting other people, getting enough sleep, spending time with family and friends, pursuing hobbies and putting effort into learning can all have a significant impact on mental health.

Aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health. Schools should provide opportunities for inclusive spiritual development that supports good mental health as well as opportunities to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and supports their mental health and wellbeing

GREAT DREAM

Ten keys to happier living

GIVING	Do things for others
RELATING	Connect with people
EXERCISING	Take care of your body
AWARENESS	Live life mindfully
TRYING OUT	Keep learning new things
DIRECTION	Have goals to look forward to
RESILIENCE	Find ways to bounce back
EMOTIONS	Look for what's good
ACCEPTANCE	Be comfortable with who you are
MEANING	Be part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

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