

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors

At Wessex we strongly believe for us to be a happy and successful school we need to promote, support and encourage all our staff to have positive mental health and wellbeing. We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our community - staff, pupils, parents and governors.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to poor mental health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health strategies, we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly and indirectly by poor mental health. We recognise that some children are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the child, their family or to community and life events

We aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health
- Provide support to staff and children who may be suffering from poor mental health.

Specific aims for the children:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that their thoughts and opinions are valued
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks through developing a growth mindset.

At Wessex we use a range of interventions to support our children with their mental health.

- Jigsaw PSHE scheme of work
- Jigsaw assemblies
- Mind UP lessons
- Brain breaks
- School goats
- Paul Dix approach to restorative behaviour
- Planned sessions in our outdoor learning area
- Wellbeing Ambassador assemblies
- Group outdoor learning sessions
- ELSA sessions
- Support from behaviour support TA
- Parent/carer drop in tea and biscuit sessions with our Mental Health Practitioner
- Individual support for parents/carers through our Mental Health Practitioner
- Additional support through SPA referrals to early help services. This may include youth teams or play therapy.

Staff at WPS are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. In order to help our pupils succeed, we recognise that the school plays an important role in supporting them to be resilient and

mentally healthy. As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

At Wessex we recognise that sometimes children may need additional support to help them with their emotional wellbeing. All staff are trained in Attachment Awareness Strategies to ensure that we are well placed and prepared to support children in our care. All staff aim to establish a warm, respectful relationship with pupils in their care.

Sometimes a child may require additional emotional support to help them to be successful in school and with their friends. We have trained staff called ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) who spend time with children as and when required. ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed. Our ELSAs plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils who are experiencing temporary or longer term additional emotional needs. The majority of work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate, especially in areas of social and friendships skills. They offer emotional support to children helping them to:

- recognise and understand their emotions
- build self esteem
- develop social skills
- develop friendship skills
- manage anger and behaviour
- manage loss and bereavement
- develop relaxation techniques
- manage transition/ change

At Wessex we also have Education Mental Health Practitioners to support families. These practitioners are trained to assess students who experience common low level mental health difficulties, such as anxiety, low mood, and behavioural difficulties. They offer a range of low intensity interventions to help students and/interparent/carers, primarily located in a school setting. The low intensity work that they provide is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and guided self-help.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity in PSHE and MindUP lessons to discuss mental health in a safe environment.

Where severe problems occur, we will ensure that appropriate referrals are made (with consent) to specialist services (eg CAMHS)

To help promote emotional health and well-being and remind everybody of its importance, we have emotional well-being ambassadors. This is a group of children who have undertaken training in school. They plan assemblies and activities to support our 10 ways to good well-being.