

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 21 May 2019

## Supporting Children & Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing in School

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 note the contents of this report

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# Report

## Supporting Children & Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing in School

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 A report was presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2018 which highlighted the wide range of high quality interventions, preventative approaches, training and initiatives working well to support children & young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools.
- 2.2 An update on the report was presented to Education, Children and Families Committee in October 2018. This report follows the recommendations made in March and October with regard to supporting Children & Young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools and provides an overview of the ongoing work.
- 2.3 It includes the details of the latest consultation with 450 children and young people in schools across Edinburgh which explored what staff, families and peers could do to better support their mental health and wellbeing as well as exploring identification and access to people who can support them at point of need.

### **3. Background**

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- 3.1 A Supporting Children & Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing report was presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2018 and an update on recommendations in October 2018.
- 3.2 This report is an update of the recommendations made in March 2018 with particular reference to the consultations that have taken place with children and young people in Edinburgh about better supporting their mental health at point of need and the Children's Conference.

### **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 In order to progress discussion in schools around the importance of supporting mental health at point of need, the Health and Wellbeing Team, in partnership with Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) developed a consultation document that was used by staff in schools and settings across between November 2018 and January 2019 to gather responses from almost 450 children and young people.
- 4.2 Children and young people were asked what schools were already doing well and what else they could do to better support their mental health and wellbeing. A brief summary of key findings is outlined below.
- 4.3 Children and young people reported lots of positives around what was already happening in schools to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing. These include; growth mindset work, Building Resilience programme, guidance support, lunch clubs and anti-bullying ambassadors, pupil support assistants, Cool, Calm and Connected, mental health ambassadors and mentoring from senior pupils.
- 4.4 In terms of improvement, most of these centred around time and space. Children and young people want their teachers and other staff to have the capacity and time listen to their concerns and take them seriously. 40 responses suggested that due to teaching time pressures, teachers were not always the identified people that children and young people would seek to talk to. Siblings and other school staff were identified as supportive, so ensuring that there was safe, private space for any adult to have a conversation with a child or young person should be a high priority in every school and supporting access to siblings (particularly where there may be family division) should be considered.
- 4.5 89 responses mentioned the presence of stigma in relation to self-referring for support and a range of suggestions were put forward about how this could be done without attracting the attention of peers or the wider school community but still getting the request to speak to someone through to the relevant person. They would like more information to be displayed in poster form and through signposting of relevant services and support lines so that it is readily available.

- 4.6 Many pupils also referred to the pressure of expectations and that academic achievement/university is still pushed as the only acceptable choice following school and desired more acknowledgement and information that there are other paths of equal value and worth to pursue if academia isn't the first choice.
- 4.7 The feedback from children and young people were turned into a Top Tips Document for Schools along with complementary Top Tips for parents/carers and peers as to how others could better support their mental health and wellbeing (see Appendices)
- 4.8 The Top Tips documents were launched by young people, schools and staff at the Children's Conference Mental Health & Wellbeing on the 28<sup>th</sup> February in Faith Mission. Over 160 staff from schools and settings attended this conference and heard from key note speakers, schools sharing practice, children and young people about what works in terms of promoting mental health and wellbeing. Over 90% of participants rated the conference and speakers as excellent and shared how they were going to take forward developments in their settings.
- 4.9 The documents have also been circulated by email to all Communities and Families staff with suggestions from staff at the conference as to how they could be used to raise awareness and improve support for all children and young people. Further work will take place to raise the profile of the feedback across all school clusters.
- 4.10 The Communities and Families Department continues to increase awareness, understanding and services around mental health and wellbeing through training, programme delivery and classroom materials such as Building Resilience, CIRCLE, Nurture Practitioners, Connected & Compassionate Classroom, Wellbeing Academy and more, detailed in full in previous Mental Health & Wellbeing reports and the Health and Wellbeing (Edinburgh Learns Strategy) – Item 7.11.
- 4.11 In addition to the work already taking place in schools, some have used their PEF grants to identify an additional member of staff who can provide additional 1-1 support. This varies from school to school and can be a counsellor, youth work lead or Pupil Support Officer (Emotional Wellbeing Academy) and many are also engaging in mentoring programmes such as Career Ready and shortly MCR Pathways (for Looked After Pupils).
- 4.12 Newer developments around point of need include the new Escape Connect Relate bibliotherapy toolkit which has been developed by pupil ambassadors, Lifelong Learning Staff and Educational Psychologists. This is to be launched on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May and has upskilled pupils to be a point of contact in school libraries to help signpost their peers to mental health resources and books that may help them in times of difficulty.
- 4.13 There is still a journey to overcome perceptions around value of vocational alongside academic routes which has highlighted in the feedback. However, the local authority is committed to challenging these and has been actively working with partners to promote alternative pathways including through the School College Partnerships, SDS Careers Advisers, Media Campaigns, Foundation Apprenticeships and National Progression Awards. These will be detailed in the

new Edinburgh Learns Framework: Pathways to developing our young workforce (available from August 2019).

- 4.14 We are waiting on further clarification from Scottish Government and the Taskforce for Children and Young People's Mental Health about the funding and implementation strategy for the 'Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow' (The Government's Programme for Scotland 2018-19). This offered commitments around better access to clinical services (such as counselling, CAMHS and professional support) and early intervention (additional School Nurses) for children and young people in schools.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Explore ways to share feedback from children and young people and encourage schools to build on learning and good practice.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 All activity described within this report is contained within service budgets and/or external funding and is delivered through effective partnership working.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Consultations took place with 450 children and young people across Edinburgh.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Item 7.11 - Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in School.pdf – Reports, 336.61 KB](#) (Education Children & Families Committee Report 6 March 2018)
- 8.2 [Item 7.10 - Update on Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in School](#) (Education Children & Families Committee Report 9 October 2018)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Top Tips Documents for Schools, Parents & Carers and Children & Young People

# 40 Top Tips for Educational Settings







# 40 Top Tips for Educational Settings

*As a Local Authority, we are continually striving to better support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. As part of this commitment staff from different schools and settings across Edinburgh consulted with almost 450 children and young people for their views and suggestions. The following is a list of the most common responses that our children and young people told us were already working well in schools or that they thought would be helpful.*

***'If you keep things inside it can weigh you down, so it is good to speak to the teacher.'***

## **Ethos and Life of the School**

- ❖ Being greeted when we arrive in the morning or into class with a smile and a good morning makes you feel good.
- ❖ Spend more time getting to know us, build relationships as early as possible before support is really needed.
- ❖ Use assemblies to regularly raise awareness and promote mental health issues, signposting and support available, both in schools and the wider community.
- ❖ It is helpful when staff know and adapt to your personal circumstances.
- ❖ Clear timetables help us to know what the day will be like.
- ❖ Look for the deeper reasons behind the behaviour. Often when we are not listening or understanding the learning, there is something else going on.
- ❖ Learn from the teachers that have effective ways to help people behave without telling them off/punishments.
- ❖ Celebrate wider achievements and share stories of alternative routes to work and further education. Remember less than 50% of young people go to university.
- ❖ Ask senior pupils or community leaders to share success stories and real-life experiences about how they found school, how they felt, what they did, who they spoke to and how they feel now.
- ❖ Look after your wellbeing. We are more stressed when you are stressed.

***'Constant academic pressure and stress from staff and parents to do well in class, pass exams and go to university - it should not be the only thing that matters.'***

## **In the Classroom**

- ❖ Allow us to get to class and settled before asking us to take off our jackets.
- ❖ Having a stationery box in the classroom is really useful and saves embarrassment if you have forgotten a pen.
- ❖ When you get something wrong in class, it is great when the teacher helps you and doesn't get cross so you can learn from your mistakes.
- ❖ Consult with us more about what we want to learn and give us opportunities to problem solve together as a class.
- ❖ It is preferable when the teacher puts us into groups as it is less stressful and we get to work with new people.



- ❖ Please let us have access to water and toilets during class.
- ❖ More time for everyone to have a one to one with the teacher to speak about work and learning.
- ❖ If a child gets something wrong please be discreet about pointing it out or tell them off in private, don't do it in front of everyone.
- ❖ Please understand there are often good reasons why we are late, it is not because we are lazy.
- ❖ Consider having a relaxing 10 minutes built into the school day for quiet reading, drawing or mindfulness.

***'Understand that young people have lives outside of school and homework isn't always manageable in the allotted time. It also means we can't spend time at home just relaxing with family but family time improves wellbeing.'***

### **Before School, Break Times & After School Clubs**

- ❖ Breakfast clubs are a good start to the day and we appreciate spending time with staff in an informal way.
- ❖ Consider setting up a mental health and wellbeing group or ambassadors who meet regularly to share better ways to promote good mental health in school and put ideas into practice.
- ❖ We would like to have a calm and quiet space to go and relax inside at break and lunchtime.
- ❖ More adults in the playground at break and lunch to supervise and speak to.
- ❖ There should be a really good variety of clubs to go to and open to all (not just those who are doing it as a subject).
- ❖ Give everyone the same chances, for example girls football and boys netball clubs.
- ❖ Use senior pupils to run some clubs, they would be better to go to and would relate to us more.
- ❖ Offer homework clubs that have staff to help you and give you the materials you need.
- ❖ Emotional support groups such as Seasons for Growth and nurture, as well as maths and literacy groups are really helpful.
- ❖ The buddy/kindness benches need more focus and attention.

***'We would like more resources in the playground, sometimes we get bored and we think that is what causes disagreements and arguments outside which upsets people'***





## Support

- ❖ We feel supported when staff notice us and ask if we are OK, especially if we look visibly different, upset or messier than usual. It is even better when all staff do this not just in the classroom but office staff, janitors, librarians, etc.
- ❖ Have someone in the school who has the job of listening and helping with worries or problems on a 1-1 basis (preferably someone who you don't have to call Miss or Sir).
- ❖ Have a clear and confidential way (eg worry boxes, text system, emails) to ask for help and let us choose who we would feel most comfortable talking to.
- ❖ All schools should have a nurture room or safe, calm place where you can go to if you are needing support where it does not feel like a punishment.
- ❖ More information and posters around school to signpost to health and wellbeing support, making sure we know resources are there and how to contact them.
- ❖ Be sensitive about the language you use around wellbeing. Depression, OCD and bipolar are diagnosable conditions and should not be used flippantly.
- ❖ Being offered hot drinks or food at 1-1s really helps us to calm down and relax.
- ❖ Sometimes young people feel reluctant to come to pupil support as they feel they will always contact home. Make it clearer that over the age of 12 we have a right to privacy and what can and cannot be confidential.
- ❖ More classes on building resilience, self-care, life choices, mental wellbeing and the importance of sleep.
- ❖ Regular visits from partner agencies and stalls showing the support they offer are good.

***'Sometimes teachers don't have time and they just say 'sorry can you come back later' but if we need to tell them something it might have taken a lot of courage to build up to talking to them and then we get shut down. Please arrange an alternative time and place that suits you instead, otherwise we might find it too difficult to come back.'***

## Acknowledgements

### **Thanks to the staff, children and young people from the following schools and settings;**

Roseburn PS, Leith Academy, Niddrie Mill PS, Currie Community HS, Young Edinburgh Action, Redhall Special School, Corstorphine PS, Forrester HS, Leith PS, Drummond HS, Gracemount HS, Royal High School, Broomhouse PS, Hillwood PS, Trinity HS, Boroughmuir HS, Craigmount HS, St Augustine's RC HS, St David's RC PS, Canongate Youth, Sciennes PS, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce, Balerno HS, Broughton HS, Newcraighall PS, Hermitage park PS, South Morningside PS, Pirniehall PS, Castlebrae HS, The Junction

Young Minds – [www.youngminds.org.uk/youngminds-professionals/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/youngminds-professionals/)

Hands on Scotland – [www.handsonscotland.co.uk](http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk)

Mentally Healthy Schools – [www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk)

Mental Health Foundation – [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Pupil Support Inclusion Hub – <https://cityofedinburgheducation.sharepoint.com/sites/PsychologicalServices/inclusionhub/SitePages/Home.aspx>





# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

## Top Tips for Parents and Carers



# Top Tips for parents and carers

This information was gathered in consultation with almost 450 children and young people from Edinburgh. We asked them what they hoped their parents and carers would do to help them develop good mental health and emotional wellbeing. Here's what they said:

Do stuff that makes you happy. If you are less stressed, everyone is less stressed.

Don't blame yourself, sometimes we are just having a bad day!

Spend more time really listening and talking with us. Take our distress seriously when we open up about our worries.

Don't force the issue if we don't want to talk immediately. Make time and space for us to tell you in our own way.

Love us, care for us, feed us and make sure we get a good night sleep so we aren't like zombies the next day.

Share your own experiences with us and be open about your mistakes or struggles in the past.

**Listen to our opinion  
and allow us to be  
involved in making  
family decisions.**

**Say sorry or give  
us a hug after we  
have a row or  
fall out.**

**Have expectations that  
are realistic and don't  
put too much pressure  
on us. There are many  
paths to success.**

**Take an interest in  
our lives, friends  
and hobbies outside  
of school.**

**Ask about school  
and help us with  
our homework.**

**Learn more about mental  
health, websites and  
services so you are  
comfortable talking about  
these issues.**

**Accept us for who we  
are and encourage our  
dreams and choices,  
not just yours.**

**Do more fun  
things together  
as a family.**

**Remember we are still  
learning and working  
out who we are. We will  
make mistakes and when  
we do, please be calm and  
patient with us.**

If you want to start a conversation with your child here are a few ideas of where to start.

- ❖ What are you most looking forward to in the next few weeks?
- ❖ How are you feeling about... ..?
- ❖ What helps you feel calm?
- ❖ What do you love about ...?
- ❖ Is there anything that you are worried about?

If you would like more advice about parenting or mental health support for children and young people here are some websites that can help.

Parentline Scotland will listen to you with kindness, give you time to think things through and support you. You can call on: 08000 28 22 33 or if it's easier, text: 07860 022844 (standard network charges apply) and they will call you back. They are open 7 days a week: Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 9am-12noon. **[www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/](http://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/)**

Young Minds offers free confidential online and telephone support to anyone worried about the emotional and mental wellbeing of a child or young person up to the age of 25. The charity also has information for parents and carers about mental health. **[www.youngminds.org](http://www.youngminds.org)**

See Me is a charity that focuses on reducing the stigma and discrimination around mental health and offers advice to parents and carers who are concerned about their child. **[www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org)**

The Mental Health Foundation offer a range of support from looking after your own mental health to supporting someone else. They can also help you find further support and advice on how to seek help. **[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)**

The City of Edinburgh Council also offers a number of courses that support parents and carers. These include: Peep Learning Together Programme, Raising Children with Confidence, Raising Teens with Confidence, Incredible Years, Triple P and Teen Triple P. For more information see: **[www.joininedinburgh.org](http://www.joininedinburgh.org)**



**HAPPY TO TRANSLATE**

ترجمہ کے لئے حاضر ہمسعدنا توفير الترجمة  
MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯  
আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব

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# Mental Health and Wellbeing Top Tips for Children and Young People

# Top Tips for children and young people

Children and young people said they do these things to keep emotionally well and able to deal with life's ups and downs.

**'Talk things over with someone you trust, a friend, teacher, parent or even a pet'**

**'Do something that you enjoy and makes you happy'**

**'Spend time with positive people'**

**'Focus on the big picture and learn what to ignore'**

**'Do the basics, eat well, get enough sleep and get active'**

**'Look for the positives even when things aren't going well'**

**'Be yourself, no-one else can tell you how to feel'**

**'If you are worried or upset about something write it down or draw a picture of how you are feeling'**

**'Take time for yourself, take a break, relax, meditate, have a bath'**

**'Reach out for a hug with someone you trust'**



# Supporting each other

Children and young people hoped a friend would do these things if they reached out for help.

- ❖ Just listen to them and try to understand
- ❖ Don't judge or laugh at them
- ❖ Share your own difficult times with them and give them hope that they can get through this
- ❖ Respect their privacy, don't share what they told you with everyone
- ❖ Help them to see the positives about themselves
- ❖ Include them in things
- ❖ Spend time with them face to face, not just on social media
- ❖ Help them to identify who they can ask for help - who's on their back up team?
- ❖ Encourage them to seek help early before it gets worse
- ❖ Don't take it personally if they aren't their usual self

# Where to find further help

If you are worried about yourself or a friend, children and young people told us that it was helpful for them to find an adult to speak to. This could be a:

- ❖ parent or carer
- ❖ teacher
- ❖ doctor
- ❖ or another adult you trust

It can be difficult to make that first step to ask for help but remember that everyone struggles from time to time and it's okay to not be okay. If you would prefer to go online for support these websites are good place to start.

Samaritans [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Epic Friends [www.epicfriends.co.uk](http://www.epicfriends.co.uk)

Respect Me [www.respectme.co.uk](http://www.respectme.co.uk)

Mood Juice [www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk)

Young Scot [www.youngscot.org](http://www.youngscot.org)

Talk to Frank [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Breathing Space [www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

The Mix [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

Healthy Respect [www.healthyrespect.co.uk](http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk)

Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Produced in consultation with almost 450 children and young people in Edinburgh. These are the things they feel would help themselves and others to better look after their emotional wellbeing and mental health.