

Suffolk Headlines

The following article was published in “Suffolk Headlines” on 29 November 2016. Suffolk Headlines is a weekly information email which is sent to headteachers and high level contacts in Suffolk schools:



Children & Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing FOR INFORMATION | ALL SCHOOLS

The Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee is independently reviewing the support available to children and young people with emotional or mental health needs.

It is keen to hear how you are working in your schools to support children’s emotional health and wellbeing, and would like to share best practice across the County.

Please contact Committee.services@suffolk.gov.uk with your feedback.

Further information:

The Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee is a committee of elected county and district councillors which scrutinises issues relating to health and wellbeing in Suffolk.

On 19 January 2017, the Committee will be hosting a meeting with members of the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee to consider how children’s emotional health and wellbeing needs are being met in Suffolk.

As part of this review, the Committee is interested to know how schools in Suffolk are providing support to pupils with emotional or mental health needs, what is working well and how things could be improved.

The Committee would welcome feedback from schools, for example:

- How do you provide emotional wellbeing support to pupils?
- Do you know how to access wellbeing services?
- Are you satisfied with the provision available?

Please get in touch at Committee.services@suffolk.gov.uk to provide us with your comments or share how your school is supporting the emotional wellbeing of young people.

To enable us to compile and publish written evidence (which will not identify any specific schools), we need to receive responses **by 20 December 2016** please.

The Committee will welcome written evidence, but there will also be opportunities for representatives from schools to speak at the meeting. Please let us know if you would like to participate.

Responses from Schools

Three schools responded to the article, and their responses are provided below:

School A – High School and Sixth Form (Multi Academy Trust)

Current support for students with emotional or mental health needs

Team of mentors (Teaching Assistants) providing regular meetings, formal and informal- supporting pupils with issues such as self-esteem, anxiety, depression, self-harm, OCD, eating disorders, bereavement, and substance misuse.

- Mentors using Emotional Literacy assessment tool before and after mentoring intervention with focus pupils. (GL assessment)
- Student support groups for groups of vulnerable KS3 pupils focusing on improving self-esteem, co-operation, and social skills.
- 1:1 anger management sessions
- External counsellor in school for limited number of pupils
- Pastoral staff, whenever possible, are liaising with external counsellors and therapists, attached to particular pupils but are not always getting the support and advice they feel they need.
- 1 session of training on OCD provided by external therapist- for mentors and pastoral Heads of Years
- Young carers group

Training for staff at the chalk face is essential. There has been a huge increase in issues surrounding mental health but training for staff is difficult to access, and staff just doing what they feel is right to support students. We would welcome some focused training on managing the issues mentioned in my first bullet point.

Many thanks

Learning Support Co-ordinator

School B - Community Primary School

Following receipt of this week's Headlines please find below some instances of practice employed to support pupil's mental health and well-being:

We have employed a counsellor since March 2013 and are waiting for her to return from a long term sickness

Implemented a mental health programme to support a particular year group which had been recognised as having issues re: bonding as a group and being aware of their personal feelings and how they impact upon others-around the area of Mindfulness(delivered by Blossom Mental Health & Personal Development Training).

Deal with any issues re: friendship promptly to prevent allegations of bullying, but also dealing with any of these as soon as we are made aware.

Trained 8 teaching assistants on a Youth Mental Health First Aid course to be able to identify potential concerns before they become bigger worries and issues.

Provide 2 lunch time groups to support wellbeing; one in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and one for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Share knowledge with staff so that they can deliver programmes such as Time to Talk and The Friendship Formula.

PSHE/SMSC linked to Characteristics of Learning in which Respect/working co-operatively play a major role.

Celebration Assemblies to celebrate and acknowledge pupils who display great behaviour.

Plan lessons to engage and support pupils.

Best wishes
Headteacher

School C - Nursery School and Children's Centre

Hello

I am very pleased to hear that the Health scrutiny and children services committees are meeting to discuss this important area and I would very much like to participate in this event as this is a particular passion of mine. I feel we need to increase awareness across professions of how we need to support emotional wellbeing as a driver for academic success and lifelong health.

At our school we focus strongly on developing and supporting emotional wellbeing of parents as well as children and helping them understand why it is important to recognise and develop emotional development and wellbeing in their children. I feel this is an area of expertise in our practise but is not complicated to achieve. Outcomes for families and children demonstrate the benefits of what we do. We have an integrated and layered approach which provide universal information to children and families but also tailor it to each personal situation so that it is bespoke and fit for purpose. We find that teaching parents and children about emotional development and intelligence and making this overt by sharing research with them helps them to make informed decisions and their feedback support this. We support them to develop reflective parenting strategies. Over the past 4 years we have implemented our resilience tracker very successfully to help us in this work and this is now being shared with other local authorities who are implementing it with their early years settings. Once again it is not complicated but recognises the importance of learning about and supporting positive mental wellbeing in order to affect whole lives and achievement both academically and in every other aspect of life. I would be happy to share this in more detail.

I hope this will be of interest to you.

Headteacher

