

Bringing wellbeing into the everyday

Five top tips

To normalise the conversation about staff mental health and wellbeing, and to move away from it being seen as an 'add on' or 'tick box' in schools, there are things that senior leaders can encourage to help bring wellbeing into the everyday school day.

Here are five top tips for school leaders. These tips can be used in conjunction with the tips included in the '*Reducing mental health stigma in schools*' and '*mental health awareness in schools*' guides, which are also found on this hub.



1 Wellbeing from the start – talk about it when recruiting

Including a statement about staff mental health and wellbeing in recruitment adverts is an excellent way of showing potential recruits that the school values, and supports, its staff. It also sets out the intention that you will prioritise staff wellbeing and can add a competitive advantage when recruiting excellent teachers, and other school staff. Of course, setting out the intention is the first step... following through on this intention is the most important step.

2

Get talking in inductions

Including conversations about mental health and wellbeing as part of staff inductions creates the space for staff to be open, right from the very start. As part of the induction you should consider:

- Setting out the schools commitment to support staff mental health and wellbeing
- Talking through your schools staff mental health and wellbeing plan and policies
- Sharing any signposting information and information about support available to staff
- Encouraging staff members to complete a Wellness Action Plan

3

Encourage the use of Wellness Action Plans

Wellness Actions Plans (WAPs) are an easy, practical way of staff supporting their own mental health at work and for managers, helping support the mental health of team members. WAPs should be voluntary to complete and there are no right or wrong ways to complete them, however offering them to staff members is an important step in encouraging them to be open about anything they may need support with. WAPs should be reviewed on a regular basis between staff and their line managers.



4

Focus on wellbeing in 1:1 meetings

Quite often when it comes to 1:1 meetings, managers can be distracted with just wanting to talk about the 'work' but it's important to recognise that conversations with staff are the work. This is especially important when it comes to supporting their mental health and wellbeing. Starting 1:1 meetings with staff with a simple 'how are you' or 'is anything worrying you' can help to open up a conversation about that doesn't just focus on the 'work'.

5

Add wellbeing to agendas

Staff mental health and wellbeing should be a standard part of regular meetings such as department meetings, senior leadership meetings and school boards. You can use simple techniques such as the 1-10 scale, where staff can score themselves and provide a reason for their score. It's important to recognise all staff may not be comfortable doing this within a team setting, so setting boundaries and allowing people to 'opt out' of giving a score is important.

When it comes to senior leadership meetings and school board, a review of the staff mental health and wellbeing plan should be a rolling agenda item.