**Customising the emotional wellbeing and mental health policy for schools.**

There is a key role for head teachers and governors in leading the development of this emotional wellbeing and mental health policy for schools, “ Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing”.

Consider the best model for customizing the policy for your school:

* Schools need to make sure that the policy works for their school and community, reflecting need and the ethos and culture in relation to emotional wellbeing.
* Careful thought needs to be given about how best to share the policy with colleagues, governors, pupils and parents.
* Ideally it will be an evolving document which reflects the ongoing development of best practice in the school. It will therefore require regular reviewing and updating.

**The customising process:**

We suggest that the current headings should be retained but that the content of each may require consideration and adjustment.

You may wish to include additional sections in line with your school’s policies and practice and your own knowledge, experience and skills.

But the policy should be clear and simple to use.

**Policy statement**

This is important and must reflect current practice. For example, you may not yet have a staff wellbeing policy in place.

**Scope**

It is essential that each school names its own related policies since these may differ.

**The policy aims to**

Does this accurately reflect the aims of your school?

**Lead members of staff.**

It’s crucial that you name key members of staff and that this information is updated to reflect any staffing changes.

Never assume that colleagues know who to turn to with their queries.

**Individual care plans.**

Does this accurately reflect the practice and procedures in your school?

**Teaching about mental health**

The basic concepts - the emphasis on enabling students and the importance of following the PSHE

guidance - must be included.

**Signposting**

Does this accurately reflect the practices and procedures in your school?

**Warning signs**

Does this accurately reflect your school’s practice and procedures?

A primary school may wish to consider other or additional warning signs?

These might include:

* Mild delays in development, toilet training, sitting still, concentrating.
* Anxious, quiet, struggles to play with other children.
* Temper tantrums.
* Change in behaviour, aggressive ,anxious, withdrawn, unhappy, unable to concentrate, starts to wet or soil.
* Deteriorating school work. Changes in self-care.
* Absences, frequent lateness. Tummy and head-aches.
* School refusal. Tearful, clingy. Low mood.
* Tired or hungry. Lack of energy.
* Sexualised behaviour
* Weight loss or gain.
* Stops attending clubs, activities.

**Managing disclosures.**

Does this accurately reflect your school’s practice and procedures?

It’s important that the policy is very clear on disclosures – when they should and should not be kept confidential.

**Confidentiality and consent.**

A crucial section fundamental to the policy’s aims.

Schools will have different guidelines on this. It’s very important to have a clear and consistent approach in your policy and that it is **shared** in straightforward language to staff, pupils and parents.

Have regard to and knowledge of the relevant legislation.

**Working with all parents and carers.**

Does this describe the school’s practice?

**Working with individual parents and carers.**

Have reference to your own school’s guidelines in relation to this issue .

Are you sufficiently aware of helplines, forums and local organisations which can be supportive of parents?

**Supporting peers.**

This is a very important consideration for all schools. In primaries, the impact of one child’s difficulties on their peer group can be significant. Younger children may not have developed sufficient emotional literacy to understand and process the issues affecting their classmate who may also be perceived in a negative way.

**Training**

This is a significant commitment. It also raises issues about who manages CPD within the school and where to access reliable, evidence – based training.

**Policy review.**

A further crucial commitment. When and by whom?