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STAFF WELLBEING planning pack

Teachers are our heroes. During lockdown, they have adapted to teaching children remotely, worked tirelessly to support the children they teach, and have prepared for a sensitive transition back to school to reduce stress and anxiety for the children.

It is important to remember that Covid-19 and the lockdown will also have had an effect on the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the school staff. Similar measures should be put into place to support them as well as the children.

To help and support others, we need to start with ourselves. This document includes ideas, links to resources and activities to support staff wellbeing.

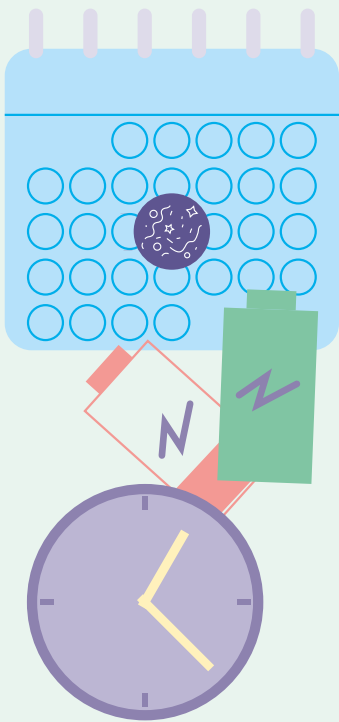




1. Whole-school wellbeing plan



Every school should have a mental health and wellbeing plan that incorporates staff wellbeing. Without mentally healthy staff, you will not have mentally healthy pupils. The entire school community, including staff and parents and carers, need to input into your plan. The following ideas could all feed into parts of the whole-school plan. For more support take a look at the [5 Steps Framework](#) for schools.



2. Plan time for staff wellbeing

In our recent survey of teachers, making time for staff wellbeing in the timetable was overwhelmingly the preferred answer for support. Here are some ideas for including staff wellbeing in the timetable:

- Inset days – Make time for a whole day focused on wellbeing, and then make this a running agenda item in each future Inset days, to review progress and make improvements
- Staff meetings – use this as an opportunity to get a feel of the staff energy. Dedicate at least one staff meeting a term to a wellbeing activity e.g. practising self-care, mindfulness
- Celebrate mental health awareness days as a whole day off regular timetable – use the celebration days to reinforce a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Allow PPA and free periods to be taken off site – this reduces the number of interruptions from students during time that should be non-contact
- Allow more freedom in the timetable – many teachers feel constrained by a strict timetable and are not able to respond to how they or the children are feeling. Allow some freedom so that wellbeing, mindfulness and other activities can be included in brief 5-10 minute slots to respond to the feelings of the staff and children

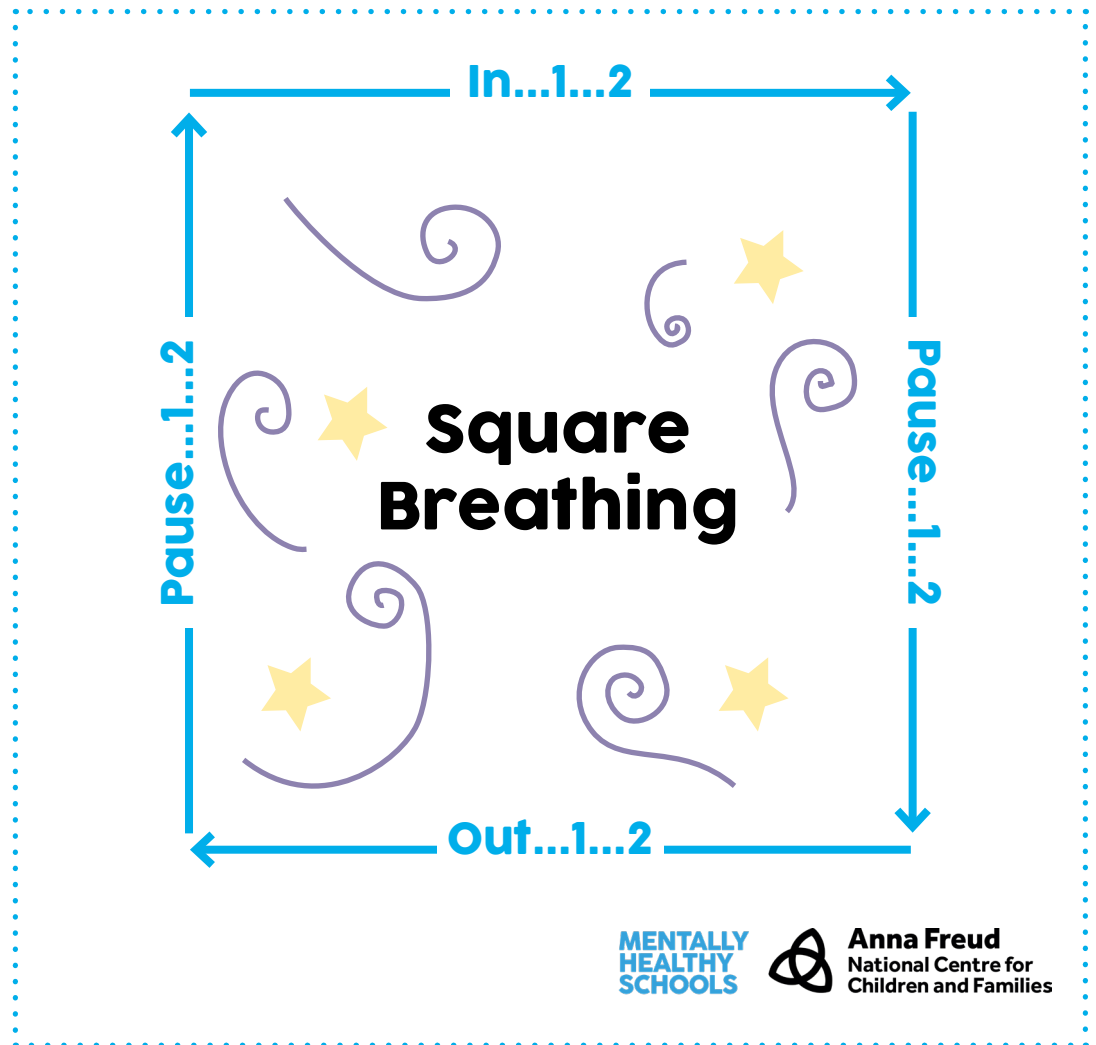
- Organise lunchtime wellbeing sessions – staff are often busy even during their lunch break and may get interrupted in the staff room. Create a non-contact space for regular wellbeing activities. You may want to use a guided relaxation like the one below.

Square breathing

Sit or stand in a comfortable position.

There are four steps to this breathing technique - breathing in for two seconds, pausing for two seconds, breathing out for two seconds and pausing for two seconds. You could draw a square either on a piece of paper or with your fingers in the air, to help you to coordinate your breathing in and out.

Repeat this activity for a few minutes.



3. Staff wellbeing feedback

Finding out how staff are feeling is key to creating a plan tailored to your school. You could create your own survey, or a number of organisations offer support with this, such as the [Wellbeing Framework](#) or the [Positive Workplace Survey](#).

Other ways of collecting feedback from staff could include:

- Check ins – either in regular supervisions or with a designated staff wellbeing lead
- An anonymous feedback box – place in a private location for staff to share ideas to improve wellbeing



4. Peer support



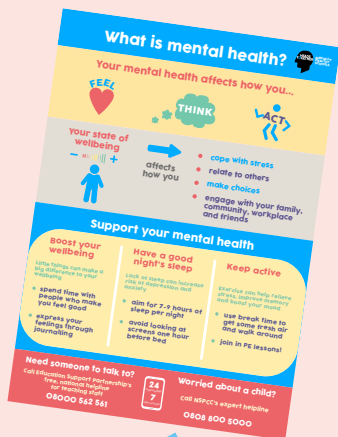
Being partnered with a supportive colleague can help staff reach out for help when needed. Invite all staff to take part and assign them a “buddy”. Create a terms of reference for the scheme, with guidance and signposting for additional support.

The mental health lead for the school would be a good person for referral. Alternatively, you may want to designate ‘wellbeing champions’ in the school – these should be staff members with an interest in mental health and wellbeing who can support colleagues.



5. Work discussion group

A work discussion group is a space where school staff can come together to receive supervision, and to think more deeply about some of the children they work with and the impact their work has on them personally. Work discussion groups tend to be facilitated by a therapist, so you could look into bringing in someone external to run this. Some schools may consider having the school counsellor or a senior leader run the group.



6. Wellbeing in the environment

Encourage wellbeing in the school environment. You could have a display and posters signposting to the support that is available for staff.

As well as this, you should also encourage the celebration of staff in the school community so they feel valued. You could use the piece of the puzzle activity to create a whole school display. You may also want to celebrate the achievements of staff on your website, in your newsletters and in assemblies so their contribution is recognised publicly.

The staff room is often a busy location with children coming and going, so where possible create a non-contact space for staff who need time to re-focus and relax in the school day.

