

Why a Whole School Approach is Important



At YoungMinds, we believe that a whole school approach is essential in building a resilient community. You may not feel able to affect change in all the areas below, but it's really helpful to know what you can do, both large and small. The important thing is that everyone feels like they can contribute to improving things for children and young people and feels empowered to do so.



Ideally, wellbeing and resilience should be on the School Improvement Plan and leaders, including governors, should be able to talk about how the school vision reflects this. Staff, pupils and parents should be able to talk about wellbeing and resilience and what this means for them and others in the school. And the overall culture of the school should be fostered to support the most vulnerable children and young people.

We worked with a group of schools to imagine what an ideal resilient school would look like. Through the lens of the whole school, these are some of the things they suggested:

Whole school:

- Attainment will improve because children are in the right place to learn
- Flat hierarchy – everyone's input is equally valued
- Staff and pupil wellbeing is a priority
- Time for supervision/reflection (formal)
- Therapeutic interventions as important as academic (eg sensory play, circuits, yoga)
- Staff all skilled at dealing with wellbeing issues.

- Wellbeing focus and achievement recognised and celebrated in the same way as academic achievements
- Staff feeling valued
- Established/effective links with external organisations
- Staff wellbeing sessions 1:1 if necessary
- Low turnover of staff
- Communities of practice supported by schools/parents
- Physical space for staff and children – inside and out
- Calm relaxed environment.
- Earlier intervention – fewer referrals.

So, it may be setting up some positive play policies/strategies for the playground, finding ways to engage just one parent who may feel isolated, or starting a 'Staff and pupil GOBs' (Glimpses of Brilliance) award (see template below), whatever resilient move you make you will be making a real difference to your school.

“Incorporating resilience is not about radically changing what we do, but it has changed the way we think. We recognise resilient practice and know that this culture is deeply set in the school. We have a Yr 5/6 drop-in service and have tweaked our rewards/behaviour systems, based on feedback from Yr 7 pupils and parents. Children are generally getting better at signposting themselves to things they need. Many of the additional clubs and strategies come from members of staff lower down the school. We recognise that the best ideas come from staff who are not senior leaders. [This] is not a bolt on, or something we only do at certain times; it has given us a common and consistent language to use all the time. We also use resources created for children with additional needs for the whole population of children, in order to ensure we are compensating for needs and adversity, identified and not.”

Deputy Head, Primary school

To find out more about how a whole school approach could make a difference to your school, contact our training team at training@youngminds.org.uk

Glimpses of Brilliance Template



When you see a pupil or staff member do something brilliant, this could be a teacher supporting another teacher through a problem, or a pupil talking to another child who was feeling lonely, write it in your star template and make a display out of all your glimpses of brilliance!

