

Education Wellbeing Briefing For Schools

December 2020



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to December's wellbeing briefing. We'd like to start by sharing our gratitude with all school staff for the dedication, creativity and capability that has been shown throughout the year and particularly during the Autumn term. Because of you, a majority of students across Birmingham have made a safe and healthy return to learning and benefitted from the protective factors that come with belonging to a learning community.

We know that this has been a difficult term for all, and that you've had to adapt day to day teaching as well as providing extra wellbeing support to students and working through the many unexpected challenges that have presented. Your response has been remarkable.

SEND and Wellbeing professionals have been working closely with colleagues in schools, throughout the Autumn, to understand the developing needs of staff and students. This has helped us ensure that we can support in a way that is helpful and effective. This term, we are pleased to have provided:

Part One of the Wellbeing for Education Return programme, through which we have shared ideas and practical resources to support student and staff wellbeing.

A continuation of our 'Trauma Informed, Attachment Aware Schools' programme, which helps schools develop environments which promote positive mental health.

Targeted support from our Educational Psychology Service, to support the needs of individuals and groups of students.

We hope that the Christmas period brings an opportunity for school staff to pause and recharge. In January, our SEND and wellbeing teams will be ready to work with you once again. In particular, we are looking forward to establishing more wellbeing networks and using these to facilitate collaboration within localities; building on the Wellbeing Education Return Programme through a series of short wellbeing CPD sessions and enhancing our offer to children and young people with mental health needs and low school attendance.

If you have further ideas about how the EPS, BEP or Forward Thinking Birmingham can continue to support you, or you'd like to share a particular challenge that you're facing in your school, please do keep the conversation going with your EP, BEP and FTB professionals.

I hope you enjoy reading December's Wellbeing Briefing.

Nichola Jones, Assistant Director, Inclusion SEND and Wellbeing

Feedback from the wellbeing for Education Return Programme

November saw our local implementation of the Department for Education's 'Wellbeing for Education Return' (WER) programme. Colleagues from the Educational Psychology Service and Birmingham Education Partnership worked together to deliver webinars throughout November, reaching

around 300 secondary and primary schools across the city, as well as special schools, colleges and alternative provision.

We were pleased to be able to share research-based frameworks and practical ideas for promoting wellbeing in schools, as well as offering a space for peer to peer discussion and support.

Thank you to everyone who attended the training and to those who completed the online evaluation. It was good to hear that the training

provided many of you with new ways to think about and support children and families. We also listened carefully to your feedback about how we can develop further and the request that many of you made for an ongoing, weekly programme of wellbeing CPD. In response, we are developing content for a programme which will build on the elements of the training that you found most helpful, such as the “Five R’s” approach to recovery.

If you’d like more information about the topics covered during the webinars, you may wish to take a look at the Anna Freud Centre’s website, which includes resources for young people, parents and professionals and which can be accessed at: <https://www.annafreud.org/>

Your ongoing feedback is important to us and if there are any further areas that you would like to be covered in the Spring term, please share your ideas with your link EP or BEP professional.

Wellbeing Networks

Our Wellbeing Network programme went live at the beginning of December, with our first network meeting in the Aston/Nechells Consortium and North West feeder secondary schools.

Two Network Lead Psychologists met together with Senior Leads for Mental Health and agreed ways of using action research to recognise good practice and promote wellbeing across the network. Initial feedback from those who attended was very positive and they highlighted the opportunity to work collaboratively during challenging times as a particular benefit.

Wellbeing networks will provide a great way for us to tailor our provision to needs within localities and ensure a coordinated offer from the EPS, BEP and other local partners. We’ve committed to increasing the number of networks throughout the new year and are already liaising with consortia in areas of the city with a high level of mental health need.

If you’d like to learn more about wellbeing networks and how they will support locality working, please get in touch with your link Educational Psychologist.

Resources to support children who are not attending school

This term, support for students with poor mental health and low school attendance has been frequently raised as a cause for concern by school staff.

The interaction between poor mental health and low school attendance is an ongoing issue which has been magnified by the national lockdown earlier in the year and the COVID 19 pandemic. The council have worked closely with Forward Thinking Birmingham to develop guidance around the issue, which is available through the BCW website: <https://bwc.nhs.uk/educational-professionals/>

In addition, the Educational Psychology Service are developing a set of complementary resources to help school professionals understand the reasons that may underpin a young person’s not attendance and how to intervene early. Look out for details of these resources in a future Wellbeing Briefing, alongside further information about our new Home Bridging team.

Youth Wellbeing Forum

As part of our drive to place children and young people at the centre of our city’s approach to wellbeing, we have established a new ‘Youth Wellbeing Forum’.

The forum will be made up of young people from secondary schools across the city. They will meet once a month and work closely with SEND and wellbeing professionals as well as senior leaders from the Council. The role involves advising the Council to deliver and review their programmes of activities, meeting with officials, councillors and other key figures such as the Director of Education and Skills.

There are still a few spaces remaining in the forum and if you know of a student who may be interested in joining, you can find out more by emailing wellbeingyouthforum@birmingham.gov.uk

Kooth – Online support for Wellbeing

Kooth is an online wellbeing platform, available free to young people living in Birmingham. It includes wellbeing related magazine articles, videos and discussion forums, as well as access to trained mental health professionals through anonymised chat and messaging services.

Content on the Kooth website is regularly updated, with recent content including 'returning to school after shielding', 'making friends at school during COVID' and 'settling back into education'. In Birmingham, the top three presenting issues for young people accessing Kooth are 'anxiety and stress', 'family relationships' and 'suicidal thoughts'.

Throughout July, August and September, a further 1400 Birmingham young people registered to use Kooth. The majority were aged between 12 and 16 years old; 77% identified as female and 44% as BME. Over a third of new registrations came from young people living in Sutton Coldfield; Edgbaston; Aston, Handsworth and Lozells.

If you'd like to share information about Kooth with students in your school, you can find out more by accessing the Kooth website at <https://www.kooth.com/>. We're particularly keen to promote Kooth to male students and to those living in the Kings Norton, Perry Barr, Bordesley, Ladywood, Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath areas. New resources have been uploaded to the #youvebeenmissed website at <https://bwc.nhs.uk/youve-been-missed/>. These include Lesson plans, films and worksheets, which are all available by clicking on the "Education Professionals" tab.