



**Supporting
Family Wellbeing
At
Arnbrook Primary
School**



The importance of family wellbeing at Arnbrook Primary School

Arnbrook Primary School recognises the importance of supporting the mental wellbeing and emotional health of all children and their families. The demands placed on parents may contribute to higher levels of stress, depression, and anxiety which can adversely affect family life as well as personal relationships. Given the emotional stresses and strains of family life Arnbrook aims to provide a holistic approach to supporting and developing family wellbeing. This will focus on the parent's ability to support and develop their own mental wellbeing and emotional health as well as providing all families with opportunities to access a wide range of support systems both internal to and external to the school.

What do we mean by wellbeing and why is it important?

The term "wellbeing" can be used to describe our holistic health, including our physical, mental and emotional health. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope better. We feel motivated and engaged and are able to bounce back from daily challenges. Taking good care of ourselves both emotionally and physically helps us to perform to the best of our ability and ensure that we are better able to support others that we care for such as children or the wider family. Looking after our own wellbeing increases the wellbeing of those we care for. Sometimes, the number of challenges parents face can make looking after their own needs feel impossible which can then pose risks to both their physical and mental health.

Families may have a lot of additional pressures to cope with, a lot of the stress that parents feel may come from a lack of support or difficulties that are not related to the particular needs of their child. Whilst it is impossible to remove all challenges, small changes may help us to cope with them better and are good for parents and children alike. Parents who have a more positive outlook on life have children who also show more positive social behaviours. Parents

can and do have positive experiences even when they are experiencing stressful situations at the same time. We can all boost the positive aspects of our wellbeing, for example how happy we are with life in general and this is even more important to do when there is significant stress in our lives. It is important to take time to see the positive aspects of raising any child, even though this may sometimes feel difficult.

Looking after your own wellbeing

Poor mental wellbeing and emotional health may impact on a parent's ability to cope during key moments of stress. Parents who have good mental wellbeing and emotional health are more likely to have the necessary resources to be able to manage and plan during or after stressful episodes whether these relate to their child, the wider family or other areas of their life such as work.

There are many ways that we can all look after our own wellbeing but not all of these will work for everyone. The simplest things, like eating healthily, getting enough rest, and exercising regularly can be difficult when caring for any child. However, it is important to do these things to look after yourself. Small changes that could benefit a family's wellbeing are:

- Putting on some enjoyable music to sing or dance to;
- Thinking about short journeys that you can be walked, instead of driving;
- Thinking back to the things that were enjoyed prior to having children such as playing sports, going out with friends, reading and then trying to think of a way to fit some of them back into daily life;
- Trying something new which could also be a good way to meet new friends as well;
- Finding someone who could support them to have short and regular breaks to do something they enjoy such as having a quiet cup of tea or going for a walk.



Taking time for yourself

Trying to make time for yourself might feel impossible, but looking after yourself is not time out from caring for your child. It is an investment that supports you, your child and your family relationships.

Sleep can be one of the most difficult things to do if your child experiences sleep difficulties. Addressing your child's sleep issues will help you get a better night's sleep. You might need some help from others to do this.

It might help to talk to other parents who are going through a similar experience to you.

Using mindfulness and meditation, can help to improve parental wellbeing. Mindfulness might also help us to make practical changes after practising it for some time as we are less likely to be reactive in stressful situations. There are courses available locally on mindfulness and these might help to get you started or some parents may prefer to use mindfulness or meditation apps on their phones at home.

Trying to take regular breaks from your caring responsibilities to look after your own health and wellbeing is very important. You could ask family and friends to help out, or speak to the SENDCO in school for support from the Short Breaks Team. Help is out there, and taking some time to find it can give you the time in future that you need to look after yourself. Having time for ourselves is one of the best resources when trying to look after yourself, even really short breaks can help you to do this.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing can improve everyone's wellbeing and quality of life. Each action can be undertaken individually or collectively as part of everyday activity.

Connect – connecting with others

Building and maintaining constructive relationships with people is an important part of wellbeing. Spending time around positive and supportive people means you are more likely to have a better self-image, be more confident and feel able to face difficult times. If you are caring and supportive to other people, you are more likely to get a positive response in return.

Give – giving – looking outward as well as inward

Giving to others is a great way to look after your wellbeing. Individuals who have a greater interest in helping others are more likely to feel happy in themselves. Allow yourself time to recognise how you can give something back to others.

Be active – doing something active

Regular exercise can lift your mood and increase your energy levels. It doesn't have to be strenuous or sporty to be effective. Pick something you enjoy so you're more likely to stick with it.

Take Notice – taking notice of the world around you

Take time during your day to enjoy the moment. Whether it's pausing for a tea break or talking to a friend, be aware of the world around you and reflect on what you're feeling. It will help you appreciate what's going on around you.

Keep Learning – learning new things

Setting challenges and learning new things can help improve your confidence and inject some fun into your day. Why not rediscover an old hobby, sign up to a course or take up an instrument? Learn a new skill to mix things up and engage with something exciting.



Taking Control

Taking the following steps are also important in the promotion and maintenance of mental wellbeing.

Knowing personal limits and developing the ability to say 'no' when necessary helps you to have a better balance in life and will enable you to take better care of both yourself and others.

Identifying the supportive people that you have in your life. If you want to increase your support networks then you might consider taking up new hobbies and activities. You can also speak to a professional or the school for more support.

Talking. There are times when challenging situations affect us emotionally. If you have a difficult day try to speak to someone that you trust. This can help you to process how you are feeling and seek support.

Be flexible around change. Even with the best plans, sometimes unexpected events or situations occur. Our ability to accept change and plan and adapt can help us to manage any potential feelings of stress and anxiety and therefore cope better overall.

Self-compassion. Take some time to stop and reflect on your thoughts in your head, are they more positive or more critical? Once you have identified any negative thought you can begin to introduce more positive thoughts and 'turn the volume down' on more critical thoughts



My Wellbeing Checklist

Please read the following statements and tick the appropriate responses	Yes	No
I have someone I can talk to about my feelings		
I have good friends that I can trust		
I sleep well most of the time		
I eat healthily most of the time		
I do some physical activity regularly		
I make time for the things that I enjoy		
I do things to help other people		
I feel I achieve things		
I know how to relax		
I am kind to myself about who I am		
I look after myself during difficult times		
I can recognise my personal strengths		
I am able to say no		
I can ask for help		

Take some time to reflect on your responses – is there one thing that you have said ‘No’ to that you could focus on developing over the coming year that could potentially help you to improve your wellbeing? Remember this is personal to you but share it with someone else if you feel this will help. There are no right or wrong answers - this is just to get you thinking about your own wellbeing.

The statement I have chosen to focus on is:

What does this look like for me now?

Three things I could do to improve my well-being in this area are:

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**