

Whole School Mental Health and Wellbeing

I want to invite you to an imaginary board meeting. One where the board is made of parents and pupils, staff and governors. They each ask you one vital question...

First pupil: Where were you when that kid in year 9 jumped on me and made me cry?

Second pupil: Where were you when I couldn't cope because my Dad left, and other kids laughed and said I was a baby?

Parent: Where were you when my daughter wanted to end it all because of her feelings?

Parent: How did it all get to this? **OR "Who the *&%\$£ are you to tell me how to run my life. Am not 'avin this!" DOOR SLAM.**

Governor: How can we support you to sustain your leadership and keep those brilliant teachers here?

What would your instinctive answer be to all the above?

I believe we do our best to support our pupils, from 2 years to 21 plus. So just what is our best – and how do we know? I also believe that there are some vital clues around how well we are doing, and that those clues can be seen in every school's culture and ethos. Where do we begin to look?

1. Are leaders on board, are they visible, do you matter to them?
2. Is respect for each other valued and nurtured?
3. Are all staff good listeners as well as the designated well-being staff?
4. Is there resilience and well-being training for all staff and pupils?
5. Is the wellbeing of all pupils and staff as good as it can be?
6. How do you know? Who have you asked?

And finally, although most importantly – 7. How do you manage your own well-being and psychology?

I truly believe a whole school well-being focus begins, with your own feelings of security and confidence and your **ability to understand** insecure and anxious thinking. The one simple performance variable affecting our wellbeing, is thought. Understanding your own innate wellbeing, your thought feeling reality, allows you to be present to support others. **An understanding of how we create our life** and how we operate our human system, brings clarity, creativity and hope to every situation. Your starting point for a whole school wellbeing focus is always with you and with all leaders. As you lead, so you model - vulnerability and success become just aspects of our diverse human nature. Voila! A healthy whole model, applicable to and starting with, school culture and school context.

"Everyone in this world shares the same innate source of wisdom (well-being), but it is hidden by the tangle of our misguided personal thoughts." Syd Banks, **The Missing Link**