Education Wellbeing Briefing

For Schools

**INTRODUCTION**

**Welcome back to the new school year. We are looking forward to working with you over the Autumn term and pleased to share this update on wellbeing initiatives across the City.**

**It has been a challenging year in Education, both for school staff and students; nurturing wellbeing and positive mental health within our school communities has never been more important.**

**To ensure that we effectively support the essential work you’re completing in schools, this term we have established a wellbeing task group. The group is comprised of senior practitioners from the Educational Psychology Service, Birmingham Educational Partnership and Home Bridging Team. Over the course of the autumn, they will be planning for and delivering on our key wellbeing priorities, which include:**

* **Building ‘Wellbeing Networks’ that will include all schools across the city and help ensure the services we provide are attuned to local need.**
* **Working with school staff who are acting as ‘Senior Leads for Mental Health’ – to include training and professional support.**
* **Creating local wellbeing tool kits, made up of evidence-based interventions. These toolkits will make it easier for you to choose and implement programmes to meet the wellbeing needs of your students.**
* **Expanding our Home Bridging team, so that children and young people with extended non-attendance at school are supported to make a successful return to learning.**
* **Continuing to provide individual support to schools and listening to your views, as expressed at local briefings, through purposeful questionnaires and to the members of our teams who work directly with you in your schools.**

**Through these initiatives, we aim to achieve our strategic objective of building strong, local partnerships between schools and services so that all our children can thrive.**

**This briefing also contains information about return to school support, the government’s Wellbeing Return grant and our local wellbeing offer. We hope that these initiatives will not only help you support students as they return to learning but also enable children and young people to build resilience in the longer term.**

**Wellbeing for Education Return Programme**

Coming back to anything after time away is hard and we know that some pupils may need and want some extra help right now to understand and cope with the feelings that returning to school may bring.

#You’veBeenMissed helps equip schools, parents and young people with a greater understanding of emotional wellbeing and the resources that can help early on.

The #You’veBeenMissed team (FTB, BCC, BEP) have worked together to offer education and tools for adults to support children and young people as well as specific resources that children, parents and carers can use independently. The team have also worked with primary care colleagues to support GPs manage emerging school non-attendance.

Resources are being updated weekly and can be found here https://bwc.nhs.uk/youve-been-missed

Seminars and workshops for staff can be booked here: https://bep.education/events/

**Return to School Support**

The Wellbeing for Education Return Programme has been funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC); for Birmingham this means there is additional funding to support extra training for all schools. We know that the new school year will be extremely challenging and want to ensure that all schools have the right level of support needed to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of all children.

The grant will be used to offer a universal programme of support and a more tailored training package designed by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in collaboration with Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), to enable school staff to respond to the additional pressures that some pupils may be feeling.

A set of training materials have been developed which build on existing and national good practice covering a number of themes incorporating the steps for a whole

**Educational Psychology**

**Helpline for Parents and Carers**

Birmingham Educational Psychology Service (EPS) are continuing to provide a telephone helpline for any parents or carers of children in Birmingham, who feel they would benefit from a consultation with a psychologist to support them with any concerns arising at this time, for them or their families.

Areas of concern could include:

* Supporting children and families as they return to school.
* Concerns around the impact of the school shut down, and the return to school.
* How best parents and carers can look after themselves so they can support their children.

The concerns can be related to school or family life.

Parents and carers will be offered an initial telephone consultation of 30 minutes with a psychologist and a potential follow up session of another 30-minute consultation at a later date. These will be Monday - Friday, within standard working hours.

**Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)**

The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) intervention builds capacity in schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils. This is achieved by training teaching assistants / learning mentors to develop and deliver individualised support programmes.

Following the success of the Birmingham ELSA programme, the EPS will be relaunching the initiative for the new academic year, with a virtual launch on 29th September.

Schools who have booked onto the ‘in person’ launch earlier in the year will already have received details of the virtual session. You can find out more about ELSA from the Educational Psychology Service.

**Home Bridging**

Following the success of the Home Bridging Team we are developing our core offer to provide support within each of our six localities. This will help develop locally tailored preventative strategies within schools, share best practice across settings and use the expertise of link professionals to put in place bespoke support for those children and young people in greatest need.

Each locality will have an allocated member of the Home Bridging Team who will work with children and young people, families, schools and professionals to support engagement and the removal of barriers to education to ensure students are able to make academic progress and build the skills they need to thrive in adulthood.

The team will be working closely with schools and professionals to identify students at risk of becoming school refusers. Support will be coordinated with the wider well-being strategy and our aim of building early intervention capacity within schools. Additional support will be provided specifically to children and young people who are struggling to return to school post COVID.

Where a child or young person is not on a school roll, the Locality Home Bridging Team will also act as a point of contact for families, building strong relationships and helping to ensure that the all professionals are involved with a plan of action for re-integration back into an education setting.

school approach, information on well-being and resilience, case studies and more in depth focus on associated topics such as dealing with bereavement and loss, warning signs, anxiety, low mood, stress and trauma and supporting recovery. These will be accompanied by case studies, resources, and references.

The programme can be accessed by Senior Leads for Mental Health and Wellbeing across the city’s colleges and schools for them to then deliver it to their staff. Training materials will be presented via 2 x 1½ hour webinars to consortia, network or college groups during the weeks beginning 2nd November and 9th November. Ongoing support will be provided to the Senior Leads for Mental Health and Wellbeing by the EPS and BEP until the end of March 2021.

Prior to half term, the EPS will be contacting Senior Leads for Mental Health and Wellbeing by email to arrange bookings for the webinars.

**Bereavement Support**

A reminder that the bereavement pathway is up and running with a single point of contact through Cruse Bereavement Care.

Edward’s Trust, Beyond the Horizon and St Mary’s Hospice offer local one-to-one bereavement counselling (which is currently a mix of socially distanced face-to-face and phone or online support).

The resources page on the Edward’s Trust website and AtaLoss.org signpost to other charities and resources and nationally, Child Bereavement UK and Winston’s Wish have lots of great resources to help you support bereaved young people. One to highlight is:

childbereavementuk.org/online-learning-for-schools

Most children and young people said that they had heard about Kooth from their school or teachers and we’d like to thank you for sharing information about Kooth within your schools. As the Autumn term continues, we’d like to continue to promote Kooth to children and young people, particularly boys, amongst whom, use of the Kooth resource has been comparatively low.

You can find out more by visiting the Kooth website: www.kooth.com

National charity Winston’s Wish have a half-hour bereavement training film that can be viewed here: https://www.winstonswish.org/childhood-bereavement-training-video/

**Wellbeing Networks**

Kooth is an online platform which aims to support the mental health of children and young people and enable them to thrive. It provides access to a range of online resources as well as online counselling support.

Kooth has been available to children and young people in Birmingham since April this year and forms part of the city’s broader wellbeing strategy.

As of July, one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-two children and young people had registered a new account with Kooth. Over three quarters of these registrations were from girls and the majority were from young people aged between twelve and sixteen. Nearly half of new registrants identified as BME.

Of those children and young people who accessed counselling support, the most frequent presenting issue was anxiety, followed by family relationships. Children and young people also frequently accessed articles and self-help resources. These covered topics such as reading and creative writing as well as mental health and wellbeing.

Looking ahead, we will be using the data that we collect through Kooth to support locality working and make sure that we continue to meet the specific mental health needs of Birmingham’s children and young people.

**Kooth Data**

Over the Summer, the team have progressed plans to enhance the support available to localities, through ‘wellbeing networks’. These will provide a forum within which wellbeing leads can meet to share good practice and enable us to support schools in ways which are attuned to their local context.

This half term, we will be working to develop a model for use in the Aston/Nechells Consortium and North West feeder secondary schools. Over the course of the Autumn term we will continue to work with schools and partner agencies to establish networks in areas of the city with a high level of mental health need.

We look forward to sharing our progress and developing this new way of working