

Chapter 3: A Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing

Template: Learning steps

Why use it?

This template gives a suggested format for a personalised proforma for children with mental health difficulties to help track the steps they are taking on their learning journey. Ideally, the child, their parents and relevant school staff will input into a document such as this. It is designed to be child-friendly, but also to include enough useful information about the child and their plan that it is helpful to all adults working with them. We recommend that no diagnosis be written on this document. This allows the child to simply express their needs without a label being placed on them. Some children will find it difficult to contribute to ‘Good things people say about me...’ – this can be modelled and practised with time. The ‘Hopes and dreams’ section is really important and should be referred to often with the child. ‘My next learning steps...’ can be used for specific learning or social and emotional targets e.g. ‘I will ask for help when I am feeling angry’. Notes about extra provision and interventions could also be included here e.g. ‘... will attend afternoon nurture intervention twice a week’.

What next?

This is a working document that should be used to support all activities that the child is involved in within school. It is easy to spend time creating these, only for them to end up carefully filed away and forgotten. Make them accessible to all – a copy for the child’s drawer, one for the parents, a folder in a known place in the classroom (ensuring that any teaching staff covering the class are made aware of this), as well as a copy held centrally with the SENCO.

Frame: I need you to know... card

Why use it?

This card is a useful tool for communicating key messages about a child to cover teachers, supply teachers, different TAs or parent helpers that might be working in the classroom. Once created, it could be laminated to prolong its use! The child can keep it in their drawer or on their table – it will allow the child to let adults know the things that matter to them, without them having to worry about verbally communicating the messages. The responsibility for passing on these messages can be given to the child if appropriate, giving them a sense of control and purpose over their learning experience. Equally, if this is not appropriate for a particular child, a central copy of all the cards for a class can be kept near the teacher’s chair or desk, perhaps in a folder of information for new adults.

The card should be written in partnership with the child, TA and parents. Help them to identify things that support them in class (‘These things help me to learn’) e.g. having instructions repeated, movement breaks or wearing ear defenders to block out classroom noise; and also to identify the reasonable adjustments that may need to be made for this child to allow learning to happen (‘Sometimes I need to...’) e.g. taking a self-directed break to calm down, moving to a position where they can concentrate better or having a particular toy or resource available to them. These reasonable adjustments are often the more unusual or uncommon strategies that can get missed when a new adult is teaching a class – not through intention, but simply because they are so specific to the child.

What next?

Be prepared to adapt or develop the cards on a regular basis as things evolve for a child. Remember to ask for parental input and updates from home. Alert the child to times when you may be absent from the class and remind them to show their card to the new adult.



I need you to know...

These things help me to learn: _____

Sometimes I need to: _____

