

How Mentally Healthy is Your School?

A Simple Audit

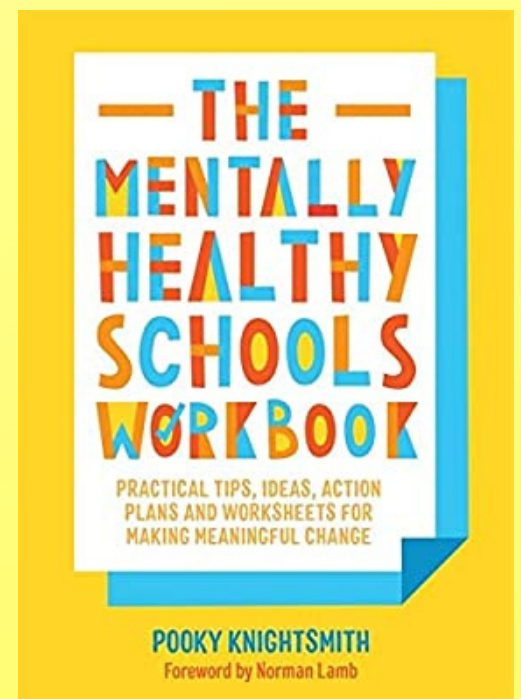


Introduction

This tool is designed to give you a brief snapshot of how mentally healthy your school is and to help you prioritise areas for development. This audit tool and the ideas in this guide are taken from 'The Mentally Healthy Schools Workbook' which was written by Dr Pooky Knightsmith, one of Creative Education's directors.

We hope you find the ideas here helpful and we wish you the best of luck with your journey towards becoming a more mentally healthy school.

Good Luck!



Having supported a wide range of schools both in the UK and internationally, on their journey towards becoming more mentally healthy, I believe that the following six areas are key areas to consider. These are the areas you'll explore as you audit your school.

Staff at My School Are Happy and Healthy

Mentally healthy schools should not be places where children flourish at the expense of staff. Instead, they should be places where everybody's mental health matters and steps are taken to promote the physical and emotional wellbeing of staff as well as students.

My School Feels Safe and Welcoming

A safe and welcoming school is one in which students will thrive and flourish. They will feel able to be themselves and will know that their needs will be met; this will be true too of staff, parents and visitors. Walking into a school which feels warm and welcoming is enough to make any visitor walk with a bounce in their step; whilst a frosty welcome with angry shouting audible in the background is enough to set anyone on edge.

The Litmus Test





The Litmus Test

The Voice of Every Learner is Heard and Valued

In recent years, schools have grown a lot better at engaging with student voice, and this is reflected in the curriculum, policies and procedures which can be best tailored to meet the needs of our current students, when we listen to what they have to say. It's important though that we ensure that every voice is heard, not just the louder ones, as there can be a tendency for a vocal minority to have their voices heard above the voices of their peers.

We Recognise and Support Our Most Vulnerable Learners

Learners can be vulnerable for a whole range of reasons, I invite you to think about how you can recognise and support vulnerable learners in every shape and form. Sometimes it's the students you least expect who most need some additional support.

Parents and Carers Positively Engage With My School

Engaging parents and carers in a meaningful way is something that sets some schools apart from others. It's not easy, and I've been really impressed by the innovative approaches that some schools I've worked with have taken in order to get this right, whilst parental engagement may be difficult, it really does reap dividends when done well.

Students, Staff and Parents Seek Help When Needed

Schools where students, staff and parents unashamedly ask for help when it's needed are schools where things are working well, in my view. They are schools where there is no stigma associated with asking for support, where people are confident that if they ask for support they will be heard and helped and where there are clear pathways in place to enable help-seeking.





For each of the items in the litmus test, rank yourself from 1 to 10 – where 1 signifies ‘not at all’ and 10 signifies ‘completely’. If possible, you should then go and ask the same questions of a range of people who will give you some honest answers and provide a different point of view. Ideally you would ask as many of the following as possible:

- A student from each year group
- Students from vulnerable or minority groups
- Engaged parents & carers
- Less engaged parents & carers
- A governor
- A member of teaching support staff
- A member of non-teaching support staff
- A member of teaching staff
- A middle leader
- A senior leader

Scoring

Name:

Role:

Date:

Staff at my school are happy and healthy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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What Next

Once you've had a chance to consider how your school scores against each of the litmus test areas, consider which areas are your priorities.

Remember that your existing areas of weakness can become your future strengths with a little concerted effort.

Equally, just because an area is one of existing strength doesn't mean that there isn't more to be done – and current successes to celebrate.

Stop and celebrate what's working well and consider how to share these ideas with other schools

Consider what it would take to move your school up one point in each area

You Could Try

Recruit for a working group including a range of stakeholders to enable your school to become more mentally healthy



Helpful?

**Tweet us @CreativeEdu
with what worked well**



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