

SEND News – Mental Health



June 2020

Hello everyone,

I hope you've all had a good weekend and are ready for a new week. More children are now back in school now which has been fantastic to see. The staff have all missed you and are looking forward to working with you again. Some of you are still at home and I hope you are all OK and managing to keep yourselves safe, well and happy.

This week's edition is on mental health. Now more than ever, it is important to be aware of issues related to mental health and ensure we look out for signs that children (and ourselves) are struggling. There is much we can do to promote positive mental health including talking about it, modelling good habits, thinking about phone usage and noticing changes in behaviour.

If you have any feedback on SEND News or ideas for future editions of this bulletin, please do get in touch with me on fb@acorneducationtrust.com – keep well everyone...
Sue Fulbrook (SEND Director)

What is mental health and how does it affect children and young people with SEND?

Did you know that it is thought that a child with a learning disability or specific condition is more likely to suffer with mental health difficulties during their life than those without (Emerson and Hatton 2007)? There are a number of factors why this may be the case including identification of the SEN, the communication skills of the young person and the lack of training and access to specialist services who can treat mental health needs in those with complex SEND. It is important to keep an eye on the whole picture of a child with SEND to identify a mental health concern, that is: physical signs, thinking and learning, communication, daily activities, relationships, behaviour and emotions. We can then look for support through universal services (e.g. GP and school provision) as well as targeted and specialist interventions.

What do schools in Acorn Education Trust do to support positive mental health for those with SEND?

- All schools teach about positive mental health and well-being as part of the curriculum.
- Have an inclusive ethos to promote awareness and acceptance of mental health difficulties.
- Offer training for staff in the mental health of children and young people.
- Train Emotional Literacy Support Assistants to work in their schools delivering 1:1 and group interventions.
- Use of lego therapy in primary schools.
- Train pastoral and SEND staff to signpost well to external support.
- Offer access to online counselling services, e.g. Kooth.
- Both secondary schools are part of the mental health hub groups and have access to CAMHS practitioners in school.
- Some access to counselling services.
- Mentoring programmes and Springboard rooms in secondary schools.
- Assemblies and presentations for children.
- Teaching mindfulness as whole class sessions or opt-in sessions.

Some useful web links:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publication/s/make-it-count-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/positive-mental-health-tips-for-parents-of-sen-children>

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/wiltshire/services/melksham/>

