

## **Annex 1**



# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for supporting well-being at Thameside Primary School**

**School Name: Thameside Primary**  
**Policy owner: Ingrid Burton**

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**Approved by Governors: April 2020**  
**Shared with staff: April 2020**

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## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the **Thameside Primary School Staff Wellbeing Policy** contains details of our arrangements in the following areas:

- Staff wellbeing on site
- Staff wellbeing off-site



## 2. Staff wellbeing on site:

We have worked closely with Reading Borough Council/Brighter Futures for Children to develop a staffing model for our on-site provision that should enable us to provide consistency for our children, while minimising the risk of infection and giving staff time for rest, recovery and time with their own families.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager are not attached to any team. They have their own on-site/home working rota and are mindful of “social distancing” advice when in school to help to minimise the risk of any illness spreading.

Where possible, each team of staff will have teachers and TAs with a mix of EYFS, KS1 and KS2 experience as well as there being someone to run the front office, a first aider etc. A rolling rota includes all staff who are not self-isolating. The number of staff coming into school is kept to a minimum in order to minimise risk.

When on-site, teaching staff will be working with the children. A generic timetable has been shared with staff that includes regular handwashing for both children and staff alike; this includes washing hands as the children come into school, at key points throughout the day and before leaving school in order to minimise the risk of infection. Where possible social distancing is encouraged, although it is recognised that for staff working with children this is not always possible.

A senior member of staff checks in with the 'teaching team' each day to check on their wellbeing and support is available from the headteacher, governors, SSO for all staff on site.

Provision is made for teaching staff to have breaks; these are covered on a rota basis for morning break and by the lunchtime support staff who come in to cover lunch duty. Tea, coffee and cake are provided for staff who need to come into school.

### **3. Staff wellbeing off site:**

When off-site, staff will be monitoring online work of their classes and as well as looking after their own families. The time spent at home off rota should help to minimise the risk of any illness spreading. There will be enough people in each team to provide cover for each other if anyone has to drop out for a while if they or anyone in their family is unwell.

Regular contact is maintained with staff who are working off site in the form of the Head's briefing, texts, emails, Teams, Facebook support group, WhatsApp groups and in person. In addition to this support is available from the HT, DHT, phase leaders and governors.

Clear expectations have been shared with all staff about the expectations of working at home; staff have been asked to set aside an hour a day to respond to work children have completed, it has been made clear to all staff that it is not the expectation that they respond every time a child submits a piece of work. This hour does not include the other school work staff have during school closure e.g. planning, report writing, setting online work, subject leader work including data analysis, transition planning, summer term topic planning etc.

If staff are on the rota to work during the Easter holidays there are clear expectations that they have a non-working day outside the holiday period whereby they undertake no work related activities. For this day teachers should send a text to their class saying they will not be responding to any work submitted the next day as they will be taking a days annual leave due to being in school during the holidays. These days will be recorded and submitted to the school business manager.

Staff are not expected to respond directly to parents email, these should be directed through the office and will be dealt with by either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

Online learning has been provided for all staff to complete to help keep them motivated and to support their CPD. Staff are also encouraged to complete the free open university courses available as part of their CPD. Jobs for Teaching Assistants that can be completed at home have also been allocated e.g. laminating, sorting phonics resources.

Since closure, the school value postcards are being sent more frequently to staff to maintain staff morale.

A couple of weeks post closure, we have asked staff to complete a short questionnaire for us to let us know how they are finding remote learning and will act on their feedback accordingly.

#### 4. Useful links and resources for staff:

We are all living and working in unsettling times so it is important to look after our own wellbeing as well as others. Below is a useful list of apps and website to help with emotional wellbeing

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

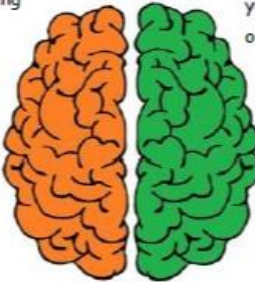
## MANAGING STRESS: CALMING OUR THOUGHTS

**EdPsychInsight**   
<https://www.epinsight.com> | Twitter - @EPInsight

### Ideas for anchoring ourselves in the present

Our thoughts often wander into the **past or the future**. The brain's survival bias acts like a magnet for negative experiences, while positive thoughts don't stick as easily.

#### How does chronic stress affect our thinking?

- 
- Confusion**
    - Poor concentration
    - Less reliable memory
    - Difficulty organising and prioritising
  - Sensitivity**
    - Hypervigilance for threats
    - Preoccupation with worst possibilities
    - Under-estimating our ability to cope
  - Low Self-esteem**
    - Loss of confidence
    - Feeling worthless
    - Perceiving a lack of control
  - Incorrect Assumptions**
    - "Always" or "Never" thinking
    - Over-generalising from isolated incidents
    - Jumping to negative conclusions
  - Distorted Perceptions**
    - Focusing on the negatives
    - Downplaying neutral or positive experiences
    - Disqualifying solutions as "Yes...but..."



#### Pay more attention to the here-and-now

- **Grounding:** 5 things you can see; 4 things you can touch; 3 things you can hear; 2 things you can smell; 1 thing you can taste.
- **50/50 Attention:** While listening to someone, anchor yourself to your surroundings – for example, notice the sensation of your feet on the floor or your legs on the chair.
- **Mindful breathing:** Focus on how the breath comes in through your nose, the rise and fall of your abdomen and how air rushes out of your mouth.

#### Challenge and Reframe your Thoughts



- **Be realistic:** Pause and ask "How likely is this?" and "What was it really like when it happened in the past?"
- **Look for evidence against:** "I coped last time"; "It wasn't so bad"; "I got through it in the end".
- **Keep things in perspective:** "Now I know how to handle this"; "This has been a bad day, but I still have..."

#### Positive Self-Talk and Gratitude

- **Moderate your language:** "This is unbearable" vs "This is so annoying".
- **Allow for solutions:** "I can't do this" vs "How do I do this?".
- **Mantras:** "This will pass"; "I can handle this"; "I am enough".
- **3 Good Things:** Three positive experiences from the day, big or small. Keep a gratitude journal or a box with photos, post-it notes & keepsakes.

#### CALM

App for Mindfulness and Meditation. (Available on iOS, Android & Web)

#### Breathe2Relax

The relaxation app trains you on the "belly breathing" technique that has proven benefits for your overall mental health. (Available on iOS and Android)

### Stress Check by Azumio

This app takes you on a deep breathing exercise to promote calmness and can bring your heart rate down in five minutes. The app provides instant feedback with breath and pulse monitoring and tracks long-term progress. (Available on Android)

### Happify

The Happify app is a way to make a game of all the positive psychology tricks you know might work, but make you feel kind of silly when you actually do them. You'll start by taking a quick test that assesses the areas of happiness you should work on. Then, you're presented with a few "tracks" that can help get you to your goals. (Available on iOS and Android)

### SAMAPP: APPS FOR ANXIETY

SAM is an application to help you understand and manage anxiety. (Available on iOS and Android)

### PACIFICA

Daily tools for stress, anxiety, and depression alongside a supportive community. Based on cognitive behavioural therapy & mindfulness meditation. (Available on iOS, Android & Web)

### Thrive: Feel Stress Free

When you log in it gives you different tips to help you relieve stress/anxiety. There are tabs for meditation, deep relaxation, self-hypnosis, and more. (Available on iOS and Android)

### BASE

An app designed to help manage stress and anxiety. By learning more about how and why we experience anxiety at different times and in different situations we can be less fearful. (Available on Android)

### Smiling Mind

Trying to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life? This app can help you launch into a regular practice of mindfulness meditations. (Available on iOS and Android)

### Wysa Happiness Chabot

Wysa helps to build emotional resilience by talking to you about your situation. Over 60 psychologists and 10,000 users have provided specific inputs to shape how Wysa helps them. (Available on iOS and Android)

### I love Hue

When you feel like you have no control, this app can help sooth you by creating simple visual harmonies from mosaic tiles. (Available on iOS and Android)

### Anxious Minds

Anxious minds are a charity that was set up by sufferers of anxiety and depression, to provide free support to all suffers of anxiety and depression. (Available on Android)

### Worry Watch

This journaling tool has a simple user interface where users can log instances of worry, fear, and anxiety. They can also add the outcome of each situation, which provides a comparison between expectation and reality that helps reduce anxiety over time. (Available on iOS)

### What's Up? Anxiety App

This app uses CBT and ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy) methods to help you cope with Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Stress and more. (Available on iOS and Android)

### WELLMIND

WellMind is your free NHS mental health and wellbeing app designed to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. The app includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing. (Available on iOS and Android)

### Cove

Free, personal music journal to help you with your emotional and mental health. Trusted by the NHS. (Available on iOS)

### Reflectly

A personal journal and diary driven by AI to enable you to deal with negative thoughts, make positivity louder and to teach you about the science of well-being. (Available on iOS and Android)

### Happy not perfect

Backed by science, designed for you, Happy Not Perfect is your go-to place for everything you need to look after your mind in a fun new way. (Available on iOS and Android)

A promotional banner for Workplace Options' Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The banner features a blue header with white and yellow text. Below the header, there is a white box containing contact information and a confidentiality statement. To the right of the box, there is a photograph of three people (two men and one woman) standing with their backs to the camera, arms around each other's shoulders, suggesting support and care. The Workplace Options logo is in the top right corner.

**STAFFED BY PROFESSIONALS**

**YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

*Achieving balance through total wellbeing and support*

Your EAP is staffed by a team of highly trained and qualified professionals who are experts in fields such as wellbeing, family matters, relationships, debt management, workplace issues, consumer rights and much more. You can be confident that the information you receive is accurate, up-to-date and relevant to your particular circumstances.

**YOUR ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY**  
The service is provided by Workplace Options, an expert provider of employee support services that is completely independent from your organisation. When you contact the EAP, the only information required from you is the name of your employer. Any additional information you share is at your discretion and appropriate to your need. You can be assured that Workplace Options is bound by professional standards regarding confidentiality and the disclosure of details of individuals who have contacted the EAP.

**FREEPHONE: 0800 243 458**  
E-MAIL: [assistance@workplaceoptions.com](mailto:assistance@workplaceoptions.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.workplaceoptions.com](http://www.workplaceoptions.com)  
USER NAME: **username**  
PASSWORD: **password**  
OUTSIDE THE UK: **+44 (0)20 8987 6550**  
SMS (FOR CALL BACK): **+44 (0)7909 341229**  
MINICOM: **+44 (0)20 8987 6574**

**WORKPLACE OPTIONS**

**AROUND-THE-CLOCK, FREE, CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE**



**PERSONAL**

- Emotional wellbeing
- Managing stress
- Anxiety and depression
- Disability and illness
- Substance and alcohol misuse
- Addictions and compulsive behaviours
- Personal development

**WORK**

- Work-life balance
- Bullying and harassment
- Workplace pressure
- Managing change
- Workplace relationships
- Careers

**FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS**

- Child care
- Education
- Elder care
- Juggling work and family life
- Caring for others
- Domestic violence or abuse

**DAILY LIVING**

- Consumer rights
- Health and wellness
- Debt and money management
- Relocation
- Community resources

**LIFE EVENTS**

- Pregnancy and new baby
- Adoption
- Marriage and cohabitation
- Separation and divorce
- Moving home
- Bereavement and loss
- Retirement

These are examples of the topics covered and not an exhaustive list. You can contact the EAP for support on anything that matters to you.

*Life – there's a lot to juggle. Work, family, relationships, finances, health, the list goes on. Sometimes, meeting the demands of your work and personal life can be a real challenge.*

*Your employer recognises this and has provided you with an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to help take the strain when you need some extra support. Your EAP can save you time and help reduce stress and anxiety, improving your wellbeing and freeing you up to focus on other things.*

**SERVICE OVERVIEW**

- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Accessible by phone, e-mail, instant messaging and website
- No cost to you
- Assistance with any work, personal or family issues
- Professional consultation, short-term counselling, information, resources and referrals to services in your local area
- Confidential and independent from your employer
- No limit to the number of issues you can gain support on

**ONLINE SUPPORT**

Support is also available on your EAP website. Simply log on with your organisation's user name and password to access:

- An extensive range of articles, tips, links and searchable databases
- **LiveConnect** – instant messaging with an information specialist/counsellor
- Online Seminar Events – new events added to the site monthly and recorded for any time access
- Financial Centre – information resource; all the best financial tools and content in one convenient place



AROUND-THE-CLOCK, FREE, CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE

**ACCESS IS EASY**

No matter when, no matter where, you have access to professional support to help you balance your work, family and personal life.

**CONTACT US NOW TO GET STARTED.**

**FREEPHONE: 0800 243 458**

**E-MAIL:**

**assistance@workplaceoptions.com**

**WEBSITE:**

**www.workplaceoptions.com**

**USER NAME: username**

**PASSWORD: password**

**OUTSIDE THE UK:**

**+44 (0)20 8987 6550**

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