

Aims of the wellbeing and reading assembly

- To help pupils understand what wellbeing is and that it can be affected by lots of different things
- To help pupils understand that we all have bad days and that this is normal, but one of the ways we can help ourselves is through reading
- To explore the ways reading can help pupils understand themselves and others, and therefore improve their wellbeing
- To share that reading can happen everywhere and that pupils can find help

How does reading help children and young people's wellbeing?

New research carried out by the National Literacy Trust shows that:

- Children and young people who are engaged with reading and writing are **three times more likely** to have high mental wellbeing than those who aren't (39.4% vs 11.8%)
- Children and young people with above expected reading skills are **three times more likely** to have high mental wellbeing than those with below expected reading skills (40.3% vs 13.1%)
- **Boys who enjoy reading have higher mental wellbeing than girls** who enjoy reading (7.5/10 vs 7/10)

To find out more about the research, visit: literacytrust.org.uk/wellbeing

For more information about Place2Be, the national charity that provides emotional support to children and young people in schools, visit: place2be.org.uk

Teacher notes

The following notes accompany the **Wellbeing and reading assembly** PowerPoint presentation by the National Literacy Trust and Place2Be.

Slide 1: What do we mean by wellbeing?

Learning Outcome: to understand what wellbeing means.

- Begin by asking pupils what they think wellbeing is – you're looking for responses such as happy, feeling good, positivity, having good friends, family, etc.

- Show them the dictionary definition on the slide. Explain that there are lots of things that contribute to good wellbeing – physical health, mental health, family, friends, a nice place to live, food, hobbies.
- Wellbeing is when you are happy with your life.

Slide 2: What can stop us feeling happy?

Learning outcome: to understand all the different things that can make us feel unhappy and affect our wellbeing.

- Ask pupils to think of the things that might make us unhappy. They might suggest things like having arguments with friends, being poor, not enough food, bad things happening, being afraid, worry about school work, losing someone you love, having no friends.
- Go through the ‘clouds’ on the slide and perhaps suggest examples that fit that they might have experienced – such as a pet dying, starting a new school and finding it hard to make friends, arguing, parents not being together, worrying about exams, bullying.
- All these things can make us feel unhappy and therefore our wellbeing suffers.

Slide 3: We all feel like this sometimes

Learning outcome: to understand that it is ok to feel unhappy and that everyone does at some point.

- Everybody has a bad day sometimes and everyone has worries.
- Ask pupils if they can think of a time when they were unhappy? They could share it if they are feeling brave and if there’s time.

Slide 4: What can we do to help ourselves?

Learning outcome: To understand that social media and external pressure can aggravate our wellbeing.

- Ask pupils to think about their experiences of social media and outside pressures making them feel worse. Why do they think this is? Can they give example of how you can feel unhappy and social media or external pressures can aggravate this?

Slide 5: What can we do to help ourselves?

Learning outcome: To understand that we can help ourselves to feel better through reading.

- As well as sharing problems with others, maybe a friend or teacher, we can also help ourselves through books. Can they remember how they felt when they read a book they enjoyed? Ask them to think about the reading they have done that made them feel good – can they share a title? Or maybe they heard a story they enjoyed or had one read at bedtime to them. All kinds of reading that we enjoy can help make us feel better.

Slides 6-7: How can reading for enjoyment help?

- We can talk about what we're reading with others and share our thoughts and ideas and also understand what others are going through.
- Reading is a great way to relax and escape helping us feel less stress and worry.
- Reading can be entertaining and fun making us laugh and feel happier. If we are happy we will have better wellbeing.
- To illustrate how reading can make you feel good, especially as a shared experience, you could choose a short story you know they will enjoy. Make sure it's one that is good to read aloud. Read it aloud and once you've finished ask them how it made them feel.

For your reference: the research

- Pupils with better wellbeing at age 7 made **more progress in school** than pupils with poorer wellbeing (Public Health England)
- Children who read for pleasure regularly were **less stressed** than non-readers (The Reading Agency)

Slide 8: Exercise your mind!

Learning outcome: To understand that reading exercises the mind in the same way physical exercises help the body.

- Ask pupils to think about how they feel when they've participated in physical exercise. They may feel tired but they will also have feelings of elation, happiness, increased wellbeing and positivity. Reading does exactly the same to our minds!

Slides 9-10: So start reading/Read everything and everywhere!

Learning outcome: To understand that reading can happen anywhere are there are lots of opportunities to read.

- Go through all the opportunities young people may have for reading, how the pupils can access books, and who they can go to if they're not sure what to read.
- Reading aloud can be great fun and listening to audio books is a great way to enjoy a story.
- Ask pupils where they read – at home, in the park, in bed, with a torch under the covers, on holiday, on the bus to school. Share some of your own memories of reading and the most extreme place you've read.
- All types of reading should be celebrated and shared with friends and families. Encourage them to use the next opportunity they have to get reading!

Slide 11: Don't forget...

Learning outcome: To understand that there are other people who can help if they or a friend are feeling unhappy

- Let pupils know that they should not feel they have to deal with feelings of anxiety or unhappiness alone.
- There are adults they can turn to for help; either teachers at school or family members.
- Don't be afraid to share problems or ask an adult for help, whether it's you or a friend who is suffering.