



Curriculum Support Pack

‘The environment has a huge impact on learning, in terms of the physical environment, but, more importantly the emotional environment needs to be right in order for learning to take place’ .

(Dr. Elaine Willmott (2006))



“There is no separation of mind and emotions: emotions, thinking and learning are all linked.” (Jensen 1998)

“All learning has an emotional base.” (Aristotle)

“Some emotions (such as sadness and anger) can block learning, while others (such as a sense of well-being, or feeling safe and valued) promote learning. So learning to manage the emotions can assist learning.”

(Greenhalgh, 1994).

In the current climate of Emotional Health and Well Being promotions, it is now almost taken for granted that learning and thinking are inexpressibly linked together with emotions and feelings. If we are not in the right ‘mood’ or ‘feeling’ and if we are not aware of our emotions, then inevitably our learning is going to suffer. This is true of adults and has long been what many good educational practitioners have been aware of for years amongst children and young people. Children are not ‘ready to learn’ unless they are ‘in the right mood’. Personal feelings affect behaviour, relationships, motivation, health and social development. It is down to the skill of the teacher to be aware of these feelings and emotions and to adjust his/her strategies and approaches accordingly, so that the pupils are eventually motivated well enough to start to learn.

This means that the adults in the classroom environment must also be aware of and in touch with, and in control of, their own emotions and feelings. The emotions of the adults in the classroom can have a tremendous impact on the learning environment and the emotions, behaviour and attendance of the children.

A recent UNICEF survey also highlighted that children in the UK are amongst the least happy in the developed world. Children with emotional difficulties at an early age are often beset by relationship and behavioural problems in adult life.

A recent HMCI report highlighted the following:

An emotionally healthy school is characterised by an ethos where all staff are self-aware and feel that the senior leadership team is interested in them and familiar with the areas in which they are doing well and how they can improve. Staff report that personal attention from a headteacher who finds time to actively listen can be enormously motivating, sending the message that an individual matters to the quality of life and achievements in the school.

There are many ways that senior leadership teams can nurture these feelings of engagement, for example, by:

- ✓ *recognising and celebrating achievements;*
- ✓ *talking to staff about how they feel;*
- ✓ *offering appropriate levels of support, including peer support;*
- ✓ *ensuring continuing professional development opportunities are available;*
- ✓ *promoting work–life balance;*
- ✓ *providing opportunities for staff to express opinions and concerns;*
- ✓ *involving colleagues in decision-making and demonstrating what has happened as a result of involvement;*
- ✓ *establishing effective systems of communication, lines of accountability and clear expectations of roles and responsibilities.*

Many schools are aware of the benefits of an ethos based on agreed core values, principles and practices such as consensual decision-making, pupil participation, positive relationships, recognition of the value of cultural and racial diversity and celebration of achievements. When such an ethos is closely aligned to teaching and learning, it will, understandably, have an important role in leading to improved levels of performance across the whole-school community.

Typically, an emotionally healthy school is a school where:

- ✓ *positive core values have become embedded;*
- ✓ *self-esteem has been enhanced;*
- ✓ *relationships are likely to be characterised by trust and respect;*
- ✓ *staff and pupil needs are addressed in an affirmative and supportive way;*
- ✓ *staff and pupils are physiologically satisfied and feel secure;*
- ✓ *everyone has a sense of belonging and people work in partnership;*
- ✓ *everyone has opportunities to grow in confidence and independence.*

HMCI report (2002)

When the adults in the school are aware and can manage their own feelings and emotions they can then help the pupils or students to do the same.



How *MoodMon* links into the curriculum.

MoodMon is excellent support material for **SEAL, RE and PSHCE** lessons. Circle time discussion on emotions and feelings, and how these impact on our behaviour and relationships, are easily facilitated by using our software package.

In particular *MoodMon* supports all the work in the following areas of the **SEAL** support activities, outlined in the next few pages.

Using *MoodMon* on a regular basis will support and enhance the aims and objectives of the Primary Strategy, will support the philosophy in 'Excellence and Enjoyment', and the rationale behind *MoodMon* embraces aspects in 'Every Child Matters – Change for Children'.

We highly recommend full discussion on the chosen emotions before regularly using *MoodMon*. It is important to encourage the children to think about:

'How do you feel when you are? What does being mean? How do I behave when I am feeling.....? What should I do about it? What should we do when we know someone is feeling?'

AT THE HEART OF ALL THIS, IS THE INSTANT FEEDBACK
USING **MOODMON** GIVES TO GAUGE
HOW READY THE CHILDREN ARE TO LEARN.



Understanding my feelings

- I can identify, recognise and express a range of feelings.
- I know that feelings, thoughts and behaviour are linked.
- I can recognise when I am becoming overwhelmed by my feelings.
- I know that it is OK to have any feeling, but not OK to behave in any way I feel like.

Managing feelings

In managing feelings, children use a range of strategies to recognise and accept their feelings. They can use this to regulate their learning and behaviour – for example managing anxiety or anger, or demonstrating resilience in the face of difficulty.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Managing how I express my feelings

- I can stop and think before acting.
- I can express a range of feelings in ways that do not hurt myself or other people.
- I understand that the way I express my feelings can change the way other people feel.
- I can adapt the way I express my feelings to suit particular situations or people.

Managing the way I am feeling

- I can calm myself down when I choose to.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my worries and other uncomfortable feelings.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my anger.
- I understand that changing the way I think about people and events changes the way I feel about them.
- I can change the way I feel by reflecting on my experiences and reviewing the way I think about them.
- I know that I can seek support from other people when I feel angry, worried or sad.
- I know what makes me feel good and know how to enhance these comfortable feelings.



Empathy

Being able to empathise involves understanding others; anticipating and predicting their likely thoughts, feelings and perceptions. It involves seeing things from another's point of view and modifying one's own response, if appropriate, in the light of this understanding.

(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – *Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning*)

Understanding the feelings of others

- I can recognise the feelings of others.
- I know that all people have feelings but understand that they might experience and show their feelings in different ways or in different circumstances.
- I can understand another person's point of view and understand how they might be feeling.

By using **MoodMon** on a daily basis, immediately following up any issues that arise each day, and by careful and confidential use of the analysis software, your pupils should be able to achieve all the above statements and become more confident in handling and expressing their emotions.

You will then be well on the way to having emotionally healthy pupils and adults in your school.

Mathematics/Numeracy.

If you have MoodMon running continuously on your whiteboard all day (e.g. minimised or in the system tray), it can easily be maximised to demonstrate the different types of graphs and charts that can be generated when collecting data. The summary chart for example gives a good idea of how data can be represented pictorially. Providing confidentiality was not breached, some of the analysis data could be used to show the use of other types of graphs and how to present data in different forms.

Language/Literacy.

By its very nature the package can be used to promote speaking and listening skills when the children are asked to discuss how they are feeling and what to do when they have negative feelings – as indicated in the SEAL support training materials.

The use the materials can be put to are limited only by the creativity and resourcefulness of the teacher!

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Other useful reference points:

www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk

www.bandapilot.org.uk

www.transporters.tv

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk