



HAPPY-CENTRED SCHOOL PROGRAMME

A Teacher's Guide



Introduction

Welcome to the Laughology Happy-Centred Schools programme; an evidence-based 'added extra' to learning that will enhance the emotional wellbeing of your school community - pupils, parents, teachers, and support staff.

The Happy-Centred Schools programme (HCS) is designed to increase opportunities for all children and gives them the skills needed to take full advantage of learning and of the school community.

The programme you and your school is about to embark on is increasingly pertinent. In a recent international comparative study of children's subjective wellbeing in 15 countries, children in England ranked 14th for satisfaction with life as a whole, and 12th for their school experience. Clearly, there is a pressing need to address the issues that make our children feel unhappy and affect their learning.

Laughology's HCS programme pioneered the whole-school approach to systemised wellbeing within schools. The pilot HCS was launched in 2012 in St Matthew's Primary School in Luton and within two years helped improve standards across a variety of areas, including SATS results.

The programme is flexible, easy to use and, most importantly, it is fun. Happy children learn more easily and are more engaged with school life. Increasing happiness in children can help break the deeply ingrained, limiting beliefs and self-perceptions that stifle aspiration and hamper the ability to achieve.



Scientific basis

The scientific study of happiness has gained traction in the past decade and the HCS programme is underpinned by data and results from studies into happiness from the fields of neuroscience and psychology.

The principles behind HCS are also drawn from Laughology's own research.

The underlying principles of the HCS programme are based on research by academics such as Dr Martn Seligman, a pioneer in the field of positive psychology, and Andrew Oswald, Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick.

Happiness research and surveys repeatedly highlight common themes which people associate with happiness. These themes form the basis of the HCS programme. There are five in total and each is a vital factor in achieving happiness.

The core themes are:

1. Confidence
2. Achievement & Success
3. Positive Relationships
4. Support
5. Coping Skills

Several factors feed into each of these themes (see appendix 1: The Happiness Matrix). However, each theme is repeatedly identified in studies as a foundation to achieving a motivated, positive growth mindset.

It is important to understand that the HCS programme does not deliver happiness as the ultimate 'destination'. Rather it promotes happiness as a life skill. An individual's happiness is reliant on many external as well as internal influences. Everyone will experience sadness, anxiety, fear and other negative emotions in life. This is natural. What the HCS programme aims to do is to give individuals the key skills needed to cope with adversity and to develop a positive attitude and mindset, leading to confidence, self-belief, motivation and engagement. We feel when explaining and talking about happiness with children, staff, parents and the wider learning community, it is important to understand and discuss happiness in this context.

The HCS programme embeds these skills in the school by introducing ideas, thoughts and vocabulary which reflect the core happiness themes listed above and found in appendix 1. Vocabulary plays an important part in the development of behaviours and for this reason the HCS programme relies on carefully selected words and phrases which staff, pupils and parents are encouraged to adopt and use.

Structure

The HCS programme is designed to run through the academic year, with a different focus during each of the six half-terms.

The first half-term is concerned with preparing the school for the programme – the set-up.

During each subsequent half-term pupils will explore one of the five core themes. After the initial set-up, the themes can be addressed in whatever order works for your establishment, as content relating to each theme has been designed to be delivered independently.

While the programme can start at the beginning of any half-term, it is highly recommended to start at the beginning of the academic year in the first half of the autumn term to ensure consistency through year groups.

HCS content is divided into three stages depending on year groupings. The content of each stage is appropriate for the age groups it addresses.

The stages are:

- Foundation & Year 1
- Years 2 & 3, and
- Years 4, 5 & 6

While the HCS programme is a whole-school initiative, it is entirely at your discretion whether you introduce the programme across the entire student community or in individual year groups. The system is designed to be flexible and to work for you and your needs.

Each core theme is delivered to each specific year grouping in weekly sessions throughout the half-term dedicated to it.

Set-up

The set-up stage of the programme allows staff, pupils and parents to familiarise themselves with the aims and themes of the project and to prepare the school with relevant materials, posters and decorations.

Firstly, schools should identify two or three HCS Champions whose responsibility it will be to administer the programme.

They will monitor progress, provide support and champion the project. Champions can be support staff, teaching assistants interested in enhancing their CPD, or teachers with a particular interest in taking a safeguarding or wellbeing role. Champions need to have a good relationship with Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and School Leadership Teams.

Being a Champion does involve some extra work, but every effort has been made to make the programme simple, easy to use and enjoyable. Feedback from Champions has always been positive, with former Champions reporting that the experience has been rewarding and enriching. Champions will also always have access to personal support from Laughology for help and advice.

During the first half-term, Champions will make sure the school is HCS-ready. An important part of this is to ensure that every classroom delivering the core themes has an HCS tree, or happiness tree in it.

The trees can take the form of colourful posters or three dimensional models and are fun to make. (see various examples in appendix 2) If done with pupils, they allow the children to express their creativity and also familiarise themselves with the project. Different schools call their trees by different names, we recommend calling them Happy-Centred Trees or Happiness Trees. Initially each tree is bare, with the five core themes listed across the top. For theme headings to add to trees see appendix 3 – Happiness tree theme headings. Each theme is colour-coded for easy recognition.

It is also a good idea to place a tree in the school hall, main entrance and staff room. During the year the trees will 'blossom' with different leaves (see Resources).



We also recommend that inspirational material is posted around the school. This can take the form of photographs or phrases and each should fit with one of the five core themes (see appendix 4 for examples). These messages should include vocabulary that reinforces the theme's message. Posters can be made with the children after initial discussions about the themes.

It is also a good idea to draft an HCS statement, which should explain what the school aims to achieve from the programme and the behaviours it expects from those benefiting from it. The statement acts as a whole-school proclamation of intent and focusses attention on the positive role the programme will play in school life. It should be placed near to the main entrance, where parents can also read it. (See appendix 4) Choosing your own words relevant to your school is important.

It is also beneficial in the set-up stage to send letters to parents explaining that the school is partaking in an exciting project and detailing what that will involve and what the benefits will be. The letter should welcome parental support, input and engagement in the project and could also make them aware of some of the vocabulary being introduced, which they can use and discuss at home.

At the set-up stage it is beneficial to initiate classroom discussions with children using the Philosophy for Children (P4C) model of questioning. The aim should be to start children thinking more deeply about their emotions and about the different core themes. P4C will help them gain a deeper insight into happiness and what it means to them. P4C guidelines for teachers with recommended questions and a P4C Rules for Kids document are included in the teacher's guide folder. The Rules for Kids can be printed and displayed in the classroom or laminated and used by classes.

Happiness survey

During the first half-term, a happiness survey of staff and children can also be undertaken by Laughology



The happiness survey will gauge levels of emotional wellbeing and identify specific issues to address. The survey can either be with a specific year group or with the whole school. The survey is not essential and is carried out as an added extra to the programme at an additional cost.

The survey sets a starting point from which progress can be measured and allows a more proactive approach to delivery to help staff understand the focus needed. At the end of the project the survey can be repeated to identify the progress that has been made.

Resources

There are resources for each theme to help enhance teaching. Some of these resources are supplied within the HCS electronic folders, others are commonly available objects.

The lesson plans will notify teachers what resources are needed for which lessons and whether those resources are supplied within the folder or need to be sourced by the school.

Typically, school-supplied resources include objects such as marbles and puzzle packs. More specific HCS-themed resources, such as Happiness Tree leaves, puppets and some stories, are supplied with the programme. If there is anything needed which does not arrive with the folder or which you have difficulty sourcing, please inform us and we will endeavour to source these items for you.

There are Happiness Tree behavior leaves specific to each theme, some are blank, whilst others contain inspirational messages for helping children think about behaviours. For example, leaves for confidence include phrases such as 'make the right choice', 'believe in yourself' and 'try to help yourself'. Behaviour leaves are colour-coded with the relevant theme displayed on the Trees. They are provided in the themed folders. In lessons you will discuss the behaviours that go with the relevant theme as detailed in lesson plans (see below) and add the relevant behaviour leaves to the Tree during the specific lesson. Adding behaviour leaves to the Trees will help children understand how behaviour relates to happiness.

You should also explore childrens' own ideas about other behaviours relevant to the theme. Discussing behaviours relating to specific themes with your class and involving the children in this process increases their learning. These class-generated behaviours and ideas can be written on the blank leaves, printed out at the relevant lessons and placed on the Trees under the specific headings.

In addition, there are also Golden Leaves that are presented to children for achieving behaviours representative of a theme. For example, a pupil who shows confidence in attempting a task he or she has never undertaken before, should be presented with a leaf inscribed with a message that gives the pupil's name and explains why the leaf has been awarded. This leaf should then be displayed on one of the Happiness Trees. Golden Leaves can also be found in the themed folders.

Pupils are also encouraged to award teachers with golden leaves to ensure the whole school buys in to the programme and its aims. Golden leaves can be awarded in year assemblies, whole school assemblies or in individual classes. We recommend involving parents too, where possible, and inviting them in to see their child receive an award.

Presentation of the golden leaves is at the discretion of the school, but should be made a positive feature of school life to be celebrated.

Lessons

Once the set-up is complete, the second half-term begins with lessons on the core themes.

The HCS programme folder contains lesson plans for each theme and age grouping. The plans provide content for weekly lessons and cover the entire school for the complete academic term.

Each lesson lasts between 45 minutes and an hour, and there are extension activities contained within the plans and suggestions for extra possible related activity. The plans also contain vocabulary lists that relate to the subject being covered. These can be sent home in the form of handouts to allow parents to engage in the process, too, as it is important to encourage children to think about and use vocabulary wherever they are.

Lesson plans begin with preparation guidelines and details of required resources. Preparation tips are clearly explained to allow sessions to be delivered with ease. For example, the 'Direct Teaching Input' - your contribution to the learning - is explained in a simple, step-by-step way to help guide you and assistants through the activities.

Each plan details Possible Extension Activities. These allow those delivering lessons to extend learning by introducing related activities that reinforce the main themes of lessons.

Within lesson plans there are also opportunities to make annotations, observations and suggestions. To get the most from the HCS programme, we recommend using these as they allow teachers and TAs to develop and evolve the programme to suit the school's specific needs. They also help maintain continuity from one year to the next.

The HCS programme is developed from an emotional intelligence psychology basis. However, compiling your own notes from each session will allow you to develop it from a teaching perspective. Notes allow for reflection on what went well and how it could be improved, and also for evaluation and feedback.

Outcomes

It is important to have an idea of how you will gauge the success of the programme at the end of each year group.

This is best done with the aid of an outcomes flowchart which addresses each core theme and sets out success criteria for each. (see appendix 5 HCS flow chart.

A blank flowchart is available in appendix 6)

Identifying your desired outcomes at the beginning of the programme will set out your goals, focus development, and illustrate for both adults and children what success through the programme will look like. We have also supplied HCS yearly statements – A guide to learning. (appendix 7) You can use these statements as a guide to understanding learning outcomes for children. We encourage you to use this as a guide and add to this as you go along.

We hope you enjoy undertaking the HCS Programme and are sure you will see the huge benefits that other schools have gained from it. More information about Laughology Happy-Centred Schools is available from www.laughology.co.uk



LAUGHOL_{OGY}

Suite 869, Kemp House,
152 - 160 City Road,
London EC1V 2NX

T: 0844 800 1701
F: 0208 337 9262

info@laughology.co.uk
www.laughology.co.uk