



Coombe Hill Infants Education Wellbeing Practitioner



Shazia Yakoob-Ajmal is an Education Wellbeing Practitioner, part of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) that works across some primary and secondary schools in Richmond and Kingston, including at this school. The MHST delivers **short term, evidence-based interventions** to children

and young people who are experiencing **mild to moderate mental health difficulties**, such as anxiety, low mood and challenging behaviour.

What is Mental Health?

We all have mental health and it's just as **important as our physical health**. Also known as emotional health or wellbeing, it is important to look after it in order to make the most of your potential and cope with life.

Mental health **affects us all** and we all have periods of time when we feel **stressed, frightened or down**.

Sometimes these feelings pass but in some cases they develop into a more serious problem.

Mental health changes according to varying circumstances and as you move through different stages of life.

Mild to moderate mental health difficulties

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, mild mental health problems are when a person has a **small number of symptoms** that have a limited effect on their daily life.

A moderate mental health problem is when a person has more symptoms that can make their **daily life much more difficult** than usual. A person may experience different levels at different times.

Behaviour to look out for

- Becoming **irritable, tearful or clingy**
- **Physical symptoms** such as stomach aches and headaches
- **Lacking confidence** to try new things or seeming unable to face simple, everyday challenges
- Find it hard to **concentrate**
- Have problems and change to **sleeping or eating patterns**
- Have **angry outbursts or being argumentative**
- Have a lot of **negative thoughts**, or keep worrying that bad things are going to happen
- Start **avoiding everyday activities**, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school

How can the MHST help?

For primary aged children, **we deliver parent led guided self help (GSH)**. This is a programme aimed at **empowering parents** to use strategies with their child to overcome difficulties with **anxiety or challenging behaviour**. We work with parents because they often play a **central role** in determining the pace and timings of when therapeutic strategies can be implemented at home and are often relied upon to solve practical issues that arise.

The evidence-based strategies covered during the intervention are based on **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) principles**. These help manage challenges by **changing thoughts and behaviours**. CBT has a strong and growing evidence base for anxiety and challenging behaviour. For more information on these interventions, please visit **www.nice.org.uk**.

GSH is a **brief intervention**, usually lasting **6 sessions**, which can be face-to-face at school, or online via a video conferencing platform. The Education Wellbeing Practitioners also run workshops and training events with parents and staff. Look out for more information about these coming up!

How do I refer my child?

If you have concerns about your child then please speak to the **designated Mental Health Lead (MHL)** at school, or to your child's teacher, who will pass this on to the MHL.

The MHLeads for Coombe Hill Infants are:-

Mrs Berry and Mrs Jakob

YoungMinds Parents helpline:

Call the YoungMinds Parents helpline for detailed **advice, emotional support** and **signposting** about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Free on **0808 802 5544** from 9.30am to 4pm (Monday to Friday)