

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO SUPPORT



Guidance for Schools

A whole school approach is advocated for the promotion of children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The promotion of mental health and wellbeing can lead to better academic performance, better school attendance and improved stay on rates through greater wellbeing, lower levels of mental health problems and greater emotional attachment to school. Curriculum for Excellence encourages a holistic approach to health and wellbeing to sustain good relationships, develop resilience and an environment of personal, social and emotional development.

Research shows that whole school approaches are more effective to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, compared to curriculum-based approaches only; a more in-depth understanding of this is discussed in the document '*Literature review of educational packs to improve young people's understanding of mental health and wellbeing*'.

Eight principles for a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing:

Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and well being

Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning

An ethos and environment that embeds respect and values diversity

Enabling student voice to influence decisions

Staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of children and young people

Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions

Work with parents and carers

Targeted support and appropriate referrals

Adapted from PHE (2015)



Principle 1:

Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing (PHE, 2015)

- Committed leadership which creates a culture of valuing all pupils and allowing them to feel a sense of belonging (NCB, 2016)
- Clear mental health and wellbeing policy developed
- Policy frameworks focussing on positive relationships and behaviour (Scottish Government, 2013)
- Early intervention strategy and student support as core (NCB, 2016)

Examples of Current Practice:



Pupil wellbeing at the heart of the school, using the SHANARRI Wellbeing Wheel for reflection and discussion;



Leadership promoting responsibility of all for promoting emotional health and wellbeing;



Member of staff has responsibility for championing mental health and wellbeing and implementing and embedding mental health and wellbeing policies into practice.













Principle 2:

An ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity (PHE, 2015; Scottish Government, 2013)

- Supportive physical, social and emotional environment focussed on mutual respect and trust, and encouraging self-worth and positive behaviours
- Children feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment (GIRFEC; CfE, 2009)
- Positive relationships between staff, parents/carers, pupils and the wider school community to promote pupil wellbeing and a sense of belonging to school (Education Scotland, 2017)
- Ethos that supports positive behaviours for learning and for successful relationships (Education Scotland, 2017)

Examples of Current Practice:

	Open door policy for parents and pupils;
	Clear policies on behaviour and bullying setting out responsibility of all in the school;
	Peer mentoring schemes and peer mediators;
	Friendship stops and friendship benches;
	Anti-bullying ambassadors and anti-bullying week;
	Focus on pupil's personal, social and employability skills, workshops and activities to address diversity;
	Restorative approaches, nurturing approaches, and solution-oriented approaches embedded;
	Rights Respecting School's Award;
	LGBT charter;
	Safe areas










Principle 3:

Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning

- Opportunities across all aspects of the formal and informal curriculum to explore, develop and embed meaningful experiences for the learner (CfE, 2009; NCB, 2016)
- Development of the knowledge, understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes for mental, social, emotional and physical wellbeing (CfE, 2009)

Examples of Current Practice

-  Social and emotional skills developed and promoted through PHSE curriculum and wider curriculum;
-  Lessons on emotional wellbeing with practical application;
-  Opportunities for specific curricular focus on mental health and wellbeing e.g. transition periods or skills to cope with exam pressures
-  Social and emotional skills integrated in all subject areas, including problem solving, coping, conflict management, managing feelings, managing relationships and motivation;
-  Emotional literacy posters displayed and discussed in classrooms;
-  Progression by building on learning in primary education and sustained throughout education;
-  Resilience initiatives e.g. Nurture groups



Principle 4:

Enabling student voice to influence decisions (PHE, 2015)

- Ensure pupils are kept fully informed and have their opinions and wishes taken into account (NCB, 2016)
- Children are heard and feel included in decisions affecting them and their school (GIRFEC)
- Developing partnerships between young people and staff to shape the vision, values and aims of the school and promote social and emotional wellbeing (Education Scotland, 2018)

Examples of Current Practice



Pupil council supported by senior leadership team;



Worry boxes, buddies, mental health champions and peer educators;



Pupil suggestion box, and annual pupil consultation;



Head boy/girl and deputies regularly meeting with head teacher and leading events;



Junior sports ambassadors, pupil sports coaches, pupils running nursery sports day;



Senior pupils running lunchtime club for younger pupils;



All pupils contributing to decisions impacting on their social and emotional wellbeing



Principle5:

Staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of students (PHE, 2015)

- Promote the use of the e-learning programme MindEd (www.minded.org.uk/)
- Staff training to increase knowledge and enable delivery of the curriculum integrating development of social and emotional skills in all areas effectively, including behaviour management and building successful relationships
- Staff training to ensure knowledge and skills to identify and support early signs of emotional distress, anxiety and behavioural problems, and assess whether a specialist is needed and make appropriate referral
- Assess and monitor mental wellbeing of staff and provide support for staff to look after their own mental wellbeing, with staff acting as good role models and promoting good mental wellbeing. (Education Scotland, 2018)

Examples of Current Practice



Staff training and support on how to develop children's social, emotional and psychological wellbeing;



Mental health first aid training for staff; Place 2Be training;



Suicide awareness training;



Continuous lifelong professional learning emphasising the responsibility of all to promote good mental health;



Promoting of staff health and wellbeing through the school culture and environment



Principle 6:

Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions (PHE, 2015)

- Measuring and assessing young people’s social and emotional wellbeing can inform decisions in the school and direct future mental health and wellbeing activities

Examples of Current Practice



Collecting Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) scores;



Focus groups with pupils and staff;

Questionnaires such as ‘My Wellbeing’ to understand pupils’ views to their wellbeing;



Completion of the SHANARRI Wellbeing Wheel with follow up dialogue;



Happy/sad sheets and feelings charts in the classroom;



Formal measures such as Stirling Children’s Mental Wellbeing Scale, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), Boxhall Profile, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



Principle 7:

Working with parents and carers (PHE, 2015)

- Parents and carers are heard and are involved in decisions affecting them and their children (GIRFEC)
- Engaging parents/carers and families in genuine participation, particularly those who are disadvantaged or families of pupils who show difficulties at school (NCB, 2016)
- Ensure parents and carers are kept fully informed to ensure they can participate in decision making (NCB, 2016)
- Provide parents with details of the school's policies on promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems

Examples of Current Practice



Formal and informal opportunities to inform parents on emotional wellbeing;



Staff understand the value and impact of parental involvement as part of the school community;



Welcoming and supportive school environment for parents/carers;



Helping support parents and carers develop their parenting skills, such as through small, group-based programmes run by trained health or education practitioners e.g. Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) programme;



Various communications e.g. websites, twitter, text messages



Principle 8:

Targeted support and appropriate referral (PHE, 2015)

- Specific help for those most at risk of poorer mental health, such as those in care, young carers, those who have previously accessed Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence
- Clear and consistent information delivered to young people about the opportunities available to them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns (NCB, 2016)
- Additional and appropriate support and care for pupils when required (GIRFEC)

Examples of Current Practice



Clear systems and processes in place to help identify children and young people with possible mental health problems;



Schools working closely with CAMHS and other services with protocols for assessment and referral;



Pastoral care and support for young people in the school;



Peer educators or mediators helping young people build relationships to aid seeking support when they need it

This guidance is a tool which can be used to build on current work in early years, primary and secondary schools to promote whole school approaches in supporting mental health and wellbeing.

It is important to recognise good practice already existing within schools; however some schools may not recognise their achievements or align these within a whole school approach.

It may also be useful to map out the current mental health and wellbeing activities in your school to evaluate how it aligns with the whole school model. The self assessment check list and Action Plan in Appendix 1 may support you to begin this process

Useful Resources

East Ayrshire Council. (2017) Supporting children and young people with mental wellbeing.

North Ayrshire Council Education and Youth Employment. (2017) Health and wellbeing strategy and frameworks 2017-2022.

South Ayrshire Council Education. (2018) Nurturing our children: A mental health and wellbeing action plan.

Curriculum for Excellence. (2009) Building the curriculum 4 skills for learning, skills for life, and skills for work. PDF Accessible:

<https://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/288517/0088239.pdf> (Available: 30th October)

Education Scotland. (2015) How good is our school? 4th Edition. PDF Accessible:

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_nih_edithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf (Available: 30th October 2018).

Education Scotland. (2017) Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: A framework to support the Self Evaluation of Nurturing Approaches in Schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Settings. PDF Accessible:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/inc55ApplyingNurturingApproaches120617.pdf> (Available: 30th October 2018).

Education Scotland. (2018) How good is OUR school? A resource to support learner participation in self- evaluation and school improvement. Part 2. PDF Accessible:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part2.pdf> (Available: 30th October 2018).

National Children's Bureau (NCB). (2016) A whole school framework for emotional well-being and mental health: Supporting resources for school leaders. PDF Accessible:

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf> (Available: 30th October 2018).

NCB. (2015) What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools? Advice for schools and framework development. PDF Accessible:

https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Health_wellbeing_docs/ncb_framework_for_promoting_well-being_and_responding_to_mental_health_in_schools.pdf (Available: 30th October 2018).

Public Health England (PHE). (2015) Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: a whole school and college approach. PDF Accessible:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf (Available: 30th October 2018).

SAMH. (2017) Going to be all right? A report on the mental health of young people in Scotland. PDF Accessible:

https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/Going_to_Be_All_Right_Jacki_Gordon_Report_2017.pdf (Available: 30th October 2018).

Scottish Government. (2013) Better relationships, better learning, better behaviour. PDF Accessible: <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0041/00416217.pdf> (Available: 30th October 2018).

Additional resources relevant to mental health and wellbeing can be accessed through NHS Ayrshire and Arran's Health Information and Resources Service (HIRS) through the following link: <https://www.healthinfoshop.scot.nhs.uk/>

If you would like further information please contact either:

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Appendix 1: Self-assessment checklist and action plan

Principles	Current Practice	Gaps Identified	Lead Responsibility	Timescale	Notes
1. Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing					
2. An ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity					
3. Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning					
4. Enabling student voice to influence decisions					

Principles	Current Practice	Gaps Identified	Lead Responsibility	Timescale	Notes
5. Staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of children and young people					
6. Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions					
7. Work with parents and carers					
8. Targeted support and appropriate referral					