Setting-Wide Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing

Overview Description

A setting-wide approach involves all parts of the education setting working together and being committed. It needs partnership working between senior leaders, teachers and all staff, as well as parents, carers and the wider community.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that primary schools and secondary schools should be supported to adopt a comprehensive, "***whole school' approach to promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people".***

The DfE also identifies a whole-school and college approach to promoting good mental health as a protective factor for child and adolescent mental health.

The culture, ethos and environment of the educational setting can have a profound influence on both pupil and staff mental wellbeing. Environments that are hostile, aggressive, chaotic or unpredictable can be harmful to mental health, and can lead to stressful teaching and working conditions. Schools and colleges are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school or college approach that is tailored to the needs of their pupils. A whole school or college approach is one that goes beyond the teaching in the classroom to pervade all aspects of life, including:

• culture, ethos and environment: the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is promoted through the 'hidden' or 'informal' curriculum, including leadership practice, the settings policies, values and attitudes, together with the social and physical environment;

• teaching: using the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge about health and wellbeing; and

• partnerships with families and the community: proactive engagement with families, outside agencies, and the wider community to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing.

DfE, (2021) Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

What is mental health and wellbeing?

Mental health and wellbeing do not have universally agreed definitions and these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness. It is generally agreed that mental health is integral to general health and wellbeing - there is no health without mental health. Good mental health is integral for us to be fully included at school and in society in general.

Mental health

Whilst there is not a universally agreed definition of mental health some definitions include:

> *"a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioural adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life"*
>
> The American Psychological Association

> *"a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"*
>
> World Health Organisation

Wellbeing

Mind (2015) describe a state of 'mental wellbeing' and state that prolonged periods of low mental wellbeing, are more likely to lead to mental health problems:

> *"Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.*
>
> *If you have good mental wellbeing you are able to:*
>
> - *feel relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem*
> - *feel and express a range of emotions*
> - *build and maintain good relationships with others*
> - *feel engaged with the world around you*
> - *live and work productively*
> - *cope with the stresses of daily life*
> - *adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty"*

Public Health England and Evidence Based Practice Unit explicitly highlight that mental wellbeing does not just mean the absence of mental illness. They state that mental wellbeing is a broader indicator of social, emotional and physical wellness that is influenced by a wider context within which the child or young person lives.

Their conceptualisation is summarised in the figure below. In other words, wellbeing is understood to be influenced by not only within-child characteristics but also their environment.

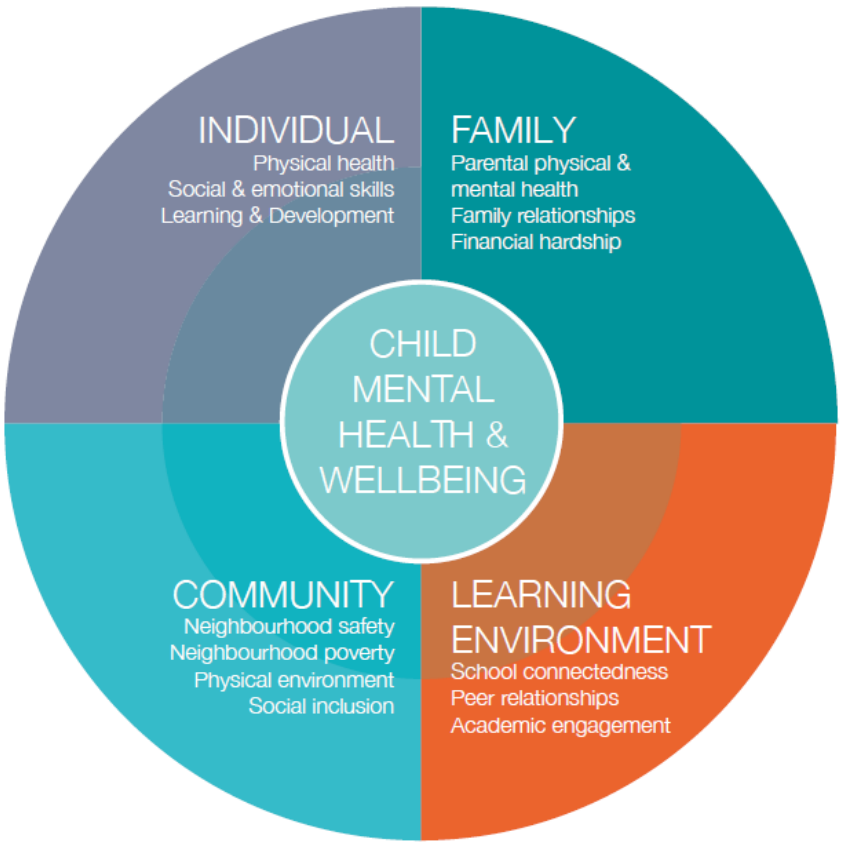
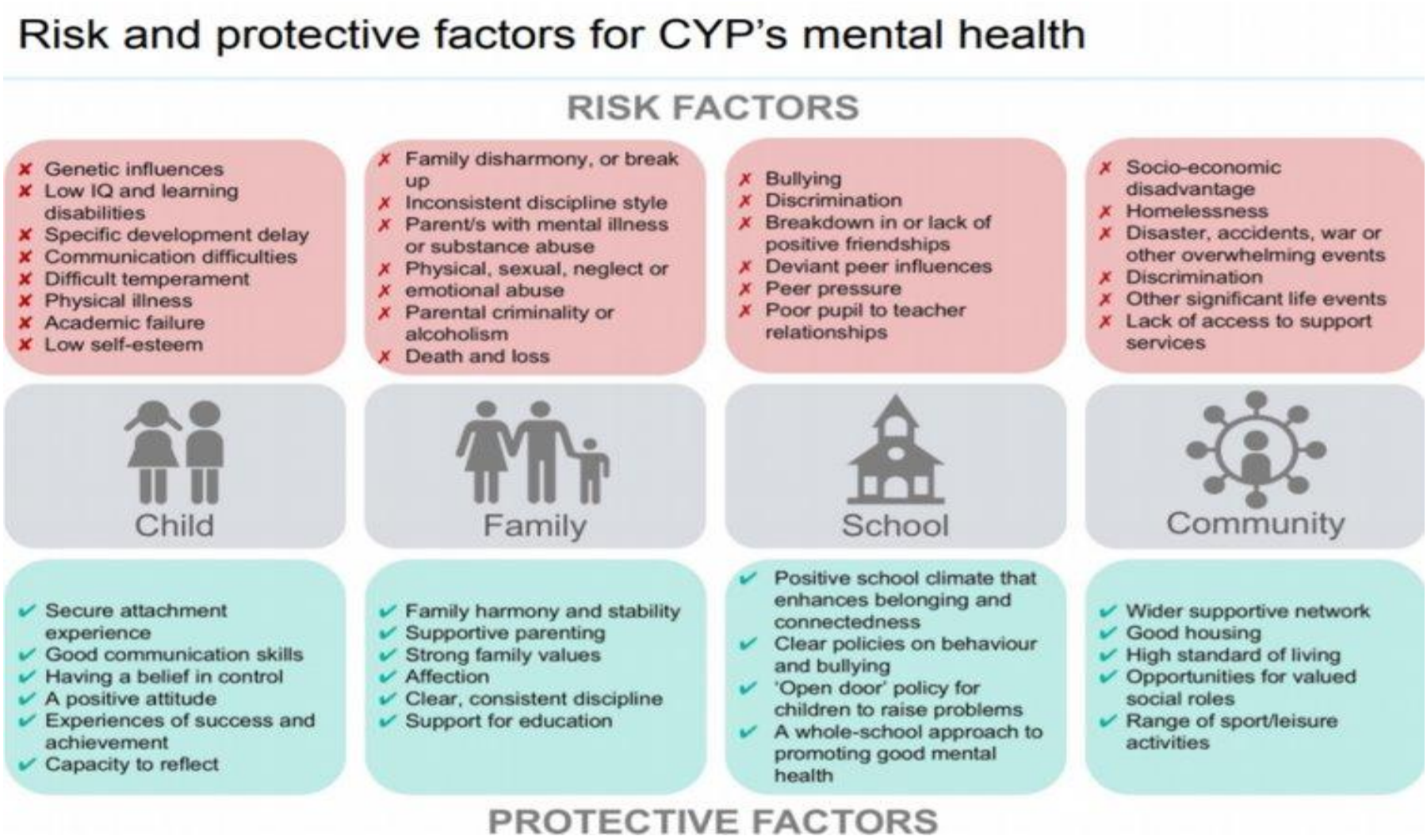


Figure 1: High-level domains that inform measurement of mental health and wellbeing (informed by PHE publication: Measuring Mental Wellbeing in Children and Young People)



Source: Public Health England (2016) The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England

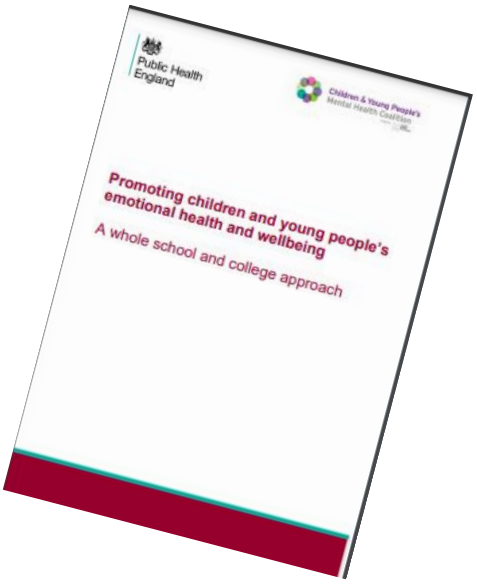
Whole school mental health and wellbeing approaches:

Key steps

In 2021, Public Health England published a paper called **Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach.**

This document sets out key actions that senior leaders in schools/colleges can take to embed a whole school approach to promoting emotional health and wellbeing.

It identified 8 key principals shown in the diagram below.



PHE (2021) p. 7

Evidence Base for the benefits

Professor Katherine Weare has researched and written extensively on mental health, wellbeing, and social and emotional learning in educational settings.

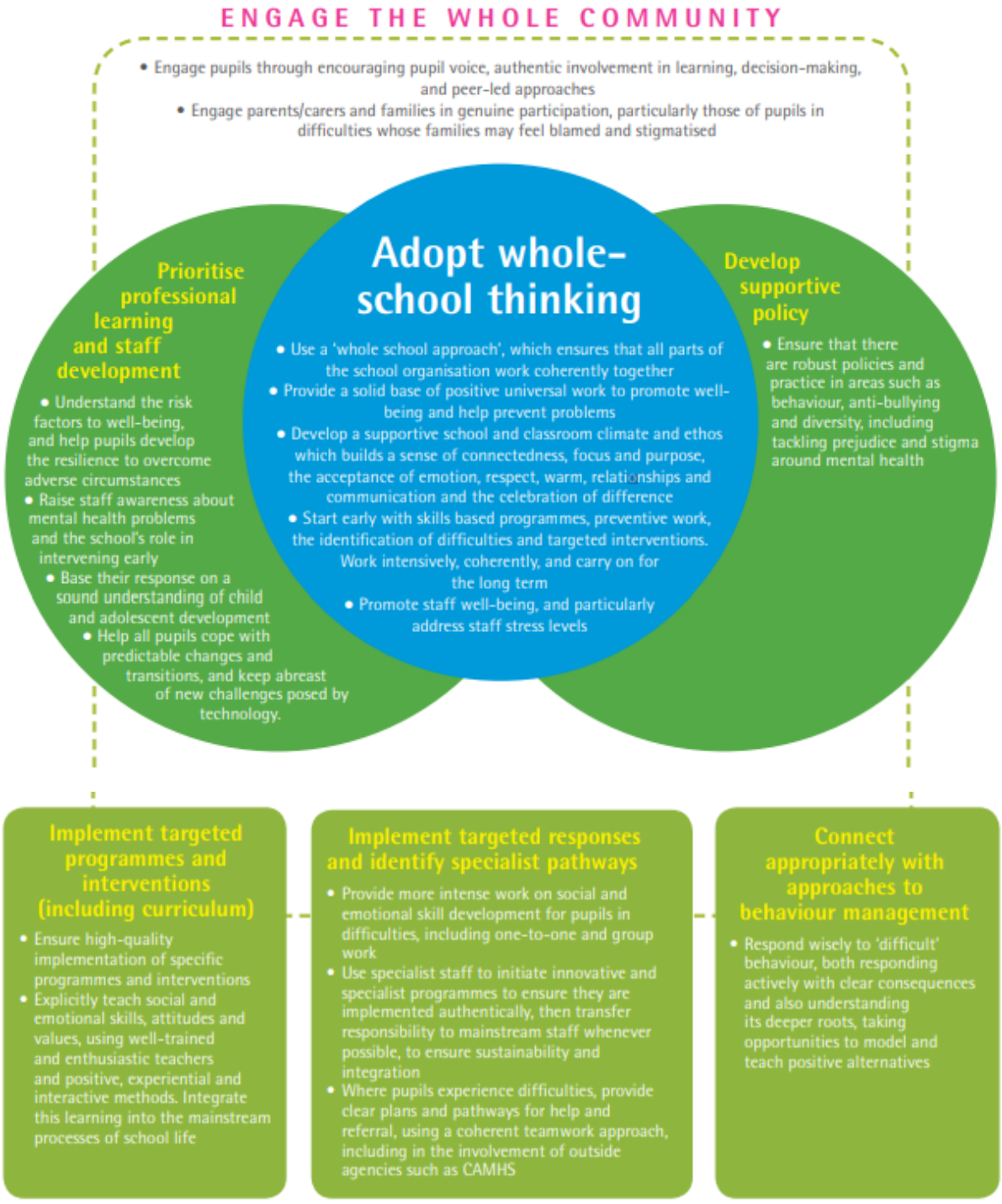
She argues that there is now a sound evidence base that well-being interventions can confer the following **positive outcomes:**

- **academic learning**, motivation, and sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and with school
- **staff well-being**, reduced stress, sickness and absence, improved teaching ability and performance.
- **pupil well-being** including happiness, a sense of purpose, connectedness and meaning.
- the development of the **social and emotional skills and attitudes** that promote learning, success, well-being and mental health, in education settings and throughout life
- the **prevention and reduction of mental health problems** such as depression, anxiety and stress.
- **improving behaviour** including reductions in low-level disruption, incidents, fights, bullying, exclusions and absence
- **reductions in risky behaviour** – such as impulsiveness, uncontrolled anger, violence, bullying and crime, early sexual experience, alcohol and drug use.

"*Schools can be confident that a focus on well-being and mental health not only enables them to provide healthy and happy school environments for pupils and staff and prepare the citizens of tomorrow with sound character and values, but also directly supports their more immediate mission: the promotion of effective learning".* (P.12)

https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/ncb_framework_for_promoting_wellbeing_and_responding_to_mental_health_in_schools.pdf

Professor Weare has drawn from a number of systemic literature reviews to suggest a framework which she suggests can help inform schools about how best to implement changes to improve wellbeing outcomes.



Taken from
https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/ncb_framework_for_promoting_wellbeing_and_responding_to_mental_health_in_schools.pdf

Setting-Wide Approaches

There are a number of different commercial packages and programmes available that can help support education settings to develop their whole school or setting mental health and wellbeing practices. Three examples are

Emotionally Friendly Settings (devised by Salford's Educational Psychology Service)

https://www.emotionallyfriendly.co.uk/

There is a financial cost to this package

5 Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing (devised by Anna Freud, National centre for Children and Families

https://www.annafreud.org/5steps/

Users need to register but resources are then free of charge.

Sandwell Wellbeing Charter Mark (devised by Sandwell Educational Psychology Service).

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200343/well-being_charter_mark

There is a financial cost to this programme.

One Wellbeing Approach (devised by One Education Ltd. Educational Psychology Service).

www.oneeducation.co.uk

There is a process where settings receive support through the Thrive in Education and Mental Health Support Team.

Any setting working with One Education Ltd Educational Psychology can request support through their link EP.

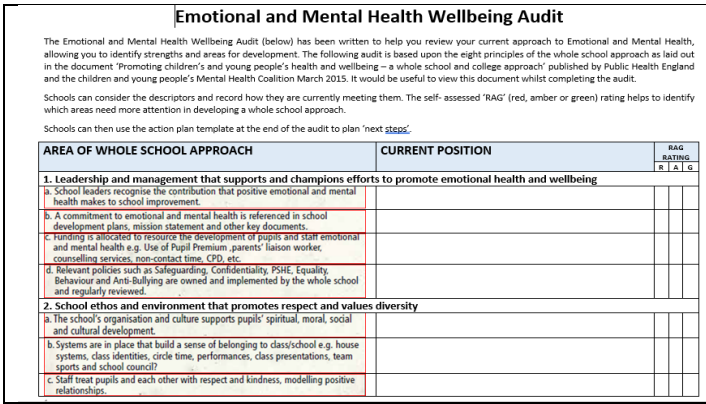
There is a financial cost to this programme.

Setting-Wide Audit Tools

There are a variety of audit tools schools can use to help think through their whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing. Below are some examples with links.

The NCB coordinates the School Wellbeing Partnership, which is a national network of nearly 50 organisations from the education, health and wellbeing, and children's sectors.
The website has lots of helpful resources (see resources section later).

This audit tool can be accessed here:
https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Tool%20FINAL.pdf



Emotional and Mental Health Wellbeing Audit

The Emotional and Mental Health Wellbeing Audit (below) has been written to help you review your current approach to Emotional and Mental Health, allowing you to identify strengths and areas for development. The following audit is based upon the eight principles of the whole school approach as laid out in the document 'Promoting children's and young people's health and wellbeing – a whole school and college approach' published by Public Health England and the children and young people's Mental Health Coalition March 2015. It would be useful to view this document whilst completing the audit.

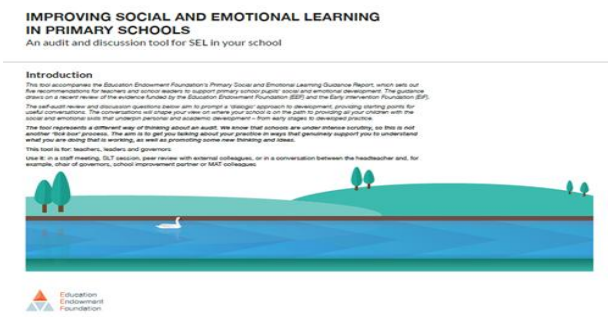
Schools can consider the descriptors and record how they are currently meeting them. The self- assessed 'RAG' (red, amber or green) rating helps to identify which areas need more attention in developing a whole school approach.

Schools can then use the action plan template at the end of the audit to plan 'next steps'.

AREA OF WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH	CURRENT POSITION	RAG RATING R	A	G
1. Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing				
a. School leaders recognise the contribution that positive emotional and mental health makes to school improvement.				
b. A commitment to emotional and mental health is referenced in school development plans, mission statement and other key documents.				
c. Funding is allocated to resource the development of pupils and staff emotional and mental health e.g. Use of Pupil Premium ,parents' liaison worker, counselling services, non-contact time, CPD, etc.				
d. Relevant policies such as Safeguarding, Confidentiality, PSHE, Equality, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying are owned and implemented by the whole school and regularly reviewed.				
2. School ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity				
a. The school's organisation and culture supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.				
b. Systems are in place that build a sense of belonging to class/school e.g. house systems, class identities, circle time, performances, class presentations, team sports and school council?				
c. Staff treat pupils and each other with respect and kindness, modelling positive relationships.				

Emotionally Healthy Schools also provides a free audit. This tool allows you to identify strengths and areas for development. Schools can consider the descriptors and record how they are currently meeting them using a RAG rating approach followed by an action plan.

This audit tool can be accessed here:
https://emotionallyhealthyschools.org/review-and-celebrate/auditing-tools/



IMPROVING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

An audit and discussion tool for SEL in your school

Introduction

This tool accompanies the Education Endowment Foundation's Primary Social and Emotional Learning Guidance Report, which sets out five recommendations for teachers and school leaders to support primary school pupils' social and emotional development. The guidance draws on a recent review of the evidence funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).

The self-audit review and discussion questions below aim to prompt a 'strategic' approach to development, providing starting points for useful conversations. The conversations will shape your view on where your school is on the path to providing all your children with the social and emotional skills that underpin personal and academic development – from early stages to developed practice.

The tool represents a different way of thinking about an audit. We know that schools are under intense scrutiny, so this is not another 'tick box' process. The aim is to get you talking about your practice in ways that genuinely support you to understand what you are doing that is working, as well as promoting some new thinking and ideas.

This tool is for: teachers, leaders and governors.

Use it: in a staff meeting, SLT session, peer review with external colleagues, or in a conversation between the headteacher and, for example, chair of governors, school improvement partner or MAT colleagues.

Education Endowment Foundation

This audit tool from the Education Endowment Foundation is specifically focused on primary school settings.

This audit tool can be accessed here:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/SEL/EEF_SEL_Audit_Tool.pdf

Setting-wide mental health and well-being support in Manchester

Schools/education settings may not always recognise this; however, they are experts in being able to support the wellbeing of their community. The existing policies, ethos, staff and curriculum plays an immense role in protecting and promoting the wellbeing of their population.

Schools and colleges looking to extend their setting-wide mental health and well-being approach can refer to The Manchester Emotional Resilience and Mental Health and Wellbeing Directory (September 2020 MERMHWD) and Manchester Thrive in Education documents (September 2020). These provide a comprehensive guide to whole school wellbeing services available to schools www.manchester.gov.uk/schoolhub.

Some examples of services in Manchester include:

Healthy Schools, which offers a free service to all schools in Manchester. Schools continue to access support and training across speciality areas: Mental Health, Social and Emotional Health, Relationships and Sex Education, Healthy Lifestyles, Injury Prevention, Drugs and Alcohol and PSHE. Their offer includes: Policy Development, Training (Face-to-face and Virtual), Network Meeting, 1-2-1 consultation, Resource and Curriculum Development and Covid-recovery support resource. Healthy Schools have also developed **Ensuring a Whole School/College Approach to Mental Health Recovery: Audit Tool** and following this are offering Mental Health Consultations with school leaders to action plan next steps.

The Manchester Thrive in Education Team (MTiE), launched in 2020, designed to complement the whole school approach offered in schools. The service includes practitioners from CAMHS, voluntary service partners from 42nd Street, Manchester Mind and Place2Be and Educational Psychologists from One Education. Its key functions include supporting the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school/college. This year MTiE Educational Psychologists have worked in five secondary schools implementing the Sandwell Wellbeing Charter Mark (see below for more information). The services are being rolled out across Manchester schools over the coming years.

Education settings through commissioned services can continue to access Educational Psychology Services (EPS). This allows all settings to work at an organisational level to develop and implement broad and targeted provision and to capacity building through research, training, workshops and consultation.

For information about whole school and college mental health support in Manchester please go to the Mental Health chapter

Useful links

Links to articles and resources to support mental health and wellbeing in higher education https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/collections/looking-after-wellbeing-higher-education

Resources for promoting mental health in further education settings, with specific strategies relating to areas such as anxiety, eating disorders, exam stress, self-harm and unhealthy relationships. https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/further-education/

References

Education, universities and childcare during coronavirus: Supporting wellbeing (DfE, 2020) available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-pupils-wellbeing

Mental Health and behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2018) available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools__.pdf

Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (2015, PHE) available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing