



Rewarding Learning

CCEA Post-Primary Guidance on Developing a Whole-Child, Whole-School, Whole-Community Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing





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Introduction

This guidance is intended to support principals, school leaders and staff to develop and implement a strategic whole-child, whole-school, whole-community approach to emotional health and wellbeing (EHWB). This guidance should be considered in conjunction with complementary CCEA guidance on developing a whole-school approach to social and emotional learning (SEL). This guidance will help schools to develop an approach to support that aligns with the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework (Department of Education and Department of Health, 2021).

Pupils' EHWB is critical for their personal, social and emotional development, learning and educational achievement. Poor EHWB can have a significant impact on children and young people in Northern Ireland. Many children and young people are affected by a range of EHWB problems. These include anxiety, stress, depression, eating disorders, thoughts of self-harm and suicide.

Some children and young people are more at risk than others of developing EHWB problems. Those who have experienced childhood adversity such as physical or sexual abuse and neglect, those in vulnerable groups who, for example, have a disability or special educational needs (SEN), and members of the LGBTQ+ community, young carers and newcomers are at greater risk of developing EHWB problems.

One way post-primary schools can support and improve all pupils' EHWB is by developing a whole-child, whole-school, whole-community approach to EHWB, with SEL as an integral part of this approach. We also recommend that this is underpinned by children's rights to ensure a focus on meeting children and young people's EHWB needs.

Coming from a strengths-based perspective, the whole-school approach should promote the positive aspects of EHWB while seeking to reduce the likelihood of pupils developing EHWB problems. It should also be based on equality, non-discrimination, respect for cultural diversity and be non-stigmatising and inclusive for all.

It is also important that senior leaders and staff understand how adverse childhood experiences and trauma can affect pupils. They need to recognise pupils in vulnerable groups who are at greater risk of developing EHWB problems and how best to support these pupils. Therefore, it is important that Trauma-Informed Practice and nurture-based approaches are part of the school's approach to EHWB.

Schools also need to ensure they support the EHWB of their staff. Staff with good levels of EHWB are more likely to be motivated and better able to cope with the challenges of supporting pupils' EHWB and their parents/carers and meeting their needs.



What is Emotional Health and Wellbeing?

The research shows there are various interpretations of emotional health and wellbeing (DE and DH, 2021). To develop a shared understanding, we have broadly defined emotional health and wellbeing as:

*The positive aspects of mental health to include **emotional, psychological and social wellbeing***

The terms emotional, psychological and social wellbeing are defined below by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2009):

Emotional wellbeing – *happiness, confidence and not feeling depressed*

Psychological wellbeing – *a feeling of autonomy and control over one's life, problem-solving skills, resilience, attentiveness and a sense of involvement with others*

Social wellbeing – *the ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid disruptive behaviour, delinquency, violence or bullying*

It is important to emphasise that **good mental health is not** just about the absence of mental health problems such as anxiety or depression. **Good mental health is associated with positive characteristics** such as self-worth, resilience, being able to cope with challenges, having good relationships and enjoying living.

Physical health including physical activity, healthy eating, diet and nutrition, and safety also play important roles in influencing a young person's EHWB. A young person who is physically healthy and feels safe is more likely to have a greater sense of EHWB (NCB, 2019; Public Health England, 2015). Therefore, in addition to the emotional, psychological and social aspects of a young person's wellbeing, it is also important that schools consider the interrelationship between these aspects of wellbeing with the young person's physical health and safety. For the purpose of this guidance, EHWB includes physical health and safety.

Children and Young People's Mental Health in Northern Ireland

Over the years, a number of reports and surveys have consistently highlighted children and young people's mental health in Northern Ireland as a growing concern. These include the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability in 2007 (DHSSPS, 2007), the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2016 (NISRA, 2016; 2018), and reports by the National Children's Bureau (2019) and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY, 2017; 2019). The NICCY report points out the increasing prevalence and complexity of mental health problems in children and young people that are occurring at an increasingly younger age and how these problems significantly impact on their lives.

Commonly, the reports indicate mental health problems tend to increase during teenage years (Kahn, 2016). One of the most recent reports, the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey Northern Ireland 2020, highlighted a range of mental health problems, including emotional and behavioural problems, mood and anxiety disorders, stress, eating disorders and self-injury and suicidal thoughts and attempts (Bunting et al., 2020).



The Effects of Mental Health Problems on Children and Young People

The research shows that young people with mental health problems can be affected in different ways. They may experience:

- behavioural problems – including antisocial and aggressive behaviour;
- emotional problems – mood and anxiety disorders including depression;
- suicidal thoughts and self-harm;
- difficulty forming and maintaining relationships;
- increased risk-taking behaviour;
- learning difficulties;
- lower attainment and academic performance;
- increased absence from school; and
- long-term effects into adulthood.

(Bunting et al., 2020; Hawton et al., 2015; Murphy and Fonagy, 2012)

Children and Young People's Vulnerability: Risk to Mental Health Problems

Some children and young people are more vulnerable and at risk of developing mental health problems than others. It is important that school leaders and all staff are aware of the risks posed to young people's mental health. Schools should use this information when planning, developing and implementing their whole-school approach to EHWB. Schools can identify risks to pupils and put in place protective measures to reduce the risk of pupils developing EHWB problems (see DE Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance, 2020 and Appendix 1: Risk and Protective Factors). The risks to young people's mental health include:

Gender and Age

Males and females are likely to experience different types of mental health problems as they mature. This is reflected in the findings from the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey (Bunting et al., 2020) and other reports (NCB, 2019; NICCY, 2017). For example, findings from the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey show that boys aged 5 to 10 tended to have higher levels of emotional problems than girls, while girls aged 16 to 19 were more likely to have emotional problems. Emotional problems include feeling worried, being unhappy, feeling nervous and having a lack of confidence. Levels of behavioural problems were higher for boys than for girls. The findings suggest this may be a new trend and should be considered in service provision. Behavioural problems include inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity and defiant, aggressive or criminal behaviour (Bunting et al., 2020). Behavioural problems are likely to develop earlier in childhood than emotional problems (Kessler et al., 2007).

Gutman et al. (2015) note that girls may internalise their behaviour and become depressed, hypersensitive etc. A range of references, including PwC (2015), cite eating disorders as a symptom of mental health issues. This is much more prevalent in girls, with over 90% of young people diagnosed being female. In contrast, boys often 'act out' and display aggressive or antisocial behaviour.



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The post-primary years are a critical time for pupils in exploring and developing their understanding of themselves and the formation of their identity. For all pupils, this time of formative psychological development impacts on their EHWB and their future as adults. However, the research shows that this a particularly difficult time for pupils who identify their sexual orientation to be other than heterosexual or their gender identity to be different to the one assigned at birth (Cara Friend, 2016; DE, 2017).

A 2016 survey of 260 LGBT young people found that 68% were bullied, while 25% had attempted suicide, 61% had thought about suicide, and 72% experienced negative attitudes from teachers or school staff because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation (Cara Friend, 2016). These findings were supported by evidence from a Department of Education report based on responses from 532 LGBT young people. Key findings included that LGBT issues were largely absent from their education, two-thirds of LGBT young people did not feel welcomed or valued in their post-primary school and around 50% were bullied. A majority of both LGB respondents (61.3%) and transgender respondents (73.8%) reported that their experiences impacted negatively on their emotional wellbeing. The research highlights the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ pupils to the risk of developing EHWB problems.

Young People Living in Poverty and in Deprived Areas

A large number of children, 110,000 (25%), in Northern Ireland live in relative income poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018). Many of these children will be from deprived areas. Children living in poverty may suffer from poor diet and nutrition, and this affects their physical health and their ability to concentrate in school. Poverty can also impact negatively on children within their social groups and friendships because they can't afford to buy clothes and items such as mobile phones, and to participate in peer group activities that are required to 'fit in' (The Children's Society, 2020).

Young people living in the most deprived areas are at greater risk of developing certain types of mental health problems than those living in the least deprived areas. For example, the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey (Bunting et al., 2020) indicated that emotional and behavioural problems and mood and anxiety disorders tended to be higher in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived. Young people (59.9%) in the most deprived areas were also more likely to have experienced adverse childhood experiences, compared to those in the least deprived areas (36.0%). Rates of parents'/carers' mental health problems were higher in the most deprived areas (31.9%), compared to those in the least deprived areas (17.2%). Young people from deprived areas with parents/carers who have mental health problems are more at risk of developing mental health problems than those in the least deprived areas (ibid.).

The Internet and Social Media

The prolonged engagement online and inappropriate use of social media can impact on EHWB and contribute to a range of mental health problems. The amount of time children and young people spend online and using social media can also impact on their physical health due to reduced physical activity, lack of and disrupted sleep, and eye strain. They are also exposed to online risks including unsuitable content, online grooming, cyberbullying and the pressure to achieve a certain lifestyle or body image. Children and young people's engagement in social media may also lead to them having unrealistic expectations because they believe the claims of other users. They may also experience the fear of missing out (FOMO) because they are not using social media (Woods and Scott, 2016; UKCCIS, 2017).



Problematic use of social media is associated with a range of mental health problems, such as low self-esteem, hyperactivity, stress, anxiety, depression, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Boer et al., 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2017; Wartberg, 2020). The problematic use of social media is also likely to negatively impact on children and young people's relationships with their parents/carers and friends, on romantic relationships and on school functioning, learning and academic performance (Abbasi et al., 2019; Alt and Boniel-Nissim, 2018; Van Den Eijnden et al., 2018).

Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School

Research shows that children's EHWB can be affected by their experience of transition from primary to post-primary schools. This can be a stressful time for pupils and their parents/carers. Transition can have a negative impact on children's EHWB, associated with a lack of a sense of belonging, increased levels of depression, anxiety and a decline in their social and emotional health (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). Most pupils adjust well to their new situation, but some children are more vulnerable than others and struggle to cope with change. In particular, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, minority groups, newcomer children, and the travelling community may be more vulnerable at the transition stage of their education (Evangelou et al., 2008; Sutherland, 2010).

Young People in Vulnerable Groups

Research also shows that certain groups of young people are more vulnerable and at risk of developing mental health problems than others. These include:

- minority groups (Khan, 2016);
- newcomers (McMullan et al., 2020);
- traveller community (The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, 2018);
- LGBTQ+ community (Cara-Friend, 2016; DE, 2017);
- having a disability or special educational needs (Kelly et al., 2016);
- young carers (Barnardo's, 2017);
- young adults leaving the care system (Access all Areas, 2017);
- young offenders (NICCY, 2017); and
- young people affected by the Northern Ireland conflict (Fitzgerald et al., 2020).

Young People and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma

Some young people are affected by ACEs that are traumatic. Their experiences can cause physical and psychological stress reactions. This may result from a single event in their lives or from prolonged experiences of circumstances that can cause physical and emotional harm. Their experiences can have lifelong lasting effects on their EHWB (Bunting, 2018). Research shows a young person's brain development can be affected by traumatic experiences, which can negatively impact on their memory and behaviour, and their ability to regulate emotions, build relationships and learn, and has been associated with cancer, obesity, diabetes and heart disease (Maynard et al., 2019).

ACEs include:

- household mental illness;
- parental separation or divorce;
- household substance abuse;



- exposure to domestic violence;
- physical abuse;
- childhood sexual abuse;
- emotional, psychological or verbal abuse;
- neglect;
- household criminality;
- a member of the household being in prison;
- taking on adult responsibilities;
- death of parent/carer, close relative or friend;
- separation from family;
- serious childhood illness or injury; and
- affected by experiences of the Northern Ireland conflict.

The young person's experience of trauma may also be affected by their culture, gender, race, sexuality and history, and it can be worsened by social inequalities and social injustice, for example poverty and discrimination (Bunting et al., 2018; Sweeney et al., 2018).

The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People's Mental Health

Children and young people's experience of the global COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 when the Northern Ireland government put in place the first of a series of regulations that led to lockdowns and school closures. Children and young people's EHWB is likely to be impacted by the effects of COVID-19 and these restrictions. Children and young people with existing mental health problems face additional challenges. These include having to cope with a lack of structure and routine brought about by school closures, reduced opportunities for socialisation with family and friends, and limited access to health services (HSC, 2020).

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing may be affected by their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. They may have to cope with the loss of a loved one due to COVID-19 and not being able to spend time with elderly relatives in care homes. They may not be able to meet with friends and family. This can lead to loneliness and feelings of isolation. Children and young people may be impacted by their parents/carers losing jobs or working reduced hours and reduced family income.

Levels of domestic violence have increased since March 2020, which places more children and young people's safety and EHWB at risk. School closures place children and young people who are experiencing neglect and/or physical or sexual abuse at greater risk. They may be unable to leave an abusive household. Tensions may lead to more young people trying to leave and becoming homeless. This increases their risk of abuse and exploitation. School closures mean young carers do not get a break from caring responsibilities (ibid.). It is anticipated that these factors are likely to affect children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Young People's Concerns about Their Mental Health

Young people's concerns about their mental health have been captured in a number of research reports. These include the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey (Bunting et al., 2020), the Elephant in the Room Report (NIYF, 2020), the Education Authority Regional Assessment of Need (Education Authority Youth Service, 2018) and NICCY Your Voice Matters (NICCY, 2015).



Figure 1 illustrates young people's concerns about their mental health based on the above reports.



Figure 1: Young People's Concerns about Their Mental Health



Stigma

Stigma is often cited in the research as one of the main reasons why young people are reluctant to talk openly about their EHWB concerns (NCB, 2019; NICCY, 2017). The Elephant in the Room Report (NIYF, 2020) also highlighted stigma as the main reason why they felt unable to talk about mental health problems. Young people commented about feeling ashamed and embarrassed, not wanting to be judged or treated differently and that adults may not take their views seriously. Three other points schools should consider in relation to young people’s EHWB were:

- Conversations about mental health are often led by adults, which narrows the discussion and inhibits young people’s participation.
- Young people don’t know how to talk about mental health problems.
- Young people have not been given the space to help transform how mental health is talked about and viewed.

Developing a Whole-Child, Whole-School, Whole-Community Approach to Support Wellbeing for All

This guidance is intended to support schools to develop and implement a whole-child, whole-school, whole-community approach to support EHWB for all (DE and DH, 2021).

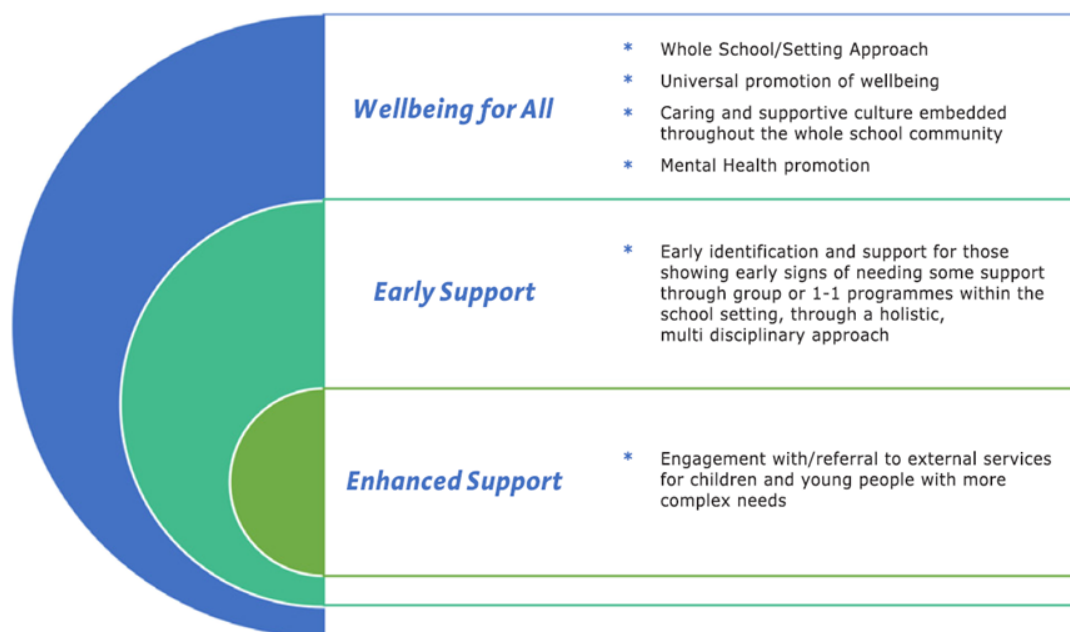


Figure 2: Model of Support

(Source DE and DH p. 10, 2021)

Wellbeing for All: A Whole-School Approach

The research shows the most effective way to improve pupils’ EHWB is through an integrated child-centred, whole-school approach to the development of the child as a whole (Connolly et al., 2011; Durlak et al., 2011; PHE, 2014; PHE, 2015; NCB, 2015; Weare, 2017).



This includes:

- the universal promotion of wellbeing and mental health through child-centred provision;
- the early identification of and support for pupils with EHWB concerns; and
- enhanced support for pupils with more complex needs.

A whole-school approach involves all aspects of school life. It involves senior leaders, all staff, pupils, parents/carers, school governors, professionals from other agencies and the wider community being committed and working collaboratively to support pupils' EHWB. **It is also important that a school's approach to EHWB ensures inclusion, equality, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity and is non-stigmatising.**

Children and Young People's Rights and Their EHWB

This guidance is aligned to the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework (DE and DH, 2021) and supports the Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Strategy 2019–2029 (DE, 2019). Both of which emphasise the importance of children and young people's rights in relation to EHWB. We therefore recommend that schools adopt a children's rights-based approach to EHWB. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) main articles, which contribute to ensuring the EHWB of children and young people, are outlined in Figure 3.

UNCRC

- **Article 3:** In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- **Article 6:** Children have a right to survive and develop healthily.
- **Article 12:** Children have a right to have their views sought, listened to and acted upon.
- **Article 19:** Children have a right to protection from all violence, including physical and emotional.
- **Article 23:** Children with mental or physical disabilities should enjoy a full and decent life.
- **Article 24:** Children have a right to good quality health and social care.
- **Article 29:** Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

Figure 3: UNCRC Rights to Ensure Children and Young People's EHWB

Trauma-Informed Practice

This guidance recommends a whole-school approach to EHWB supported by Trauma-Informed Practice. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful experiences that occur during a young person's childhood and affect their living environment (Hardcastle et al., 2018). Living in a situation where they are exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence or neglect or in a home where there is substance abuse can affect a young person's EHWB. The impact can last into adulthood. ACEs are associated with poorer outcomes for these young people in terms of educational attainment, EHWB, employment, criminality and breakdown of families (Bunting et al., 2018; 2019). Although, it should also be recognised that not all young people who experience childhood adversity will inevitably develop enduring mental health conditions.



While the effects of childhood traumatic experiences are unique to the individual, they can be mediated by a range of factors, including building the pupil's resilience and their ability to cope with the effects of adversity.

Trauma-Informed Practice is a way of supporting young people who have suffered from trauma caused by adverse childhood experiences. It aims to create recovery pathways for pupils who have experienced trauma, while seeking to prevent the possibility of re-traumatisation. This is a whole-systems approach led by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, which is being implemented across a range of children and young people's services including post-primary schools. It supports existing school safeguarding policies, protections and measures for vulnerable pupils.

Trauma-Informed Practice is about enabling teachers to provide trauma-informed care for their pupils. Trauma-Informed Practice is a way to:

- develop staff understanding of how ACEs can cause trauma in a pupil's life;
- develop staff understanding of how these adversities can impact on the pupil's development and emotional and behavioural responses;
- support the early identification of pupil EHWB needs;
- support early intervention and support by bridging the gap through understanding of learning and behaviour; and
- identify and use SEL strategies to develop the pupil's resilience to cope with adversity.

Nurture Approaches

Complementary to Trauma-Informed Practice, adopting a nurturing approach in schools provides enriching and restorative experiences for children and young people whose social and emotional development may have been disrupted by trauma, loss and/or change. The approach recognises that relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing and that all educational settings have a role to play in establishing the positive relationships that are required to promote healthy social and emotional development. These relationships should be reliable, predictable and consistent, where possible.

The six guiding principles of nurture are presented as values that can help provide children with the best start in education, focusing on safety, understanding, wellbeing and inclusion. The six nurture principles are:

1. learning is understood developmentally;
2. the classroom offers a secure base;
3. the importance of nurture for wellbeing and self-esteem;
4. language is a vital means of communication;
5. all behaviour is communication; and
6. the importance of transition in children's lives.

Within a nurturing environment, staff are deliberate in showing pupils that they are valued, thought about and held in positive regard. By embedding the principles of nurture and Trauma-Informed Practice within the school culture, pupils will be more able to thrive, learn and achieve.



Benefits of a Whole-School Approach to EHWB

The research shows the benefits of a whole-school approach to EHWB include:

- improvements in motivation, learning and academic attainment;
- increased pupil wellbeing, happiness and sense of purpose;
- the development of pupils' social and emotional competencies and resilience;
- the reduction and prevention of mental health problems such as anxiety, stress and depression;
- improved pupil behaviour and reduced risk-taking behaviour;
- improvements in sense of connectedness and sense of belonging to the school; and
- increased staff wellbeing, reduced stress and improved performance.

(EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, 2019; NCB, 2015; Durlak et al., 2011; Goldberg et al., 2019; Weare, 2017)

Eight Principles of Whole-School EHWB

This guidance is founded on eight principles, as illustrated in Figure 4, and underpinned by UNCRC Articles 3, 6, 12, 19, 23, 24 and 29.



Figure 4: Eight Principles of Whole-School EHWB



1 Children's Rights-Based, Child-Centred Provision

Child-centred provision is underpinned by UNCRC articles related to EHWB. The school offers a range of well-planned and connected activities, programmes and services to promote, support and improve the EHWB of all pupils. This includes the early identification of pupil needs, providing early intervention and targeted and enhanced support, and monitoring impact.

2 Staff EHWB

The school encourages and promotes self-care and a work–life balance. Staff feel valued, supported and have a sense of belonging. Staff can access a range of school EHWB support services and participate in activities that support their EHWB. Staff are encouraged to talk openly about their EHWB concerns and know that they will be listened to and supported. Staff have access to a comfortable physical space to take time out. Staff have regular opportunities to suggest ways the school could improve their EHWB.

3 Effective Leadership

School leaders work collaboratively with staff, parents/carers, pupils, school governors and professionals from other agencies to promote, support and improve pupil and staff EHWB. They provide clear vision and strategic direction for the whole-school approach to pupil and staff EHWB. They ensure EHWB is promoted and supported in school policies and in whole-school practice and that it is based on inclusion, equality, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity and is non-stigmatising. School leaders ensure EHWB is part of the school self-evaluation and development planning cycle and use these processes to improve EHWB throughout the school.

4 School Ethos

The school provides a safe, nurturing environment that promotes children's rights and pupil and staff EHWB. The ethos promotes inclusion, building good relationships and a sense of belonging, and encourages open conversations about EHWB. All forms of discrimination and stigma around mental health are challenged. Pupils and staff feel valued and supported.

5 Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is valued and promoted in all aspects of school life. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and feelings. They are listened to and taken seriously. Pupils are involved in school decision-making processes, especially in relation to their EHWB.

6 Curriculum Provision and Teaching and Learning

The EHWB of all pupils is promoted, supported and improved through all curriculum subjects, with strong connections to other school components of EHWB provision. The curriculum promotes pupil voice. Pupils learn about the importance of EHWB and their rights to EHWB. They develop the capacity to improve their EHWB by building relationships and developing knowledge, understanding, social and emotional competencies, and resilience.

7 Staff Professional Learning

The school builds staff confidence and capacity to promote pupil EHWB and their own EHWB. The school offers a range of quality training to meet the individual needs of staff. The continuing professional development (CPD) programme is regularly reviewed and updated in response to educational changes and pupil needs.



8 Engaging with Parents/Carers, External Agencies and the Wider Community

The school builds good relationships with and involves parents/carers, and works collaboratively with external agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the wider community to promote, support and improve pupil and staff EHWB.

School Self-Evaluation and Development Planning

The eight principles in this guidance provide a framework for a whole-school approach to EHWB. The principles can be used as part of the school's self-evaluation and development planning. The inclusion of EHWB in the School Development Plan is a statutory requirement (DE, 2010). Within this broader context, schools should also focus on evaluating and developing a whole-school approach to SEL (see CCEA SEL guidance).

Points for Consideration

There are a number of key points that schools should consider when planning their approach to EHWB. These include:

- developing and using a shared language and understanding of EHWB and SEL;
- raising awareness of children's rights in relation to EHWB;
- ensuring the EHWB of pupils is underpinned by children's rights (UNCRC);
- developing a whole-school approach to SEL that promotes equality and diversity, meets the needs of all pupils and takes steps to meet the needs of pupils in vulnerable groups;
- developing a shared understanding of how SEL can improve pupils' EHWB and build resilience;
- addressing stigma associated with mental health by promoting a positive culture of wellbeing, encouraging openness and wider understanding when talking about mental health and challenging negative attitudes;
- promoting pupil voice and providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision-making processes around EHWB;
- supporting staff wellbeing;
- developing and building collaborative partnerships with professionals in other agencies;
- having a policy and procedures in place on early identification and support of pupils with social, behavioural, emotional and wellbeing difficulties (SBEW) in line with revised SEN classifications under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016;
- establishing good pastoral structures, for example:
 - continuity in the staff members available to provide pupils with support;
 - awareness of individual pupils' language and communication skills and ability to articulate issues; and
 - awareness of cultural diversity;
- maintaining a supportive, safe and nurturing environment that:
 - is welcoming and pleasant;
 - fosters positive whole-school relationships;
 - makes everyone feel valued; and
 - uses positive classroom management strategies;
- providing a range of extracurricular activities;



- promoting a preventative curriculum that includes flexible, skills-based personal development programmes;
- having robust procedures to monitor trends in pupil behaviour, assessment, pastoral and attendance data for the purpose of identifying EHWB issues;
- planning for tailored interventions such as:
 - access to counselling;
 - music and art therapy;
 - sensory regulation;
 - reasonable adjustments to the school timetable; and
 - time-out cards;
- using mentors and buddies to promote emotional wellbeing;
- having mental health ambassadors to train pupils in mental health first aid;
- considering the appointment of a wellbeing or inclusion co-ordinator, family support worker or youth worker;
- using staff training opportunities to build capacity, including sharing effective practice within Area Learning Communities;
- training staff in Trauma-Informed Practice to raise their awareness of how trauma and adverse childhood experiences can affect pupils and to support teachers to identify pupils with potential EHWB issues; and
- training staff on teaching SEL.

Planning: Questions to Consider

1. How will EHWB provision address UNCRC Articles 3, 6, 12, 19, 23, 24 and 29?
2. Are there other UNCRC articles that could be addressed?
3. What criteria will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the whole-school approach to EHWB and component parts?
4. How will pupils and parents/carers be involved?
5. How will you assess the impact of the school's EHWB programme and component parts on pupils, staff and the wider community?
6. What are other schools doing to support pupil and staff EHWB?
7. What other bodies/agencies could contribute?
8. How will self-evaluation, planning, development and implementation of a whole-school approach to EHWB and its purpose be communicated to staff, pupils, parents/carers, the Board of Governors and other key stakeholders?
9. What will be the key messages?
10. Who will be responsible for leading the overall evaluation, development and implementation of the whole-school EHWB programme?
11. Who will be responsible for leading and developing the whole-school approach to SEL?
12. Who will lead and who will be involved in each of the self-evaluation and development stages? What will be their roles and responsibilities?
13. Who should be consulted? When should they be consulted? How will they be consulted?
14. What resources are required? Are there associated costs, such as financial and staff time?



A Model for Self-Evaluation and Development Planning

Schools can use this guidance to highlight areas of EHWB for development and improvement. Schools should consider implementing SEL as part of their EHWB provision (see CCEA SEL guidance). Schools that choose to implement SEL may find it practical to establish a subgroup of staff, led by a senior leader, to work alongside the main team leading self-evaluation and development planning of EHWB. Further information on this is provided in the SEL guidance.

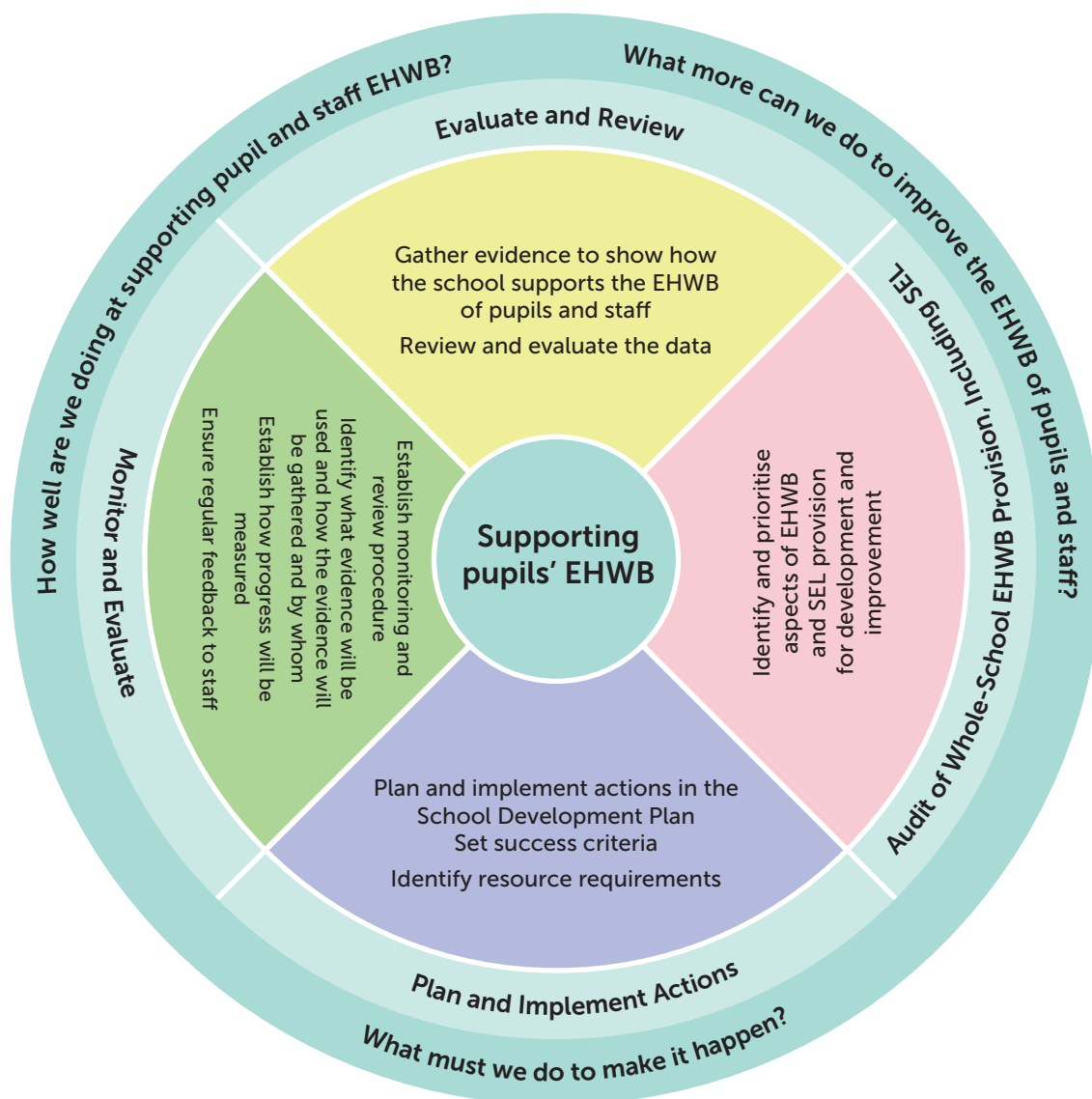


Figure 5: School Self-Evaluation and Development Planning Cycle

Evaluate and Review

The evaluate and review stage involves gathering evidence from a range of sources to provide the overall picture of the school's approach to supporting the EHWB of pupils and staff. Schools can use a triangulation approach to evaluate evidence. This is a common approach used in research. It involves analysing evidence from two or more different methods and sources. This helps to avoid bias and enhances the credibility of school evaluation.

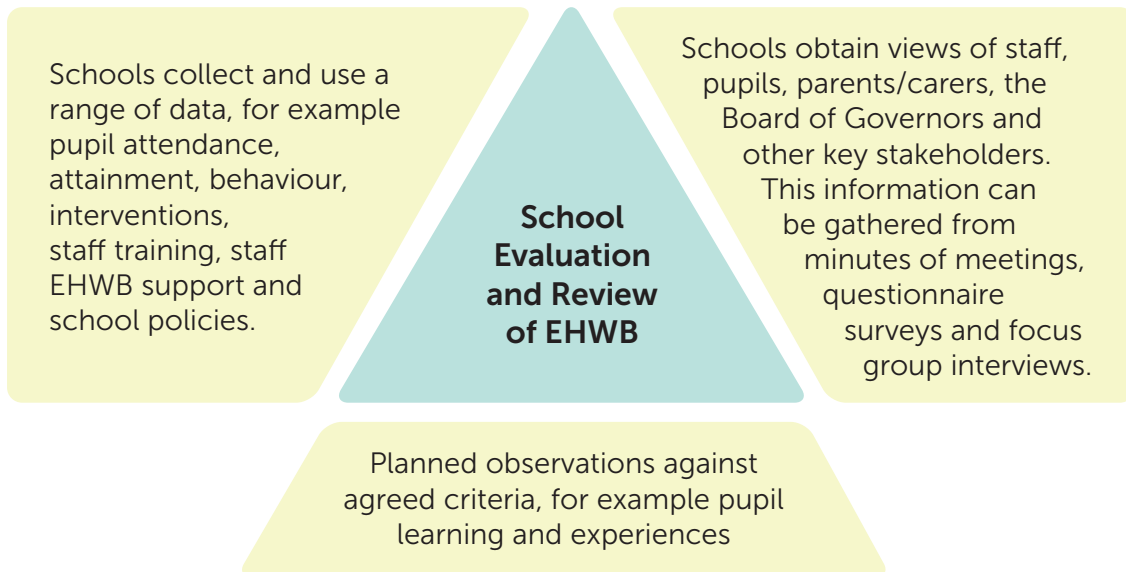


Figure 6: School Evaluation and Review, Gathering and Analysing Data

Evaluation and Review: Questions to Consider

1. What research questions will be used to inform your evaluation?
2. What data will be collected?
3. Are there any gaps in the data that need to be addressed? If so, how will this be done?
4. How will the data be analysed?
5. How will the outcomes be communicated and to whom and when?

Conduct an EHWB Audit

Schools can conduct an EHWB audit considering the eight principles in this guidance. Alternatively, schools can develop their own audit tool or use the one provided by the Department of Education, which is available on the [Self-Assessment Audit Tool – Information and Questionnaires](#) page.

Schools that choose to implement SEL will need to do a separate audit of SEL across subjects and other provision.

Plan and Implement Actions

From the audit, schools will have identified areas to develop and can use the development planning process to implement and monitor actions against deadlines. At this point, schools should consider:

- the intended impact in terms of outcomes they hope to achieve for pupils, parents/carers, staff, the school and the wider community as a result of their intervention;
- how impact will be assessed;
- monitoring and evaluation procedures; and
- setting success criteria.



Schools developing a school-wide approach to SEL will need to plan how SEL can be developed throughout its provision. Heads of Department and teachers will need time to plan and integrate SEL competencies into their schemes of work.

The Eight Principles: A Framework for Evaluation and Planning



This section illustrates the characteristics of effective practice for each of the eight principles. Schools can use this as a framework for self-evaluation and development planning. It will help schools to identify and prioritise areas for planning and development.

1. Children's Rights-Based, Child-Centred Provision

Children's rights-based, child-centred provision is about ensuring the interests of the child are paramount. Whole-school, child-centred provision should be underpinned by the UNCRC Articles 3, 6, 12, 19, 23, 24 and 29. This will help to ensure the EHWB needs of all pupils are met. Child-centred provision refers to the full range of services that the school provides to support pupils' EHWB. Provision should be research and evidence-based and contribute to addressing the risk factors discussed in Appendix 1. Whole-school, child-centred provision includes the curriculum (the preventative curriculum) and extracurricular provision, pastoral care, counselling, other initiatives and interventions, and targeted support. Schools are advised to take into account Department of Education safeguarding and child protection guidance.

The focus of the school's EHWB provision should be on promoting EHWB and preventing or reducing the likelihood of pupils developing EHWB problems. The programme should be based on identifying the risks to pupils, particularly those in vulnerable groups, and supporting pupils by having in place protective measures. Schools are advised to take into account CCEA guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education and supporting young people and families from the LGBTQ+ community and ensuring non-discrimination.

As the school's EHWB provision will include a number of components, it is important that they complement one another and are well connected, with the common purpose of supporting pupils' EHWB. The EHWB programme needs to be well managed and regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated. The above points should be reflected in relevant school policies and practice.



Schools should also have a mechanism and processes in place for:

- early identification of and support for pupils who show signs of distress about their EHWB;
- assessing their EHWB;
- providing age-appropriate interventions;
- monitoring the pupil's response to the interventions; and
- enhanced support and making referrals to outside agencies.

It is important for schools to build collaborative working partnerships with professionals from other agencies, for example the Education Authority Youth Service, Independent Counselling Service for Schools, NICCY, Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), School Nursing Service, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, PSNI, local councils and the Rainbow Project. The school can also benefit from working with NGOs with experience of dealing with young people and parents/carers, mental health and EHWB, such as Barnardo's, Save the Children, NSPCC, Northern Ireland Youth Forum and Parenting NI. Schools should consider how they measure the overall impact of their EHWB provision and of each of the components on pupils' EHWB (see Appendix 2: Quality Control – Using External Agencies/Programmes).

What Child-Centred Provision Might Look Like in a Post-Primary School

The following are examples based on current practice of child-centred provision in post-primary schools. They are not intended to cover all the types of provision a post-primary school can offer. Curriculum provision can be enhanced by making visible connections between different components and how they support pupil EHWB. This helps pupils to see how all the parts are connected to the whole and to understand the different ways they can improve their EHWB.

Pastoral Care

The school's pastoral care provision can support the EHWB of pupils by:

- maintaining close partnership with family/carers;
- monitoring pupil EHWB;
- promoting the importance of children's rights and their EHWB;
- promoting positive behaviour;
- providing structure and routine;
- providing a safe space for pupils;
- encouraging pupils to express their emotions and feelings, seek help and know who to go to within the school for help;
- signposting pupils to relevant helplines;
- providing pupils with access to free information, support and guidance in relation to their EHWB;
- responding to pupil EHWB needs;
- using form time and tutorials to teach Personal Development and the preventative curriculum;
- promoting good teacher–pupil relationships;
- monitoring attendance and flagging poor attendance;
- supporting pupils' personal development;
- ensuring at least one member of staff (form teacher or class teacher) knows each pupil and can identify changes in behaviour that may indicate possible distress about their EHWB;



- early identification of pupils experiencing EHWB distress;
- enabling teachers to monitor pupils' EHWB and identify potential risks and issues;
- providing opportunities for pupil emotional check-ins;
- developing pupils' SEL competencies; and
- building pupil resilience.

Special Educational Needs

The school's SEN provision can support the EHWB of pupils by:

- ensuring the needs of pupils with SEN are met;
- having regular conversations with pupils about their concerns;
- raising awareness of the rights and needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and the importance of their EHWB;
- highlighting the importance of early identification of pupils who are experiencing EHWB distress;
- providing advice and support to teachers on the early identification of pupil needs and on planning and developing ways to support them;
- assessing pupil EHWB needs;
- ensuring EHWB forms part of their Individual Education Plan;
- providing targeted support for pupils through a range of interventions;
- monitoring, reviewing and recording pupil progress and response to interventions;
- liaising with mothers, fathers, carers and extended family; and
- liaising with and making referrals to outside agencies that provide specialist support.

Extracurricular Clubs and Societies

Post-primary schools provide a range of extracurricular clubs, societies and activities. These cover a variety of areas, such as sport (individual and team sports – football, netball and hockey) music (school orchestra and learning to play a musical instrument) art (design, drama and dance) subject clubs (Science and Scripture Union), enterprise, fundraising, horticulture projects and youth clubs. Pupils' participation in extracurricular provision can benefit their EHWB in a number of ways:

- reduces stress – pupils can relax and do something they enjoy;
- may improve their physical health;
- builds their self-confidence and self-esteem;
- improves their motivation and persistence;
- helps pupils to develop a sense of purpose and belonging;
- encourages pupils to make effective use of their free time;
- supports pupils to develop their ability to build relationships and social networks;
- enables pupils to contribute to their local community;





- helps pupils to overcome challenges and setbacks in a supportive environment; and
- assists their applications to university and their future career prospects.

Research shows that pupil participation in extracurricular activities can improve academic attainment. It also increases the likelihood that pupils will continue in education beyond compulsory schooling and, as adults, they will show higher levels of civic participation. However, the research also suggests that pupils from the poorest households are much less likely to take part in any extracurricular activity, but particularly music and sport. The barriers to pupil participation include cost, lack of confidence and difficulties to access (Donnelly et al., 2019).

School Counselling

All pupils in post-primary schools have access to professional counselling provided by counsellors from an approved external service. Schools should have a clear referral mechanism and process in place for counselling that is shared with pupils and parents/carers. Parents/Carers and pupils need to be aware that they can also request pupil counselling and, under the normal process, parents/carers should be advised why their child is being considered for counselling, what this will involve, the likely duration and expected outcomes.

The benefits of counselling pupils include:

- Pupils have someone to discuss their problems with and who will listen to and support them.
- It can help young people deal with issues and events in their life that can impact on EHWP, for example parental separation.
- Early intervention for issues such as anxiety may prevent further mental health issues developing and can offer pupils the tools to recognise when they are experiencing difficulties and coping strategies to manage their emotions and stress.
- It helps pupils to manage their behaviour.
- It helps pupils to improve their learning.

(DfE, 2016; Gronholm et al., 2018; Young Minds, 2020)

Peer Support

Peer support involves pupils supporting their peers by sharing their knowledge and experience and providing practical help. Peer support includes one-to-one, face-to-face or online support and face-to-face peer-led groups. Many post-primary schools in Northern Ireland have peer-support programmes in place. These include mentoring, buddying, prefect teams assigned to junior classes and pupil pastoral care teams (NCB, 2019).

An evaluation of peer-support programmes in schools in England highlights the potential of peer support as an effective way to support pupils' EHWP (DfE, 2020; NESTA, 2013). Although the evidence of the overall effectiveness of peer-support programmes is mixed, some programmes have reported benefits to supporting young people, including:

- increased happiness or wellbeing;
- improved self-esteem, confidence and emotional resilience;
- improved relationships/reduction in friendship problems; and
- improved social skills or school behaviour.

(Coleman et al., 2017)



Research suggests peer-support programmes are more likely to be effective under the following conditions:

- the support of senior leadership;
- having a member of staff with overall responsibility for managing and supervising the peer-support programme;
- well planned and structured and linked to school aims/objectives and to whole-school approach to EHWP with clear outcomes;
- having a dedicated physical space for peer support;
- whole-school awareness of peer-support programme;
- training for staff and pupils participating in peer support;
- mentors and mentees well matched;
- a supportive professional network, including colleagues with experience regarding mental health, SEN and behaviour support;
- empowering pupils to lead and manage – pupils should participate in the design and delivery of the programme;
- establishing and managing expectations for the peer mentor role – pupils should be aware of their responsibilities in this role, particularly the importance of confidentiality and anonymity;
- recognising and rewarding mentors for their contribution to the programme; and
- monitoring, review and evaluation process in place.

(Coleman et al., 2017; DfE, 2020)

Peer-support programmes could be a good way of developing pupils' SEL competencies and the knowledge and understanding they need to safeguard and improve their own EHWP and that of their peers (Coleman et al., 2017; DfE, 2020). Schools would need to consider meeting the conditions for effective peer support and ensure the peer-support programme complies with child protection and safeguarding policies.



An EHWB peer-support programme could include developing pupils' understanding about the UNCRC and EHWB-related rights. This could also be linked to the Rights Respecting Schools Award scheme and contribute to promoting pupil voice. Schools could work collaboratively with an external agency, for example the Education Authority Youth Service or an NGO with relevant experience, to develop a peer-support programme to support pupil EHWB. This might include general training for staff and pupils on, for example:

- communication and active listening;
- dealing with sensitive issues;
- ensuring a non-judgemental attitude;
- knowing limits of expertise and when to refer;
- confidentiality and ethical issues; and
- safeguarding and child protection issues.

More specific training needs would depend on the purpose of the peer-support programme and could be addressed at the planning stage. Possible areas for peer support include five steps to wellbeing, mindfulness, building resilience and Rights Respecting Schools.

Building Pupil Resilience

Please also see the CCEA SEL guidance; it illustrates how strategies can be used to develop SEL competencies that build pupil resilience. Building pupils' resilience is commonly cited in policy and research as one of the main ways to support pupils' EHWB (NCB, 2020). While there are various definitions of resilience, they typically include reference to:

- being able to cope;
- overcoming adversity;
- bouncing back;
- developing good habits; and
- developing adaptive responses.

Research shows that building pupils' resilience is particularly beneficial for vulnerable pupils, including those who have had traumatic and adverse childhood experiences, and helps to reduce risk-taking behaviour, improve academic performance and overall wellbeing (Bunting et al., 2018; NCB, 2020). However, building resilience extends beyond the school and into the community. It will benefit from community support and involve expertise from other agencies to support Trauma-Informed Practice. Building resilience should also involve parents/carers and may include setting up support groups for parents/carers to help them develop their child's resilience. This could be part of the school's child-centred provision and be underpinned by children rights.

The research identifies nine factors that contribute to building pupils' resilience (NCB, 2020). Teachers can use the SEL Competency Framework, strategies and activities to develop the SEL competencies associated with most of these factors. The nine factors are outlined below, along with how schools can contribute to each:



1 Young people have at least one stable and committed relationship

The presence of a supportive adult within a school can provide a first step towards building pupils' resilience (Green et al., 2007); usually, this will be the pupils' form tutor. As pupils move through the school, particularly at post-16, it might be a subject teacher or an enrichment teacher. Learners with SEN may find this relationship in their classroom teacher or SENCo. Vulnerable pupils and pupils with ACEs might have a strong relationship with a pastoral vice principal or the school counsellor. Teachers can help pupils to develop their understanding of the importance of having healthy, respectful relationships through the school ethos, Personal Development and pastoral care. Teachers can use SEL strategies to support pupils to develop the competencies required for building and maintaining relationships.

2 Basic needs are met

The school can help to meet pupils' basic needs by providing them with a safe and secure space. The school pastoral care system supports their personal development and EHWP, while safeguarding and child protection policies and practices ensure their safety and care. Teachers and pupils can raise concerns about their safety and EHWP. The school can draw on partner agencies to provide additional support if required. Pupils are encouraged to ask for help and know who to go to in school for help.

3 Develop physical health

Pupils develop their understanding of the importance of physical health, including diet and nutrition and how to develop a healthy lifestyle, through Personal Development, Home Economics and Physical Education. Pupils develop their physical health by participating in physical activities and sport during Physical Education and through organised extracurricular sports and activities. These subjects also provide opportunities for pupils to develop a range of SEL competencies.

4 Building self-efficacy

This is the pupil's belief in their own ability to achieve success. Teachers can build pupils' self-efficacy by providing them with opportunities to develop SEL competencies, such as recognising their strengths, limitations and potential, valuing themselves for who they are, confidently communicating views and playing an active part in school life. Teachers can also do this by genuinely acknowledging the pupil's effort, work and achievement.

5 Develop strong executive function and self-regulation

These competencies help pupils to recognise and respond to stress and to realise that stress can be managed. Teachers can use the SEL Competency Framework, strategies and activities to develop pupils' self-management competencies. These include planning, organising work, coping strategies, and self-awareness and social awareness competencies that focus on developing the pupil's competency to identify and manage their emotions.

6 Building optimism and hope

It can often be quite difficult for some pupils to be optimistic and hopeful, especially when they have experienced adversity or trauma. However, enabling pupils to develop an optimistic and hopeful outlook can help them to focus on the positive. This can help pupils to recognise that while past events/experiences can't be undone, they do not have to define their future and that there are solutions to their problems. Teachers can use SEL strategies to encourage pupils to self-reflect, think positively and take positive action.



7 Social connections with peers and community

Adolescence is a critical stage in a pupil's development. It is also a time when they need to make connections with peers and people in the wider community. Making connections with others is a way for pupils to build their support network and to develop their sense of belonging. Having a support network gives pupils a sense of security because they know there is someone they can go to if they need help. Some pupils may find making connections difficult; they may lack confidence or the relationship skills required to make connections. Teachers can support pupils to make connections by focusing on building their self-confidence and developing their relationship and social awareness competencies. Pupils also need to know about what makes a healthy, respectful relationship and be aware of the risks to their personal safety of making contact with people they do not know.

8 Develop a sense of purpose

Having a sense of purpose is what gives people a reason for getting up in the morning. However, some pupils may not have realised their sense of purpose. A sense of purpose provides the motivation to take action and to achieve goals and targets. Teachers can use the SEL Competency Framework to focus on developing pupils' sense of purpose by, for example, helping pupils to be self-aware, to recognise what they are good at, to think positively about their future and to make responsible decisions. Teachers can also use SEL strategies to encourage pupils to take positive action and to participate in school life and the wider community.

9 Support parents/carers in developing their own skills and resilience

Often parents/carers may be vulnerable and lack the capacity to help their children build resilience. As part of building a supportive relationship with parents/carers, schools could consider extending resilience training to the wider school community. This will, in turn, equip parents/carers to help their children more effectively.

Take Five Steps to Wellbeing

Take Five Steps to Wellbeing is a programme recommended by the Public Health Agency. Many post-primary schools are using the five steps model, which is supported by local Trusts. Table 1 shows the five steps to wellbeing and possible connections to other EHWP components. Teachers can encourage pupils to use this model and to develop the five steps into wellbeing habits. Teachers could also encourage pupils to keep a record of their actions in a wellbeing journal (see CCEA SEL guidance).



Table 1: Five Steps to Wellbeing and Connections

Five Steps to Wellbeing	Connections to Other EHWB Components
<p>1. Connect This encourages pupils to make connections and build relationships with family, friends and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Personal Development and learning about relationships • SEL Relationship and Social Awareness competencies
<p>2. Be active This encourages pupils to take some type of exercise that they enjoy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Physical health • Physical Education and extracurricular activities • Personal Development – benefits of healthy lifestyles and physical exercise • SEL – taking positive action • Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Management competencies
<p>3. Take notice This encourages pupils to be mindful and enjoy the moment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Mindfulness • SEL Self-Management and coping strategies
<p>4. Keep learning This encourages pupils to try and learn something new.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL – taking positive action • SEL Self-Awareness and Self-Management competencies
<p>5. Give This encourages pupils to take positive action to help others and to recognise the satisfaction gained from helping others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and Global Citizenship and contributing to the school, community and society • SEL – Self-Awareness and Social Awareness and developing empathy and compassion.

Mood Matters

Mood Matters is an evidence-based programme offered by Aware NI for 14 to 18-year-olds as part of their therapeutic provision for young people. It aims to develop the knowledge and skills young people require to maintain good mental health, build resilience and better cope with life's challenges. It is based on cognitive behavioural concepts and uses practical examples to show young people how to think and act positively. The programme content includes exploring what mental health is, mental health problems and mental illness, things that affect mental health, signs and symptoms of depression, looking after our mental health, sources of help and how Aware NI can help. Mood Matters also links to the Take Five Steps to Wellbeing programme and encourages young people to build Take Five into their daily lives. This programme connects well to the other components of child-centred provision and to the curriculum and Learning for Life and Work.



Mindfulness

Mindfulness-based interventions have become popular in many post-primary schools. Mindfulness involves teaching pupils techniques that help them to wilfully focus on the present and to be aware of, and to acknowledge and accept, their feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations. Techniques include body scans, breathing and breath awareness, and focusing on thoughts, feelings, sounds and body sensations. The research suggests that high quality, ongoing mindfulness training can improve the social and physical health and wellbeing of pupils. Pupils who are mindful are more likely to experience a greater sense of wellbeing and experience fewer negative emotions and stress (Bostic et al., 2015; Weare, 2012).

Research suggests that well-conducted mindfulness sessions can help pupils to:

- be calm;
- improve attention;
- regulate emotions;
- build confidence and self-esteem;
- manage and reduce stress and anxiety;
- manage behaviour;
- develop coping skills;
- build resilience;
- improve thinking and performance;
- enhance problem-solving; and
- develop friendships, kindness and compassion.



Mindfulness-based interventions can be used to complement SEL and the development of pupils' SEL competencies, including self-awareness, optimism, hope and compassion as a coping strategy. Mindfulness has been shown to be helpful for pupils with anxiety, depression and behavioural difficulties (Durlak et al., 2011; Weare, 2012).

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice encourages pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. It involves pupils who have been harmed to meet and have a conversation with the person responsible. It is based on the idea that the pupil who has been harmed conveys how they have been affected by the other's actions. It requires the person responsible to acknowledge how their actions harmed the other pupil and to take action to address this. Restorative practice focuses on resolving conflict by rebuilding and strengthening relationships. Restorative practice provides opportunities to develop SEL competencies such as self-reflection, recognising, identifying and managing emotions, listening with empathy, respecting the views of others, recognising the consequences of actions and building relationships. Research indicates restorative practice can create a more positive learning environment, with better attendance and fewer behaviour incidents (Hopkins, 2011; Warren and Hibben, 2020).

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award is a global initiative with hundreds of schools involved worldwide. Participating in the award scheme would be a good way to develop a children's rights-based whole-school approach to EHWP. The award scheme supports schools to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. The award is based on principles



of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. It recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's practice to improve wellbeing and help all children and young people realise their potential. One of the requirements at all levels is that every child in the school is aware of their rights and how the school is focused on delivering them. The award scheme is also supported by training and resources for teachers.

Research shows that participating in the award scheme improved pupils' knowledge about their ability to exercise their rights. Pupils said that knowing about their rights made them more able to demand them and to seek protection from abuse and violence. The award scheme improved pupils' sense of self-esteem and self-worth. It supported pupil engagement and developed their sense of belonging, and promoted pupil voice and a culture of respect across the school and community (UNICEF, 2020).

The scheme provides a range of opportunities for developing SEL competencies and links to Local and Global Citizenship, Active Citizenship and learning about the UNCRC. It is a structured programme, with audit and evaluation embedded; this information is valuable when mapping EHWB opportunities across the school.

Department of Education – iMatter Programme

School may find the materials provided for the [Department of Education iMatter Programme](#) useful for promoting resilient emotional health for all pupils. The programme provides a suite of homework diary inserts, leaflets and posters on topics of concern to young people, such as self-esteem, substance abuse, and coping with stress, worry and anxiety.

Education Authority Youth Service

The [Education Authority Youth Service](#) provides support for young people through a number of programmes.

Youth Online

This is an online platform for young people to stay in touch with youth workers, to have a chat or to let them know of any support they need. The website, available at www.youthonline.org.uk, includes a Stay Safe, Stay Well section that has information about coronavirus, staying safe online and healthy eating, and a Stay Engaged section with activities for young people on topics such as growth mindset, processing emotions, exercise and fitness, goal setting, building self-confidence, yoga and cooking skills.

Facilitating Life and Resilience Education (FLARE)

This is part of the Education Authority Youth Service's support, developed in partnership with the Public Health Agency. FLARE supports young people aged 11–25 and promotes positive mental health.

Assessing Pupil EHWB

As part of the school monitoring of EHWB, schools can assess pupils' EHWB through their own well-constructed surveys. The Department of Education iMatter programme provides EHWB questionnaires for pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, which are available on the Department of Education page [Self-Assessment Audit Tool – Information and Questionnaires](#).



Schools can also use validated EHWB measurement surveys. Schools can use this information to keep track of pupils' EHWB and for planning.

Early Support: Early Identification of Pupil Need, Targeted Support, Monitoring and Review

Schools need to have a mechanism and clear processes and pathways in place for the early identification, monitoring and referral of pupils with potential social, behavioural, emotional and wellbeing needs. These mechanisms and processes are usually well established in post-primary schools as part of their SEN provision and through their pastoral care system, supported by Child Protection, Safeguarding, Equality and Positive Behaviour policies.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, SEN team and Pastoral Leader can advise teachers on the above practices and processes and their contribution to individual support plans, in collaboration with internal services and external agencies. Teachers benefit from training on Trauma-Informed Practice, nurture and promoting positive behaviour alongside understanding of medical conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism, which can impact on a child's ability to learn. This raises their understanding and awareness of the risk factors to pupils' EHWB and of pupils who may be vulnerable to EHWB problems and helps them with the early identification of need.

The early identification of signs of a pupil's distress with their EHWB is important because timely support can be provided that may prevent problems developing (Weare, 2015). The pupil's presentation and behaviour can be monitored and assessed, and a support programme implemented as early as possible. Early identification should be an ongoing process, used to inform the planning of learning and support provision for the pupil (CCEA, 2014). In some cases, it may be obvious when a pupil is experiencing distress, for example when they have suffered a traumatic experience or bereavement and the school has been informed. However, in other instances it may be less evident, and issues of confidentiality and concern about the stigma associated with having EHWB needs may impede the pupil from coming forward and sharing their concerns.



Mechanisms and processes to support the early identification of need include:

- ensuring effective transfer of information from previous schools;
- working collaboratively with parents/carers, psychologists and other services;
- talking to pupils and their peers; and/or
- seeking feedback from teachers and others.

This helps to develop a holistic understanding of the young person's background, experience and level of need.

While understanding that only appropriately trained professionals can make a diagnosis of an EHWB problem, school staff are in a strong position to notice changes in a pupil's presentation, mood and behaviour, which may indicate that they are experiencing distress with their EHWB or at risk of developing a problem. School staff need to feel confident in this role and assured that they



are not missing anything important. This is supported within a climate that promotes inclusion and good communication across the school community, where relationships are valued, and pupils are encouraged and feel able to talk about their concerns to a trusted teacher or other adult.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, SEN team and Pastoral Leader can advise teachers on appropriate methods for observing and identifying pupils' EHWB needs. A useful starting point for teachers is to be empathetic, have an open conversation with the pupil and take their lead in what might be helpful for them. Other initial identification methods available to teachers are:

- observation in class, playground, lunchrooms, bus or other transport, school trips or extracurricular activities;
- awareness of responses or reactions to topics in Personal Development;
- contact time and check-in with pupils at registration and at the end of the school day;
- presentation and interactions during subject classes and assemblies;
- review of classwork or homework, particularly by those teachers with pastoral responsibility for a class group;
- noting of particular behaviours and patterns of behaviour over a period of time, for example general behaviour that is related to an activity or time of day or week, such as a reluctance to remove heavy clothing in front of others or lateness to school on a particular day each week;
- noting changes in behaviour or appearance; and/or
- noting any signs of distress or unusual reactions or behaviour.

When identifying a pupil who may have EHWB needs, the teacher should also make effective use of data by reviewing their patterns of attendance, attainment and behaviour. The teacher should speak with other teachers, including the form teacher who knows the pupil well, and discuss their concerns with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and/or Pastoral Leader. Where schools suspect a pupil is having EHWB difficulties, they should take timely action to provide support for the pupil. This should also involve discussions with the pupil and parents/carers. This provision should be offered and delivered with compassion and sensitivity.

The next stage may involve schools using a validated assessment tool to assess the pupil's EHWB needs. Two of the most commonly used in post-primary schools are:

- the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; and
- the Boxall Profile.

Schools can use the assessment information to plan and provide targeted support for the pupil. It is crucial that pupils are involved in helping to identify their needs and agreeing targets. The [Early Intervention Foundation Guidebook](#) lists over 100 interventions that have been evaluated for impact. These include SEL programmes.

It is also important that the pupil's response and progress with these interventions are regularly monitored and reviewed with pupil and parent/carer input and, if required, changes made. This information is useful when making a decision to make a referral for specialist support.



Enhanced Support

In most cases, pupils' EHWB needs can be met through schools' whole-school EHWB provision. However, some pupils may need additional help that requires specialist support from outside agencies. This involves making a referral to other agencies such as CAMHS, Education Welfare Services or Social Services (see Appendix 3: Links to External Agencies). When an external referral is made, it is important that the pupil remains connected to the school. The pupil should be at the centre of a co-ordinated support strategy that involves the school working collaboratively with the external agency, the pupil and their family to ensure their EHWB needs are met, minimise disruption and assist continuity.

Children's Rights-Based, Child-Centred Provision: Key Points for Effective Practice

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating and developing children's rights-based, child-centred provision.

1. The school's child-centred provision and practice should:
 - be informed by research and evidence;
 - promote the positive EHWB of all pupils;
 - be underpinned by UNCRC Articles 3, 6, 12, 19, 23, 24 and 29;
 - be inclusive, ensure equality and non-discrimination, and be non-stigmatising and supported by the Equality policy;
 - be based on Trauma-Informed Practice and nurture approaches – the needs of pupils in groups vulnerable to mental health problems and those with adverse childhood experiences are recognised and addressed;
 - recognise all behaviour as communication;
 - challenge negative attitudes and stigma about mental health; and
 - be preventative by reducing the likelihood of pupils developing social and emotional problems by assessing risks and putting in place protective measures.
2. The school's EHWB programme has clear aims and objectives. It identifies risks to pupil EHWB and how these are mitigated by protective measures and addressed in the school's policies and practices.
3. The school's EHWB programme is co-ordinated, coherent and integrated throughout all aspects of the school. This is evidenced through cross-curricular links and in school policies and demonstrated in practice.
4. The school uses a shared, child-friendly language that enables all those involved in school life to understand the importance of EHWB and SEL.
5. The school's pastoral care system ensures that at least one member of staff (form teacher or class teacher) knows each pupil and can identify changes in behaviour that may indicate possible distress about their EHWB.
6. Pupils' EHWB is regularly assessed and monitored, and the findings are used to inform developments to improve pupils' EHWB.
7. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' emotional literacy and supporting pupils to express their emotions and feelings.
8. Pupils are encouraged to seek help and know who to go to within the school for help.
9. Pupils are signposted to relevant helplines and have access to free information, support and guidance in relation to their EHWB, including the counselling and school nursing service.



Early Identification of Pupil Need, Targeted Support, Monitoring and Review: Key Points for Effective Practice

1. There is a mechanism and clear processes and pathways in place for the early identification, monitoring and referral of pupils with EHWB needs.
2. All staff are fully aware of the above and know who to contact for guidance and support.
3. Training is provided to ensure staff are aware of how adverse childhood experiences and trauma can affect pupils and of pupils in vulnerable groups at risk of EHWB problems.
4. All staff contribute to the early identification of pupils with EHWB needs.
5. The school works closely with pupils and their parents/carers.
6. Age-appropriate, targeted interventions are used to support individuals and groups of pupils with EHWB needs.
7. The school works collaboratively with external agencies to provide timely support or referrals for treatment.
8. Validated tools are used to assess pupils' EHWB and to assess the impact of interventions.
9. Interventions are regularly monitored and reviewed and, if required, changes made.
10. Data is used effectively so that changes in pupil patterns of attainment, attendance or behaviour are noted and acted on.

2. Staff EHWB: Key Points for Effective Practice

When staff have good levels of EHWB, they are more likely to feel motivated and engaged, cope well and be resilient. Conversely, low levels of staff EHWB are likely to negatively affect how they feel about themselves and their ability to cope. Poor EHWB can affect the physical and mental health of staff.

Ensuring staff wellbeing is essential to the success of a whole-school approach to EHWB. Senior leaders should consult with staff to obtain their views on how staff EHWB can be improved; this could include a confidential EHWB survey (Anna Freud, 2020; Education Support, 2020).

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating staff EHWB.

1. Senior leaders, school governors and members of the EHWB team are well informed about EHWB. They participate in EHWB training and share learning and practice with staff.
2. The school values compassionate leadership and promotes self-care and work-life balance.
3. Senior leaders model good working practice and encourage self-care and work-life balance.
4. There are clear policies, procedures and services in place to support the needs of all staff EHWB. These are regularly reviewed, and support pathways are clearly communicated to staff.
5. EHWB is a focus of staff performance review and staff development.





6. Staff EHWB is a regular item in team meetings.
7. Staff experiencing EHWB concerns know who to go to, are listened to and offered timely, practical support.
8. Staff are encouraged to avail of the Education Authority Health Well resource.
9. There is a comfortable physical space within the school where staff can take time out if required.
10. The school provides opportunities for staff to participate in social activities that are not work-related.
11. The school provides regular opportunities for staff feedback regarding EHWB. The school conducts regular staff EHWB surveys and acts on the information to further improve staff EHWB.
12. The school supports staff EHWB by offering staff sessions on, for example:
 - mindfulness;
 - yoga;
 - relaxation techniques and managing stress;
 - dealing with change; and/or
 - personal resilience.

3. Effective Leadership: Key Points for Effective Practice

Effective school leadership is one of the main characteristics of developing an effective whole-school approach to EHWB (Anna Freud, 2021a; Connolly et al., 2011; NCB, 2016). School leaders can use this guidance and other research to identify ways to build on and improve the school's current approach to EHWB. An important part of this will involve consultations with school governors, teachers, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders to gather their views on areas for improvement, development and implementation.

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating and developing leadership to support EHWB.

1. There is a named senior leadership team member with overall responsibility for EHWB. All staff are aware of this.
2. There is a named school governor with responsibility for and oversight of pupil and staff EHWB, including policy, practice, and monitoring EHWB impact and outcomes.
3. School leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction for the development of the school approach to EHWB.
4. Systems, structures and practices are in place for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the EHWB programme on a regular basis.
5. The school's approach to EHWB is based on inclusion, equality, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity, and is non-stigmatising and supported by the Equality policy.
6. The school's approach to EHWB is informed by evidence and research.
7. The school identifies and makes resources available to develop, implement and sustain the EHWB programme.
8. Support and training is provided for school governors on EHWB.



9. All school policies are regularly reviewed, and EHWB is clearly referenced and linked to related UNCRC articles.
10. There is an up-to-date EHWB policy.

4. School Ethos: Key Points for Effective Practice

The school ethos refers to the school's values, beliefs, attitudes and culture. These are pervasive and reflected in all aspects of school life, and play a significant role in supporting and promoting a children's rights-based approach to EHWB throughout the school (Connolly et al., 2011; Weare and Nind, 2011).

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating the school ethos to support EHWB.

1. The school provides a safe, welcoming environment that visibly promotes the importance of EHWB and encourages all those involved in school life to talk openly about EHWB issues and where asking for support is normal. Negative views and stigma about mental health are challenged.
2. Pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to raise concerns they may have about their EHWB and know who they can speak with.
3. The school ethos promotes SEL and children's rights and their importance to EHWB.
4. The school ethos fosters equality, respect, inclusiveness, connectedness, building relationships and pupils' sense of belonging.
5. Pupil voice is valued and promoted.
6. Positive behaviour is promoted, and pupils and staff understand the links between positive behaviour and EHWB.
7. The school ethos supports all pupils to be resilient and mentally healthy, through programmes including SEL and targeted support.
8. Safe spaces are designated for pupils outside the classroom where they can self-reflect.
9. Success is celebrated in all areas of school life through, for example, assemblies, displays, school social media and communication with parents/carers.
10. The importance of staff wellbeing is recognised and valued, and staff can talk openly about their EHWB and know they can access support if required.

5. Pupil Voice: Key Points for Effective Practice

The EHWB of pupils depends on them developing their sense of self-efficacy and taking positive action to improve their own EHWB (Connolly et al., 2011; NCB, 2015; NICCY, 2017). Schools can support pupils to do this by valuing and promoting pupil voice. This is underpinned by UNCRC Article 12 and their right to express their views, to be heard and to be taken seriously. Pupil voice is about providing genuine opportunities and making time for pupils to share their experiences, views and any concerns they may have about their EHWB. This involves commitment to embedding pupil participation in all aspects of school life and to creating the mechanisms and safe space for pupil voice.

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating pupil voice to support EHWB.



1. The school promotes and values pupil voice; this is reflected in the school's values, ethos, policy and practice with reference to UNCRC Article 12.
2. Pupil engagement and participation is embedded in all aspects of school life.
3. Regular, meaningful opportunities are provided and time allowed for all pupils to express their views in relation to their EHWB. They will be listened to and taken seriously and know that this is one of their children's rights.
4. All pupils will be heard, particularly those identified as being in vulnerable groups.
5. Communication and language barriers are addressed and, where appropriate, adjustments are made to enable pupils to communicate their views.
6. Pupils recognise their views are important and valued.
7. Pupils are involved in school decision-making processes that affect their EHWB.
8. Pupils are enabled to develop the confidence and capacity to express their views and concerns about their EHWB.
9. Pupils are invited to share their experiences of EHWB provision, including interventions and targeted support.
10. Pupils have opportunities to support one another's EHWB through, for example, peer support and mentoring.

6. Curriculum Provision and Teaching and Learning: Key Points for Effective Practice

There should be clear links between the school's curriculum provision and the other components of child-centred provision. These should be clear in policy and practice. This helps staff and pupils to see the relationships between EHWB components and presents EHWB in a more holistic way.

There is a core body of knowledge that pupils should be taught which will help them to better understand and to cope with some of the issues they may face in their daily lives and to help support their EHWB. This is mainly provided through the statutory Learning for Life and Work curriculum and Physical Education. Personal Development, in particular, gives specific attention to developing pupils' EHWB, health and safety, relationships, sexual identity, and the development of a sense of morality and values such as respect. Through Local and Global Citizenship, pupils learn about children and young people's rights and their importance to EHWB and make connections to the school and wider community. In Home Economics, pupils learn about healthy eating, diet and nutrition. Physical Education contributes to developing pupils' physical health by learning about the benefits of exercise and encouraging their participation in physical activities.

It is vital that a whole-school approach embeds EHWB in all aspects of school life – policy, practice, support structures, relationships, teaching and learning – and that it is not restricted to key subjects or conceived as an isolated subject.

It is also recommended that SEL is promoted through all subjects. Subjects should provide opportunities for developing pupils' SEL competencies and building resilience. These should be signposted in subject departmental policies and schemes of work, referenced to how they promote EHWB and UNCRC articles (see CCEA SEL guidance).



The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating curriculum provision and teaching and learning to support EHWB.

1. All subjects contribute to promoting the EHWB of all pupils.
2. EHWB curriculum provision meets the needs of pupils in vulnerable groups and those who have experienced childhood adversity and trauma.
3. The school curriculum provision should be strongly and visibly connected to the other components of child-centred EHWB provision, challenge stereotypes, encourage enquiry and promote equality for all.
4. All subjects promote pupils' SEL and provide opportunities for developing SEL competencies alongside subject knowledge, with a focus on developing resilience.
5. There is progression and continuity across the key stages in relation to developing SEL competencies.
6. The school supports development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the importance of EHWB and related children's rights, issues that affect them and how to improve their EHWB by meeting the Key Stages 3 and 4 minimum statutory requirements for Learning for Life and Work, and Physical Education. This includes physical health, for example physical activity, healthy eating, diet and nutrition, and safety such as identifying and managing risks.
7. Subject departmental policies, schemes of work and lesson plans should make reference to SEL and how subjects contribute to promoting pupil EHWB, referenced to the UNCRC.
8. Teaching and learning is based on using SEL strategies and enquiry-based active teaching and learning methods.
9. Pupil voice is promoted through a range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in their learning, to express their views and to help shape provision.
10. Assessment is used to support pupil learning and development of SEL competencies.



7. Staff Professional Learning: Key Points for Effective Practice

Providing training for staff will play an important part in helping to ensure the success of the children's rights-based whole-school approach to EHWB. At the planning stage, senior leaders could undertake an audit of EHWB across the school, involving all stakeholders and identifying strengths and areas for development. This could inform implementation/development plans and identification of staff training needs (and in consultation with staff, be followed by a staff survey to identify training needs). Staff CPD could be actioned in the School Development Plan and form part of longer-term strategy to support embedding EHWB into whole-school practice (Connolly et al., 2011; Goldberg et al., 2019; NCB, 2016).

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating staff CPD to support EHWB.

1. The school offers a range of quality training opportunities for all staff on EHWB.
2. Training is based on identifying and meeting the individual needs of all staff and in response to pupil need.
3. Criteria is used to select and commission external training.
4. Training is provided internally by qualified, experienced staff and externally through credible organisations by qualified, experienced staff.
5. All training is evaluated and the information used to assess impact and plan further training.
6. The school CPD programme is regularly reviewed.
7. The school provides a range of opportunities for the continuous professional development of staff in relation to supporting pupil EHWB and in line with evolving trends and needs. These may include training on:
 - how to develop pupils' EHWB;
 - teaching SEL and developing SEL competencies through their subjects, including how they can be used to build successful relationships and resilience;
 - Trauma-Informed Practice and nurture;
 - promoting positive behaviour;
 - being aware of and meeting the needs of pupils in vulnerable groups;
 - assessing and supporting pupil progress in SEL;
 - how to identify and assess the early signs of anxiety, emotional distress and behavioural problems displayed by pupils and to recognise when to seek support;
 - teaching sensitive and controversial issues, including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse;
 - Relationships and Sexuality Education;
 - gender and identity;
 - children and young people's rights and EHWB (UNCRC);
 - child protection;
 - safeguarding; and
 - equality and diversity.



8. Engaging with Parents/Carers, External Agencies and the Wider Community: Key Points for Effective Practice

The success of the whole-school approach to EHWB depends on the school building good relationships with parents/carers, external agencies and groups in the wider community (Anna Freud, 2021b; Connolly et al., 2011; NCB, 2016). When parents/carers are involved in their child's learning, EHWB and their school life, it can help to improve their learning and enhance their EHWB. When this is supported by a school ethos where parents/carers are encouraged to engage with the school and work together alongside teachers and support staff, their children have a better support network, and children's EHWB problems can be identified early and timely support provided to address their EHWB needs. Schools could also consider how they can help parent/carers who may lack the confidence or skill to support their child's EHWB. One way schools might do this is by setting up an EHWB programme for parents/carers.

Schools also need to work collaboratively with a range of external agencies, for example the Education Authority, School Nursing Service, Department of Education Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) and CAMHS (see Appendix 3: Links to External Agencies). School leaders and teachers will need to work with external agencies to agree and plan the details of EHWB service provision and ensure that it meets the needs of the pupils and that there are criteria and clear pathways for specialist support. Schools can also work with NGOs that provide a range of EHWB services, including training for teachers and resources.

Schools can involve the wider community in promoting and supporting EHWB. They can involve local people, community groups and employers in school activities and events. Schools can participate in community forums and engage with employers, with a focus on promoting EHWB. Schools should also consider opportunities presented through being part of Area Learning Communities and Shared Education to work collaboratively to develop and improve EHWB.

The following are key points for effective practice that schools should consider when evaluating their approach to engaging with parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community.

1. The school proactively seeks to engage and involve parents/carers in school life and provides regular opportunities for parents/carers to be involved, for example online forums/discussion, parents' evenings and school events.
2. The school provides regular opportunities for parents/carers to participate in school events that will improve their understanding of EHWB and support their parenting, for example parent workshops on EHWB and building parent resilience.
3. There are effective forums for parents/carers to express their views in relation to EHWB, for example Parent Teacher Association, Board of Governors, surveys and online forums.
4. Parents/Carers are actively encouraged to raise concerns about their child's EHWB and are aware of a range of mechanisms and who to speak with to express EHWB concerns.
5. Parents/Carers are involved in decisions on any support provided by the school about their child's EHWB.
6. Parents/Carers are regularly provided with accessible information about the school's EHWB policy or related EHWB policies and procedures and how to access support services.
7. Additional support is provided to parents/carers who require it, so that they can better support their own and their children's EHWB.



8. The school has good relationships and effectively collaborates with external agencies to plan and provide a range of specialist services to support staff and pupil EHWB.
9. The school works collaboratively with NGOs to develop and enhance its approach to EHWB.
10. The school builds good relationships with the local community and works collaboratively with community groups and employers to promote the importance of EHWB and support one another to improve EHWB.
11. The school has good relationships with other schools and effectively collaborates with partner schools through Area Learning Communities and Shared Education to develop and improve EHWB of staff and pupils.



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Useful Links

(In Order of Headings Occurrence in Guidance)

Nurture and Trauma-Informed Practice

[Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland – Training](#)

[Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland – Trauma Informed Practice](#)

[Bunting et al., \(2019\) – Developing trauma informed practice in Northern Ireland: Key messages](#)

[The Nurture Group Network – Nurture groups in Northern Ireland: A briefing from The Nurture Group Network](#)

[Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland – Help me make sense of the world: Understanding the impact of trauma on brain development](#)

[Early Intervention Foundation \(2017\) – Nurture Groups](#)

School Self-Evaluation and Development Planning

[Mentally Healthy Schools – Whole-school approach](#)

[CCEA – Curriculum Planning and Design: Principles of Curriculum Planning](#)

[CCEA – Curriculum Planning: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

[CCEA – Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties](#)

[Department of Education – Pupil health and wellbeing](#)

[ETI – Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Post-Primary](#)

[ETI – Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Education Other Than at School](#)

[ETI – An evaluation of the effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-Being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres](#)

[Department of Education – Self-Assessment Audit Tool – Information and Questionnaires](#)

[Emotionally Healthy Schools – Risk and protective factors](#)

[Department of Education – Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A guide for schools](#)



Child-Centred Provision

[Social Workers Toolbox – Heads Up! A toolkit of sessions to run with young people to promote mental health & emotional well-being](#)

[Pure Mental NI – About Us](#)

[Mental Health Foundation – Peer Education Project \(PEP\)](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Peer Support for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Programme](#)

[Anti-Bullying Alliance – Examples of peer support schemes](#)

[Boingboing – What can schools do?](#)

[Positive Psychology – Teaching Resilience in Schools and Fostering Resilient Learners](#)

[YoungMinds – Building Pupil Resilience in Schools](#)

[Public Health Agency – Take 5 steps to wellbeing](#)

[Belfast Strategic Partnership – Take 5 steps to wellbeing](#)

[Aware NI – Mood Matters for Young People](#)

[Mindfulness in Schools Project](#)

[Mindful – Best Practices for Bringing Mindfulness into Schools](#)

[Positive Psychology – Mindfulness in Education: 31+ Ways of Teaching Mindfulness in Schools](#)

[Restorative Justice Council – Best Practice Guidance for Restorative Practice](#)

[UNICEF – Rights Respecting Schools](#)

[CCEA – Key Stage 3 Local and Global Citizenship](#)

[Department of Education – iMatter Programme](#)

[Education Authority – Youth Services Support](#)

Assessing Pupil EHWB

[Department of Education – Self-Assessment Audit Tool – Information and Questionnaires \(iMatter EHWB questionnaires for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4\)](#)

[Public Health England – Measuring and monitoring children and young people’s mental wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges](#)

[Early Intervention Foundation – Guidebook](#)



[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Identify Pupils at Risk](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Using Measurement Tools to Understand Pupils’ Mental Health Needs: A Guide for Schools and Colleges](#)

Early Support: Early Identification of Pupil Need, Targeted Support, Monitoring and Review

[Department of Education – Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools](#)

[Emotionally Healthy Schools – Risk and protective factors](#)

[CCEA – Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties](#)

Staff EHWB

[Mentally Healthy Schools – Supporting staff wellbeing](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Supporting staff wellbeing in schools](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Ten steps towards school staff wellbeing](#)

[Barnardo’s Education Community – Staff Wellbeing](#)

[Education Authority – Health Well](#)

[Education Authority – Staff Health and Wellbeing Guidance Linked to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Mindful Teachers](#)

Effective Leadership

[Mentally Healthy Schools – Getting started – school leaders](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Leading Change](#)

[North Tyneside Council – Emotionally Healthy Schools Resource Pack](#)

Pupil Voice

[Mentally Healthy Schools – Pupil voice](#)

Curriculum Provision and Teaching and Learning

[CCEA – Wellbeing Hub](#)

[CCEA – Relationships and Sexuality Education \(RSE\)](#)

[CCEA – InSync](#)

[CCEA – Key Stage 3 Local and Global Citizenship](#)

[CCEA – Active Citizenship](#)



Engaging with Parents/Carers, External Agencies and the Wider Community

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Engage with all parents and carers](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Advice for parents and carers: Talking mental health with young people at secondary school](#)

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – Improve working and collaboration with mental health services](#)



EHWB Glossary

Terms	Meanings
Emotional Health and Wellbeing	The positive aspects of mental health, including emotional, psychological, social wellbeing, and physical health and safety
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma	<p>Childhood experiences that are traumatic and can cause physical and psychological emotional stress reactions</p> <p>These can be the result of a single event or from prolonged experiences and can have lifelong, lasting effects on EHWB.</p>
Executive Function Skills	Skills related to executive function include proficiency in adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, working memory, time management and organisation.
Nurture Approaches	These are based on attachment theory, which aims to address barriers to learning arising from pupils' unmet attachment needs. The approaches recognise that relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing and that all educational settings have a role to play in establishing the positive relationships that are required to promote healthy social and emotional development.
Preventative Curriculum	Part of the Northern Ireland schools' statutory curriculum provision that focuses on keeping safe messages and the proactive promotion of positive EHWB
Sensitive and Controversial Issues	Sensitive and controversial issues are those that can cause strong emotional responses in pupils. Pupils may hold strong and opposing views about these issues.
Resilience	This is the pupil's ability to overcome the challenges they face throughout their lives or the capacity to bounce back from adversity.
Restorative Practice	This is a strategy that focuses on resolving conflict by rebuilding and strengthening relationships. It involves pupils taking responsibility for their behaviour and engaging in conversation with the person affected by their behaviour to agree on actions to resolve the situation.



Terms	Meanings
Risk and Protective Factors	Risk factors – a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level associated with a higher likelihood of EHWB problem outcomes.
	Protective factors – a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family or community level associated with reducing the negative impact of a risk factor on EHWB problem outcomes.
Self-Efficacy	This is the pupil’s belief in their capabilities and their ability to perform in specific tasks.
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Sexual orientation describes a person’s physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person.
	Gender identity is a person’s inherent sense of being a boy, a man or male, or a girl, a woman or female, or an alternative gender. This may or may not correspond to a person’s sex assigned at birth.
School Ethos	The school’s values, beliefs, attitudes and culture
Social and Emotional Learning	The processes and methods used to develop pupils’ competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and decision-making
Trauma-Informed Practice	Trauma-Informed Practice recognises the correlation between trauma and poorer outcomes that may be caused by the direct impact of the trauma. It is a way of increasing the understanding of trauma and its impact through supporting the development of skills and knowledge throughout the workforce.
Vulnerable Groups	Young people from certain groups who are at greater risk of developing EHWB problems



Appendices

Appendix 1: Risk and Protective Factors

Table 1 shows examples of risk and protective factors. Schools should conduct their own analysis of risk and put in place their own protective measures to reduce the risk of pupils developing EHWB problems.

Table 1: Risk and Protective Factors

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Developmental delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • Special educational needs • Self-identity, in particular sexual orientation and gender identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills and sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Being resilient • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Capacity to reflect • Self-worth
In the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household mental illness • Parental separation or divorce • Separation from family • Household substance abuse • Exposure to domestic violence • Physical abuse • Childhood sexual abuse • Emotional, psychological or verbal abuse • Neglect • Household criminality • Death of parent or close relative or friend • Taking on adult responsibilities • Serious childhood illness or injury • Affected by experiences of the Northern Ireland conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent–child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationship



	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying, including online (cyber), homophobic and transgender • Discrimination • Sexual orientation and gender identity • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Peer pressure • Peer-on-peer abuse • Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole-school approach to developing SEL and promoting good EHWB • Effective Safeguarding and Child Protection, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies in place and practice monitored • Promotion of pupil voice • Pupils encouraged to talk openly about EHWB concerns • Good pupil–teacher/school relationships • Teachers, pupils and parents/ carers understand the importance of EHWB and know how to maintain and improve EHWB • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences and friendships • Staff are aware of pupils in vulnerable groups and how to support them • An effective early identification and help process • Staff trained and confident to meet pupil EHWB needs • School works collaboratively with external agencies • School involves and supports parents/carers • Staff EHWB is valued and promoted • Guidance and support for • pupils in vulnerable groups • Procedures to ensure staff are confident to raise concerns



	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Poverty • Homelessness • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs, paramilitaries and organised crime groups – trafficking, online abuse and sexual exploitation • Community conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • Opportunities to engage in the community • Access to a range of sport/leisure activities.



Appendix 2: Quality Control – Using External Agencies/Programmes

Actions	Questions to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify school needs Assess pupils' EHWB needs Audit of EHWB provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are priority areas of EHWB to be developed? What EHWB needs do pupils have? What works well currently and what is not going so well in our school?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and identify potential programmes Research evidence of impact See the EIF Guidebook and EEF Evaluations for evidence on some well-known programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of programme is required? What pupil needs will it meet? Can it be effectively implemented in the school? What are the potential impacts? What is the cost?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review sample activities Trial the programme with a class or group of pupils Get feedback – teachers, pupils and parents/carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the focus of the programmes? Do they meet our needs/priorities? What were the views of teachers, pupils and parents/carers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult and agree with staff what will be implemented Include as target in School Development Plan Consider the cost/time/staff required Monitor, review and evaluate impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What staff training is required? Is there a cost? How will cost be covered? Are there opportunities to work collaboratively with other schools? How long will it take to implement the programme? What staff training is required? How will impact be measured?

If the programme is being delivered by an external agency:

- ask the service provider to share their evidence base and credentials;
- agree the standards of service and expectations of delivery;
- ensure the provision is safe and effective;
- ensure the service will be delivered by qualified and experienced professionals who have undertaken appropriate checks;
- have clear aims:
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - Who will benefit?
 - How will you measure progress and impact?
- ensure the service provides value for money and is cost effective.

(Anna Freud, 2021)



Appendix 3: Links to External Agencies

Agency	Target Population	Role	Referral Route	Contact
Department of Education Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS)	All post-primary aged pupils in grant-aided and special schools	To provide independent one-to-one counselling within the pastoral framework of the school	Referred by staff and/or pupil self-referral	Department of Education – Counselling service in schools
School Nursing Service	All children aged 5–19	To provide a universal service to support health and wellbeing, including providing information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining health and development; emotional health and wellbeing; hearing/vision; immunisations; keeping safe; healthy lifestyles; and smoking/drugs/alcohol. 	The School Nursing Service will routinely visit schools for immunisations etc. Schools and families can contact the service directly for support and information. The School Nurse Helpline can be contacted on (028) 9083 1454 Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.	Via the relevant Health Trust Health and Social Care Online – HSC Structure



Agency	Target Population	Role	Referral Route	Contact
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	All young people under 18, with additional family support available	<p>CAMHS and Children’s Early Intervention Service (CEIS) offer support and advice to children and young people with mental health concerns. They are an integrated, specialist, community-based and multidisciplinary service staffed by trained professionals who have expertise in working with children, young people and their families with a range of difficulties.</p> <p>There are a wide range of interventions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment; • individual work with young people; • family-based work; • parenting groups; • group work with young people; • specialist psychological therapies; • family therapy; and • psychotherapy. 	<p>Referrals are made through GPs/Health and Social Care professionals/education professionals.</p> <p>Northern Health and Social Care Trust – How to make a referral</p> <p>Self-referrals are not accepted.</p>	<p>Via the relevant Health Trust</p> <p>Health and Social Care Online – HSC Structure</p>



Agency	Target Population	Role	Referral Route	Contact
<p>Educational Psychology Service</p>	<p>This team mainly works with pupils on the SEN register, but can be contacted for any pupil.</p>	<p>The service offers help to individual pupils and advice to schools about those pupils, for example pupils with autism spectrum disorder or pupils with dyslexia.</p> <p>Their process begins with observation and through assessment, feedback intervention and monitoring, the support is planned and tracked.</p> <p>When a pupil needs intervention beyond what a school can provide, the Educational Psychology Service can liaise with the Education Authority for further support.</p> <p>The service provides information to pupils and parents/carers. See the post-primary pupil leaflet About Your Educational Psychologist for more information.</p>	<p>Referral is through the school, usually by the SENCo, and parental permission is always required.</p>	<p>Via the Education Authority Educational Psychology Service</p>



Agency	Target Population	Role	Referral Route	Contact
Education Welfare Service (EWS)	<p>Any pupil whose attendance is below 85% and where there is a concern</p> <p>Three key programmes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miss School, Miss Out 2. School Age Mothers (SAM) 3. Looked After Children 	<p>EWS is a specialist education support service designed to help young people and their families engage fully with the education system.</p> <p>EWS officers support young people to stay in school/ return to school and, where appropriate, work with schools, families and other agencies to facilitate this.</p>	<p>The majority of referrals come from schools. Schools must provide evidence of interventions already taken.</p> <p>Referral can also be made by parents/carers, social workers or other agencies.</p> <p>Parents/carers are always informed of an EWS referral.</p>	<p>Contact details for each area can be accessed on the Education Authority page Education Welfare Service Contact Details.</p>
PSNI	<p>The PSNI works with all pupils as part of the preventative curriculum.</p> <p>Individual pupils may also become involved with the PSNI.</p>	<p>Through the PSNI's Citizenship and Safety Education Programme (CASE), the PSNI can visit schools and deliver programmes on a range of issues, for example fireworks, alcohol, drugs and farm safety.</p> <p>They can also visit schools in response to specific incidents to offer support and information.</p>	<p>PSNI CASE officers can be contacted by the school to organise visits etc.</p>	<p>PSNI – Working with our Young People</p>



Agency	Target Population	Role	Referral Route	Contact
Social Services	<p>All pupils within a school</p> <p>Pupils coming to a school who are on the 'at risk' register or are a Looked After Child will already have a named Social Services contact.</p>	<p>The role of Social Services is to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.</p> <p>They support schools by responding to new concerns. They also work in partnership with schools to support pupils who are considered vulnerable or at risk.</p>	<p>Referrals to Social Services from school are usually through the Pastoral Vice Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection.</p> <p>Parents/Carers and pupils can also contact Social Services with a concern.</p>	<p>Contact to Social Services is through the local gateway team. Details are available on the NI Direct page Gateway Service Teams contact details.</p>

