



Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales



Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being

Self-Evaluation Tool Guidance



Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Emotional and Mental Wellbeing in Schools.....	3
1.2	A whole school approach	4
2	AIM OF THE EVALUATION TOOL AND GUIDANCE:	4
2.1	How to use the tool	5
3	SECTION A: LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT.....	7
4	SECTION B: UNDERSTANDING AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY	13
5	SECTION C: INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT	20
6	SECTION D: WORKFORCE.....	25
7	SECTION E: RELATIONSHIPS	32
8	SECTION F: HELP AND SUPPORT	38
9	SECTION G: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	44
10	SECTION H: THE CURRICULUM	48

1 Introduction

Mental well-being affects everyone, but it may mean different things to different people; each person will have their own view on what it means to be mentally well. Mental well-being affects how people grow and develop; it influences how they cope with normal stresses of life, how they work and the way in which they participate in family and community life. Mental well-being is an important area of health and wellbeing as it determines both overall health and happiness. Although mental well-being is a difficult concept to grasp and is therefore often confused with mental ill health, it may be useful to think about it as a resource for everyday life. Individual mental well-being comprises a number of elements, which if impacted on negatively can throw individual mental wellbeing off balance and can lead to mental ill health.

Different aspects of mental well-being include factors such self-esteem, self-belief, emotional intelligence, sense of purpose, social connections and stigma. This guidance aims to support the school to consider these aspects when embedding a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being.

The framework provides schools with an opportunity to both promote positive mental well-being, prevent mental ill health and to take action to support individuals where needed.

1.1 Emotional and Mental Wellbeing in Schools

The four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales are that all children and young people will be ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals. Schools will design their own curriculum to enable learners to make progress to these purposes. Good emotional and mental well-being is a resource for everyday life and is essential to underpin each of these goals.

In September 2018 the then Cabinet Secretaries for Education and Health and Social Services announced the formation of a Joint Ministerial Task and Finish Group on a Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing¹ in recognition of both the importance of good mental health and wellbeing to learning. There was also a growing concern about the mental health of young people highlighted by the Mind Over Matter Report produced by the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Welsh Assembly. In 2021 Welsh Government published a [Framework on embedding a whole school approach](#) to support schools in developing and implementing these approaches.

To support this work, Public Health Wales, working with partners, has been tasked to develop additional tools to support schools to undertake a baseline

self-evaluation and develop their own improvement plans. This process for schools will be long-term and the approach taken should be one of continuous improvement.

An evaluation tool has been developed to help schools to think about their school and where they are currently against a range of actions which are consistent with a comprehensive whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing. This guidance is designed to support schools in undertaking this self-evaluation and in planning improvement. This first version of guidance will be subject to ongoing development as we progress through this journey.

1.2 A whole school approach

A whole school approach recognises that every aspect of the life of the school can impact on our health and well-being and all of those within the school community; learners, teachers and support staff. A whole school approach acknowledges that the environment and ethos of a school is just as important as the curriculum and policies. It involves not just what takes place in the classroom or the formal curriculum but in all of the day-to-day activities of a school.

A successful whole school approach will involve learners, parents and carers, staff and governors all working together as a school community to improve well-being based on a good understanding of the needs of the school community.

It considers all aspects of need from universal approaches to promoting good health and preventing ill health to more targeted approaches for those individuals at greater risk and specific support for those individuals with identified needs, with a focus on early intervention. A whole school approach successfully delivered will involve developing effective working partnerships between the school and all of the agencies in the wider system that can provide specialist advice and support.

2 Aim of the Evaluation Tool and Guidance:

This self-evaluation tool and guidance will provide a broad overview and a starting point for development of the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being. It should not be seen by schools as a 'tick box exercise', but a means to foster an inclusive dialogue across the school community that helps the school identify what it is currently doing well and what areas need further development or improvement. It is an opportunity to create an enquiry-based approach to learning about well-being in our schools that will be continually revisited and adapted, drawing on shared

learning and experience. Completing the tool will draw on multiple sources of evidence from hard data to the more subjective feelings that are reported. Having identified areas for improvement these should be prioritised into an action plan that can be incorporated into wider school development and improvement plans.

For many schools, the evaluation tool and guidance will support the process of reviewing and improving work that has already been done around emotional health and mental well-being. For schools that are at an earlier stage of the journey, the tool will support them in developing the culture which supports the well-being of children and young people, staff and the wider community and to embedding the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being.

2.1 How to use the tool

The self-evaluation tool uses key questions from the Welsh Government statutory framework on 'embedding a whole-school approach' and also draws on the international evidence base on effective practice in promoting emotional and mental wellbeing in school settings. This tool also draws on the learning from the National Quality Award and will replace the emotional and mental well-being section within that award.

The process of completing the tool and the discussions that the school has, involving all parts of the school community, is the most important part of the process. There is little value in a small group of individuals completing the tool in isolation.

Welsh Government has provided additional funding to appoint local Whole School Approach Implementation Leads, who together with your local Healthy Schools Team will support schools with this process.

The self-evaluation tool should be utilised in the following way:

- The tool should be completed through a shared process. There is value in individuals considering their own thoughts in advance and then coming together to discuss their scoring and then through discussion coming to a conclusion
- Schools will probably find they need to work through it in sections rather than in one go
- The tool should ideally be completed by different groups within the school, for example the Senior Leadership Team; Health and Well-being leads; teachers; support staff; parents and learners. The thoughts and views of the different groups should then be amalgamated to provide an overarching score. It is very important that you consider and discuss when different groups come to a different conclusion and why that might be

- Each group should document the evidence they used in coming to their score
- The school should agree priorities for action following the self-evaluation and it is important that these are based on the evidence you have gathered and are realistic. You may wish to develop a longer-term plan with staged implementation

Your Local WSA Implementation Lead will facilitate support to review your self-evaluation and plans and we would encourage schools to work with their school cluster to share thoughts and priorities. This is particularly valuable as transition from primary to secondary school is a key time when mental and emotional health problems can develop. A shared approach to priorities across the cluster may be helpful. Secondary schools may also find it valuable to participate in peer review with other similar schools.

Your school will have someone assigned to support them through this process, this may be someone from the local Healthy Schools Scheme or other professionals working to support schools from the third sector or from local child and adolescent mental health services. They will be able to provide advice on action that the school can take to address their priority areas. The document belongs to the school and will not be used as a means of performance management but can be used by the school as evidence for inspection or as part of the National Quality Award. You will be asked to share the broad areas of priority that you identified so that at a local, regional and national level additional support and development can be provided where there are common issues raised and to highlight areas where further policy development might be needed.

This document will only be useful if it is kept as a live tool that is regularly reviewed. We would suggest that schools review action annually with a more in depth review every two years.

Throughout this guidance document we have provided questions that might help to trigger discussion as you complete the tool.

3 Section A: Leadership and Commitment

A: *Leadership and commitment – the school through its ways of working, policies, allocation of staff and resources can clearly evidence leadership for and commitment to a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being*

Why is this important?

The leadership of any organisation, including schools, play a major role in setting the ethos, culture and values of that organisation. Leadership teams who prioritise health and well-being immediately signal its importance within the day-to-day life of the school, that it is fundamental to the core purpose of the school, not an added extra.

Leadership in health and well-being will be visible in a number of ways. Strong leaders ensure that their school upholds children's rights, promotes well-being holistically and is an inclusive community. Leaders are responsible for promoting staff well-being, protecting staff from excessive workload and ensuring that they are safe in work (Estyn, 2018).

There is good evidence from research in Wales¹ and internationally that the active involvement of school leaders in work on health and wellbeing is related to health and well-being practices in a school and outcomes for children and young people.

Leadership and Commitment to mental health and well-being in action

In undertaking your self-evaluation, you will need to consider a number of dimensions of school leadership and commitment, these will include:

- Designated leadership roles within the school
- Policies and procedures
- Visibility of mental health and well-being within the day-to-day business of the school
- Visible leadership
- Continuous improvement

¹ Moore, G.F., Littlecott, H.J., Fletcher, A. *et al.* Variations in schools' commitment to health and implementation of health improvement activities: a cross-sectional study of secondary schools in Wales. *BMC Public Health* **16**, 138 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2763-0>

A1: *A senior member of staff is designated as lead for health and well-being including the whole school approach to mental and emotional health and well-being framework; supported where appropriate by other members of staff*

A clearly identified leadership role for health and well-being within the school is important to coordinate and oversee action within the school and to engage internally and externally. It is important that the role sits within the senior leadership team due to the scope of action required across the whole school. The role may be a stand-alone role within the senior leadership team but often complements other responsibilities for learner well-being. It is important however, that leadership roles are distributed throughout the school rather than something being seen as the sole responsibility of one individual, how this works in practice will depend on the size and complexity of the school.

Schools may also wish to consider whether one of the school governors has an oversight role with respect to health and well-being including the implementation of the Framework within the school.

Questions to ask?

Can everyone name the individual/s responsible for health and wellbeing including the Framework?

Are leadership roles formalised e.g., included in job descriptions, remunerated or with dedicated time?

Is there a team identifiable within the school that oversees and leads action relating to health and wellbeing including the whole school approach to mental and emotional wellbeing framework?

A2: *The school development and improvement plans include measurable action to promote mental health and well-being in the whole school community*

The importance and value placed on an issue can often be judged by its visibility within the day-to-day business of the school. The school's SLT should be able to demonstrate a clear vision to promote emotional and mental well-being, by assessing what is already in place, identifying the

priorities for improvement and developing strategic plans for embedding the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being.

The visibility of action to promote and protect emotional and mental well-being within plans is one measure of priority. The school improvement or development plan should include the actions agreed as a result of this self-evaluation and as part of a process of continuous improvement.

The priorities of the school should be clearly set out and demonstrate how it will achieve these and by when. There should be clear evidence of these actions being reviewed at suitable intervals by an appropriate group.

The inclusion of the issue for discussion on the agenda of relevant meetings is also a sign of its priority and importance. Is the issue of emotional and mental well-being and the school response to the Framework for a Whole School Approach discussed at Governors meetings; senior leadership team; staff meetings; parent meetings and school council or similar body? There should be evidence that SLT and the Governing Body have taken ownership of the school's development plans, ensuring they are under continuous review and barriers to implementation are addressed.

Questions to ask?

Are improvement actions relating to emotional and mental well-being prominent in development and improvement plans within the school?

Is there evidence that the subject is regularly discussed and does action happen as a result of those discussions?

A3: *The school can evidence a continuous improvement approach in which plans are regularly reviewed against outcomes and change is made as necessary*

As with most important areas of development, the task of promoting and protecting mental and emotional well-being will never be finished. There will always be an opportunity and a need to improve and develop, to respond to new challenges and situations.

There are a number of established leadership and improvement methodologies, which can be deployed by the leadership teams². Typically, these approaches emphasise having clear goals or plans, implementing action, monitoring whether improvements have occurred and making

² <https://gov.wales/school-improvement-guidance>

changes as a result. The emphasis is on gradual incremental change, achievement and recognition of success.

Senior leadership teams should be able to demonstrate how their approach to emotional and mental wellbeing has adopted a continuous improvement approach. This would include clearly stated improvement objectives or goals, evidence of action having been taken and most importantly evidence that the impact of that change has been evaluated and reviewed.

Questions to ask?

Is everyone clear what the school's current goals are in respect of emotional and mental well-being?

Can you evidence that action you have taken has led to improvements?

Are you clear what difference your current plans are intended to make, how will you know if you have been successful?

Are there examples of where you have changed your plans as a result of an evaluation or review that showed things had not gone as you expected?

A4: *Communication within the school and with the wider school community provide evidence of our commitment to learners and staff health and well-being, including emotional and mental well-being*

It is important that the day-to-day life of the school and particularly the role of leaders actively models the values and behaviours set out in the school plans and policies. Leaders are people too and they will not always get it right but can always demonstrate that they are trying and learning from their mistakes as they go along.

The school image to the outside world should also convey that emotional and mental well-being is important, this might include the school website; communication to staff, parents and pupils; actively challenging attitudes and behaviours that are damaging to emotional and mental well-being.

The use of stories as a way of sharing learning experiences within the school can help to model the values of the school and can be a powerful communication mechanism.

Questions to ask?

Would someone looking at the school information from the outside easily recognise the commitment to emotional and mental well-being?

Do people recognise consistency between the theory and practice in the school, what people say and what they do?

A5: *The school can evidence that, within available resources, support is provided for activities, which promote mental health and well-being*

There will never be sufficient resources to address all of the priorities and issues identified within a school, but the decisions schools make about how to use the resources that they have does reflect the priority given to different issues.

Ensuring that the work to implement the framework is adequately resourced, including through the allocation of time, is an important measure of its priority to the school.

Questions to Ask?

Has the school identified resources to support action to promote mental and emotional wellbeing?

Are the development and improvement plans for mental and emotional wellbeing appropriately resourced?

A6: *The school has a range of policies based on best practice to create a positive ethos and culture which is supportive of emotional and mental well-being*

The presence of a suite of policies within the school that set out the school's values, approach to supporting, promoting and managing health and well-being related issues and the processes that should be followed are an important building block for a whole school approach. There is no right answer as to what those policies should be, as each school will take a different approach.

While the content of policy documents is important, it is the process of development of the policies and their active use in the day-to-day life of the school that is important. These should be concise, well promoted and

Public Health Wales	Guidance – Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool
---------------------	---

accessible and also provide guidance on supporting staff emotional and mental well-being. Policies should be developed with input from the whole school community and be subject to regular review to ensure they respond and remain relevant to the changing needs within the school. Emotional and mental well-being will be influenced by policy in a range of areas including policies relating to:

- Equality and diversity
- Behaviour management
- Substance use and misuse
- Bullying and harassment.

The core underpinning principles of good emotional and mental well-being, including a sense of belonging, inclusion, empowerment and learner voice, should be evidenced, through wider school policies. The SLT, teachers and wider school staff should be able to recognise the link between learner and staff well-being and their school policies and actions (which include tackling bullying, safeguarding, healthy relationships, play and recreational opportunities, learner participation and equalities). It is important that these policies recognise that bullying behaviour, other behavioural concerns or substance use and misuse as examples, are often indicators of underlying emotional and mental well-being problems or difficulties and policies should take a supportive approach that seeks to identify and resolve the underlying concerns rather than just a punitive approach.

Questions to Ask?

Can you clearly identify relevant policies? When were they last reviewed?

Do individuals have examples of where the policies have helped to bring situations to a positive outcome?

Is there a process in which the objective of the policy is reviewed, and an evaluation takes place on whether this has been achieved?

4 Section B: Understanding and meeting the needs of the school community

B: *Understanding the emotional and mental well-being needs of learners and staff – the school understands emotional and mental well-being issues within the school*

Why is this important?

The emotional and mental well-being needs of learners and staff can be assessed in a number of different ways. As highlighted in Estyn's Healthy and Happy Thematic Review (2018), schools that evidence good practice, regularly analyse a wide range of data about learners' well-being and consider this alongside the views of learners and their parents as well as the views of professionals. Staff use their analysis to evaluate specific aspects of well-being and plan for improvement, where necessary. In schools where well-being is embedded, staff have a strong focus on gathering and analysing information about the well-being of learners and in particular vulnerable learners. Specific or additional tools are often used to help them to further understand learners and to monitor their progress (Estyn, 2018).

Senior leadership teams have a key role in mapping the school's strengths and areas for development, using a range of data they have available to them, including internal and external sources and benchmarking data from schools within their own region.

The School Health Research Network (SHRN), invite secondary schools in the Network to participate in a survey every two years. One element of the survey focuses on emotional and mental well-being. Following participation in the survey, a bespoke school report can be provided on request, enabling schools to use the results to assess areas of need within their school.

The use of data is not the only approach and how people think and feel should be considered when identifying needs. The findings from the needs assessment are important for planning activities and evaluating their impact. If there is a general consensus there is a problem through undertaking a needs assessment, it is an area which should be focussed on by the school.

A whole school approach promotes equity for all, reducing unexplained variation. Schools should be actively looking for variation between groups within the school, particularly those who are known to be at greater risk of poorer outcomes.

Understanding the Emotional and Mental Well-being needs of learners and staff in action

When undertaking self-evaluation, you will need to consider a number of factors including:

- The different sources of data and information available to the school and the comparative strengths and weaknesses of these
- That there are different kinds of needs (a) Felt needs – what people consider and/or say they need b) Expressed needs: needs expressed by action e.g., visiting a school nurse c) Normative needs: what professionals define as need d) Comparative need: by comparing different groups or your school with others. All of these are important.
- How information from a range of sources is brought together to decide on what changes the school wants to make – all sources of data may not tell the same story, understanding why that might be is an important part of the process.
- How you use information from a range of sources to measure change
- How the school uses its relationships and partnerships with other agencies to understand the needs of the wider community and to learn about new and emerging issues.

B1: *The school understands the emotional and mental well-being needs of the learners and staff in the school and how these have changed over time*

Schools have access to a wide range of routine information that will help them to understand the emotional and mental well-being needs of the school community. Undertaking a thorough assessment of need can be a lengthy and time-consuming process but once done it can be refreshed and updated as new information becomes available.

Different data will be available at different levels including wider national or area issues; whole school or year groups, or about specific characteristics such as gender or ethnicity. It may also be possible for some data to break it down to more specific population groups, but schools should be cautious about drawing conclusions from relatively small numbers. It is useful to look at data according to different specific groups in the school to find and understand more about unwarranted variation and inequalities.

Qualitative data, in particular learner, staff and parent feedback, is important and should be included in the needs assessment as this addresses

felt needs. Please see guidance in Section D on Involvement and Engagement. Qualitative data on perceptions can give a good understanding of what really affects learners and staff. However, the data can need careful handling as details of context, background and question wording can affect the result. Local descriptive accounts of environmental or social factors (also qualitative data) can give a good understanding although the scale of the health impact of the identified problem may be difficult to assess.

Trend over time is useful as it can show if things are improving. It is also useful to consider whether things have changed since you last looked at it but the same method of collecting the data/ question wording must be used in order to compare the data over time and you usually need more than one time point to identify a trend or change in direction.

The school needs to consider if there are circumstances or events which might necessitate the school to change plans or actions. The most significant recent event has been the COVID-19 pandemic which is widely recognised as having an impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, school staff and the wider community.

Sources of data

School Health Research Network (SHRN) Data

Secondary schools complete a bilingual electronic Student Health and Wellbeing Survey every two years. The survey is based on the World Health Organisation's collaborative Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey to allow integration of the two surveys every four years and is accompanied by a School Environment Questionnaire, which allows relationships between school policies and practices and student health to be investigated. Questions are developed in consultation with key stakeholders in schools, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government. In 2019/20 just under 120,000 11- to 16-year-olds took part in the survey and findings on 'mental health and wellbeing', 'school life', 'physical activity and diet', 'family and social life', 'relationships', and 'substance use and gambling' are presented in the National Report (see link below). Regional reports are also available if enough schools in the area complete the survey. This is the most reliable source of data about secondary school health and wellbeing in Wales. <https://www.shrn.org.uk/national-data/>

Children's Commissioner Survey: A number of publications and reports summarising feedback from children and young people are available:

<https://www.childcom.wales.org.uk>

Information from other local agencies e.g., Youth Services; Substance Use and Misuse Services, local health needs assessments from the Health Board and the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health.

Schools may also undertake their own regular surveys of pupils, staff or parents which can be used.

Attendance and exclusion data; sickness absence data for staff can provide a useful insight but do need to be used carefully so that they do not identify individuals.

Questions to be asked of data

- a. *Purpose: Is the data you are using fit for purpose? You will need to think how and why it was collected and whether the way in which you want to use it is consistent with its original purpose and that the conclusions you are drawing are valid.*
- b. *Statistical significance: Are the numbers big enough to allow an adequately precise estimate and to draw sound conclusions from? Will confidentiality issues allow the relevant use of the data? Could there be a risk of inappropriate and unnecessary disclosure of person-level data? What are the confidence intervals or limits, which is how confident are you that differences between groups or over time are real differences rather than natural variation?*
- c. *Timeliness: Is the data still relevant?*
- d. *Generalisability: Is the data relevant to your school population?*
- e. *Completeness: Has all the data been included. Is it a representative sample or was a random sample used?*

Questions to Ask?

Are the priorities the school has identified supported by evidence?

Have comparisons been made about how you are doing against other schools that are similar?

Do you have ways of obtaining feedback or views from learners, staff and parents?

B2: *The school can identify and describe the needs of specific groups of pupils who may be at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health and well-being*

There are a number of different individuals and specific groups which are at greater risk of poorer emotional and mental well-being due to various risk factors including discrimination (due to race, ethnicity, gender or sexual

identity), adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and poverty. It is important that the school understands the population or community that it serves. Schools will vary and there will be differences in the community they serve; for instance, some schools may have a significant Traveller or specific ethnic community or have provision catering for additional learning needs.

When learners are treated unfairly and discriminated against because of who they are, this can have a detrimental effect on their mental health, their self-esteem and their educational performance. It is important that schools understand who might be at risk of discrimination, what they should do to minimise discrimination and how they can buffer and support children and families who may be at risk.

Schools can create an environment which embraces and conveys positive messages about identity, diversity, cultures and faith (through policies, staff training, engaging families and communities, making sure lesson plans and resources are inclusive). Schools may wish to undertake more in-depth work with particular populations to understand the messaging needed for that group and messaging or kind of communication required for others in the school who don't belong to a particular group and who may make assumptions.

Understanding and identifying risk factors that can affect learners and staff can help a school to better understand the needs of specific sub-groups within the school and used in conjunction with other sources of information, inform school-based practice and interventions. Access to training and continued professional development is important to support staff in their role in identifying and understanding the needs of all learners and in particular, those learners that are at a greater risk of experiencing poor mental health due to risk factors, such as poverty, ACEs, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity.

As well as circumstances or events that can affect the whole school population, there may also be more specific local events that have an impact on the wellbeing of learners, staff and the wider school community such as the closure of local businesses which in turn leads to significant job losses and unemployment in the local area. This economic insecurity with parents out of work means that children at the school could be more vulnerable and the school should consider what they can do to help. Based on data and intelligence the school has about the event, the school should actively consider actively adapting plans and reprioritising actions to support learners in these more challenging circumstances.

A collaborative approach to identifying those learners at greater risk of poor emotional and mental well-being is crucial in identifying needs and informing school practice. This requires good communication and effective working relationships with key stakeholders and other professionals. The

school should establish or participate in an existing partnership to enable these conversations to happen. Whilst validated data tools are important, including other sources of data such as observations or assessments from other professionals can assist schools in robustly identifying the needs of particular groups who are more at risk of experiencing poorer emotional and mental well-being. A school can understand the extent to which learners are at risk by using monitoring tools such as self-evaluation, direct observations and the opportunity to, 'just talk' is made available to all learners.

Questions to Ask?

Are there specific groups within your school community who are more at risk of poor mental health?

Can you think of examples of how the school has responded to an event or events which may pose a threat or risk to mental and emotional wellbeing for the school community?

How does the school draw on the knowledge from partnerships with a range of local agencies to understand what is happening in their community more broadly?

B3: *The school actively monitors a range of emotional and mental well-being outcomes and indicators e.g., free school meals, ethnicity, to minimise inequalities in mental health and well-being*

This indicator is about monitoring the emotional and mental well-being outcomes and other outcomes at a school population level to consider inequalities amongst different groups.

It is important for schools to understand whether there are differences in routine data for different sub-groups within the school. From this intelligence, schools will know whether there is a gap and be in a better position to work out what should be done to reduce that gap. Examples include variation in uptake of different services (such as counselling) or opportunities (such as after school clubs) between different groups. Understanding which learners access services or opportunities can help the school check that inequalities are not being widened because the children with greatest needs do not access the services or take part in opportunities (could it be that some learners cannot take part in some after school activities because they do not have access to required equipment?).

All schools will have some learners that will have a disability or additional learning needs. Some schools will have dedicated provision for children with behavioural problems. There can be a negative impact on learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing by being streamed into the 'bottom set' if

those learners feel less valued or important within the school. Schools should therefore be cautious in how they support learners with additional needs and monitor to check there is no adverse impact on mental health and wellbeing due to changes in policy or certain practices.

Questions to Ask?

Does the school have baseline information on which groups of children access different services and take part in different activities or opportunities?

Has does the school address any gaps in outcomes between different groups? For example, do the children on free school meals have differences in terms of achievement and what is the school doing to address any gaps?

B4: *The school is aware of emerging health priorities and topics relating to emotional and mental well-being and well-being and is connected to wider strategic plans and priorities in the area*

This indicator is about who schools work within partnership (such as the police, social services, local community groups, youth service) and how these partnerships are used to understand the needs of learners and the wider school community.

It is important that schools are aware of wider plans and priorities and can show this. For example, are schools aware of the Local Health Board priorities or what their Local Authorities or Welsh Government say about certain issues. The school should connect the actions they are taking or plan to take to wider priorities and plans to show that they understand they are part of the wider landscape and prioritise activity accordingly.

The school will have access to other sources of information e.g., information from other local agencies such as the police, local community groups, youth services or substances use and misuse services, local health needs assessments. These can also be utilised in conjunction with school and local authority data sources to identify emerging community-based needs, which can support the school in better understanding the emotional and mental well-being needs of learners and staff. This could include information about levels of deprivation in the community, unemployment and economic activity, offending rates.

Questions to Ask?

Does the school connect what they are doing to wider plans to show that they are responding to wider system priorities e.g., Welsh Government, Local Authority, Health Board priorities?

How does the school use information from other agencies to help it understand what local community priorities and needs might be?

5 Section C: Involvement and Engagement

C. Involvement and Engagement – the school can demonstrate how the whole school community is engaged and involved in the day-to-day life of the school; in influencing decision making and reviewing progress.

Why is this important?

This indicator is about promoting emotional and mental well-being in school through engagement and involvement of the whole school community. Inequities in access to opportunities to engage and become involved in school life can impact on a person's sense of belonging, efficacy and voice, which can in turn contribute to poor emotional and mental well-being.

Creating an environment where everyone can engage and become involved with school life is an important aspect of promoting positive mental well-being. This means providing opportunities for learners, staff, parents and carers to foster ongoing dialogue versus holding a one-off meeting. Engagement and involvement should not be viewed as an added extra but instead, a sustained activity in all aspects of school life. This in turn will help the school community to develop trusting relationships between learners, staff, parents and carers.

Power and power dynamics play a role in the school community's ability to sustain involvement and engagement. Power exists in all aspects of society, and this includes the school community. Power is a complex concept but in essence, it exists within relationships; not all individuals hold the same amount of power. The way in which power dynamics are managed within the school community will impact on how successful true involvement and engagement will be. Power is often referred to as the degree of control that individuals and communities have over their own lives. The level of control that learners, staff, parents and carers feel they have in decisions that impact on school life and the opportunities to participate with and fully engage in decision making are important for emotional and mental well-

being. People who feel that they do not have 'power' tend to have poorer health generally but particularly poorer mental and emotional wellbeing. Good engagement and involvement in the life of a school will increase feelings of control and should lead to better mental and emotional wellbeing.

The principle of making every effort to engage the whole school community in supporting a vision where learners, staff, parents and carers are engaged and involved in making decisions that impact on school life is visible is explicit in communications as well as in mission statement for the school and that it is supported by school leadership team and Board of Governors.

Involvement and engagement in emotional and mental well-being in action

In undertaking your self-evaluation, you will need to consider a number of dimensions to engagement and involvement. These include:

- Does the school's mission statement reflect the importance of engagement and involvement by the whole school community?
- Involvement and engagement policies and procedures
- The school community's understanding of power and power dynamics relating to involvement and engagement, and ways in which the school works to address this
- Visibility of equity in access to opportunities to become engaged and involved in different aspects of school life
- Mechanisms in place to listen to and respond to issues raised by learners and staff.
- Whether representation from learners, staff, parents and carers vary for different activities, i.e., the same individuals are not involved and engaged in every activity and if they are that others/new individuals join them in each activity/group
- Representation in groups/activities that impact on school life is from learners from across year groups and includes learners with varying degrees of ability and those with specific needs. Evidence that there are mechanisms in place to support individuals to sustain their engagement.

C1: *The school can demonstrate how it ensures that learner voice is prominent in all activity and that this reflects all pupils*

It is important that all voices are heard, and the school appreciates the value they can bring to informing the decisions it makes about policy and practice within the school. Individuals are experts in their unique experience

of school life and therefore acknowledging all forms of knowledge as equal leads to better informed decisions and subsequent actions. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and therefore clear mechanisms for enabling 'the learners voice' to be prominent in decisions that impact on school life are in place and understood by the whole school community. If learners feel their voices are heard, it is likely that they feel valued and contribute to building confidence, self-belief and self-esteem all of which are factors that contribute to good emotional and mental well-being.

A 'learner's voice group' is one mechanism of creating an environment where the learners voice is heard, which may be through a School Council or similar group. How learners are selected will influence representation; good practice in recruitment to school councils is that the members are elected by their peers.

Creating an environment where learners feel safe to raise issues that matter to them, and where clear processes in place to do so is important to ensure all learners' voices are heard. Being able to demonstrate that the mechanisms in place in the school are effective in influencing decisions about school life is important to sustain engagement, involvement and motivation of learners.

All mechanisms for hearing the learner's voice within the school community should be evidenced by staff and governors who understand their role in taking views of learners on board and taking appropriate action. One way of demonstrating that the learner's voice is prominent in decisions about school life is ensuring that the link between the learner's voice and the School Development Plan is clearly visible and that activity relating to it within the plan is reviewed regularly to ensure progress is made.

Questions to ask?

Is there a link between the learner's voice and the School Development Plan?

Are there action plans in place to address any areas of concern?

How does the school's senior team and governors interact with the school council or similar body and demonstrate that they have listened to the learner's voice?

How are members recruited to any 'learner voice group'?

Does the 'School Life' section of the SHRN survey data show that learners feel engaged in school life? Is there evidence in your school report that there

are differences in how engaged or involved learners feel according to age, gender, socio-economic status?

C2: *The school can demonstrate how it ensures that parents / carers and families are actively engaged in school life?*

Active and meaningful engagement by parents and carers in school life is an important element of promoting the learners emotional and mental well-being. There is evidence from research that shows that active engagement by parents and carers is likely to have a positive impact on the learner's mental well-being, as well as attendance, educational attainment, behaviour and increase their sense of belonging in school in learners from different socio-economic backgrounds.

The amount of time parents spend engaging is likely to be different in primary and secondary schools, mainly because of the way in which children are transported to each.

Regular parent teacher evenings provide an opportunity for the school to engage with parents. The school should consider those parents who don't attend; considerations should include barriers to engagement and the development of an action plan to consider ways in which to help parents overcome the barriers.

School leaders may want to consider creating opportunities for parents to speak to other parents about the learner's experience of school life and supporting them to take collective action in raising issues anonymously and safely.

Questions to ask?

Are there mechanisms in place to enable parents to engage and involve themselves in school life?

Does the school collect and analyse data about non-attenders at parent teacher evenings?

Does the school demonstrate that it takes action to understand the barriers to some parents and carers attending parent teacher evenings?

Is there an action plan to help parents overcome the barriers?

C3: *The school can demonstrate how it ensures that all staff are actively engaged and involved in decisions that impact on school life*

Schools should seek to create an environment and mechanisms to engage and involve staff proactively seeking their views on decisions that could potentially lead to changes policy and practice within the school. Involving staff in discussions leads to a sense of having control over aspects of their working life as well a sense of being valued. These feelings contribute to promoting positive mental well-being. By way of example taking a Whole School Approach to implementing the Framework to embed mental well-being in schools may require a number of changes within your school and might require a change in culture, shifting norms and creating expectations. In this instance engaging and involving staff will be crucial to implementing and achieving the positive benefits it will bring to the whole school community.

You might want to consider mechanism by which you can involve staff and an example of one may be the establishment of a 'staff voice group'. As with the learner voice group, consideration should be given to membership and how to get representation from across whole staff group, teachers, and manager's, teaching support staff, administration and catering staff. There should be a clear line of sight between the staff voice group and actions in the Schools Development Plan as well as action plans to support the implementation of the Framework or other issues raised.

Questions to ask?

Is staff engagement monitored within the SDP?

How are staff engaged in strategic or policy development and decision making?

Does staff engagement draw from across the staff not just teaching staff?

C4: *The school can evidence a range of partnerships with public and third sector agencies with expertise in mental health and well-being and how their expertise is informing action*

There are many different types of partnerships, and many different reasons that you might want to develop them. Some partners will help you generate ideas or develop content; others will help you to design your engagement activity; some will be able to share their skills and knowledge to ensure your activity is a success and others may be prepared to put resources into the activity. Partners can also help you develop relationships with different audiences. It is important for the school to think through what partners you want to work with and those who want to work with you.

Partnership working within the school setting should take account of the experiences of teachers, staff and learners to consider what is relevant to the school and the community. There are already good examples of partnership working through the WNHSS, which supports schools to use a whole school approach to health and well-being. There is also support available through regional Consortia, the School Health Research Network, Governing Bodies, CAMHS In-Reach, police, youth justice teams, specialist CAMHS and third sector.

There are a plethora of agencies who can provide support, often at cost, to schools, however, it is important to understand what is needed at the relevant time in order for the school to assess which agency can help. There may be local services who are able to engage around specific areas e.g., family breakdown/substance misuse, suicide and self-harm.

Questions to ask:

Does the school routinely engage with partners (if so, who?) to inform action on mental health?

How does the school respond to changing needs within school; how does the school decide which organisations are credible partners to work with?

6 Section D: Workforce

D: *Workforce – the school can evidence how it supports the staff within the school to maintain their own well-being and effectively promote emotional and mental well-being of others.*

Why is this important?

For a whole school approach to be successful, it cannot be limited to learner well-being, but must also consider the emotional and mental well-being of all school staff. The workforce needs to be supported not only to maintain their own well-being, but also to be able to effectively promote emotional and mental well-being of others, in a whole school approach.

Issues that affect teacher well-being can have a significant knock-on effect for learner well-being. Better teacher well-being has been shown to be associated with better learner well-being and lower psychological distress. The WISE study which included schools from Wales found that teacher 'presenteeism' and the quality of the teacher-learner relationship were significant mediating factors in these associations³.

Emotionally and mentally healthy teachers are better able to develop strong positive teacher-learner relationships, and evidence shows that cultivating a mentally healthy school where staff operate in a culture that equally values their own well-being, is essential for retaining and motivating staff. This is important not simply in terms of ensuring academic attainment, but in fostering an ethos that nurtures the young person, building their cooperation, commitment, resilience and confidence.

Ensuring that the health, emotional and mental well-being of staff is not detrimentally impacted upon while in work is of vital importance. To enable staff to have good well-being is crucial to develop a whole school approach, embedding well-being into the entire school ethos, the curriculum, and staff training and professional development.

Maintenance and promotion of emotional and mental well-being in the school workforce in action

In undertaking your self-evaluation, you will need to consider a number of dimensions of workforce support, these will include:

- How the school culture promotes staff wellbeing
- Access to a range of practical support for mental health and emotional well-being
- Leadership and the performance management process
- Professional learning opportunities
- Staff-staff and staff-learner relationships

³ WISE research study, Harding, S., et al., 2019.

D1: *The school can demonstrate how it supports staff in maintaining and improving their emotional and mental well-being*

Staff well-being is supported when the workforce feels valued, trusted, connected and confident in being open about their emotional and mental well-being.

Performance management and professional learning structures are an important aspect of this support. Appraisal for teachers, support staff and other members of the school workforce should embrace staff recognition, encouragement and develop a culture of communication about well-being in the workplace that can lead to staff feeling more able to talk about their emotional and mental well-being, and the development of more positive staff relationships.

Reflective practice as part of the performance management process can encourage staff self-awareness about their own well-being needs, and the ability to recognise factors that impact on personal well-being. There should be evidence that staff feel confident in raising issues that affect their emotional and mental well-being, assured that they will be listened to without judgement, and that appropriate action taken.

The role of school leaders in creating a culture of workplace well-being is an important part of a whole school approach to promote the emotional and mental well-being of staff. Head teachers and school leadership teams have an important role to model self-care, practice and behaviours that support well-being, including encouragement of an appropriate work life balance.

The school may wish to consider *The Corporate Health Standard* as a tool for continuous improvement that develops and promotes the health and well-being of staff. When school leadership is aware of areas of stress and factors within and outside of the school that impact staff well-being, they are better able to promote appropriate evidence-based interventions and provide timely support.

The National Evaluation and Improvement Resource self-evaluation tool enables school leaders to review staff well-being and identify common stressors, such as high workload or excessive burdens of out-of-classroom activities. The staff environment is also a crucial aspect of any health promoting workplace. Positive environments include adequate facilities and dedicate, pleasant spaces to relax and take time out. All staff should be

involved in the development of a health promoting workplace and promoting peer support mechanisms amongst staff can help develop reflective practice and facilitate the identification of common factors effecting staff well-being.

School staff should know how to access available Local Authority provided support services, including for example school counselling services, employee assistance programmes and professional learning, all of which can contribute to the package of support available that enables staff to maintain and improve their own emotional and mental well-being.

Questions to Ask?

What opportunities are in place for staff to have safe spaces to explore their own well-being?

D2: *The school has considered the skills and competencies required by staff in undertaking their role to support emotional and mental well-being in school and has a process in place to ensure they are able to develop and maintain these.*

Investing in professional learning for staff at all levels contributes to staff satisfaction, motivation and well-being. It is important that the workforce is equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support learner and staff emotional and mental well-being, and that skills are maintained over time.

Most teachers will not have received formal training in health and well-being during their initial teacher training and may have had limited opportunities as part of their continuing professional development. As their role in this area is increasingly recognised through the new curriculum and through the Framework it is important that they are supported to feel confident in undertaking this role for their own well-being and that of learners.

All school staff need to develop the confidence to actively listen to learners and colleagues as well as the skills to respond appropriately, even to challenging or concerning issues that are raised. Developing a deeper understanding about emotional and mental well-being; risk and protective factors for different groups, children and young people's psychological development, neurodevelopment and pedagogy, can contribute to staff feeling better equipped to support learners and colleagues. Some staff may wish to develop knowledge and understanding around specific areas, such as Trauma Informed Schools or ACE's, and they should be supported to access appropriate resources and additional training.

Conversations about professional learning should be part of individual staff performance management processes. Mechanisms should be available to support monitoring, reflecting and planning around professional learning. These include The Professional Learning Passport, available to all Education Workforce Council registrants and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) Practice, Review and Development record. Regular audit of skills and competencies of staff across the school will inform any the provision of professional learning opportunities, support, guidance and resources that are required to upskill the workforce, enabling them to undertake their roles in supporting emotional and mental well-being in school life.

Questions to Ask?

Has the school carried out a training needs analysis, identifying the knowledge, skills and competencies required to support learner and staff emotional and mental well-being? When was the last review?

What development and professional learning opportunities have been made available for school staff? Has learning to support the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being featured in staff inset sessions?

What procedures are in place to monitor the knowledge and skills gained through professional learning and ensure they can be maintained?

D3: *The school has a network of support in place for staff who are experiencing emotional and mental well-being problems to enable them to access appropriate help and support*

All schools should aspire to a culture where all staff can voice their concerns and ask for support and when staff raise difficulties regarding their mental health e.g., anxiety or depression. Staff should feel confident that they will be listened to without judgement, fear of stigma, and that appropriate action will be taken.

There should be evidence of communication within the workforce which ensures that all staff know where and how to access support for emotional and mental well-being when they need it, both inside and outside of the school environment, at school level and in wider Local Authority support mechanisms.

It is important that staff are encouraged to notice when colleagues may be struggling and feel confident in offering support. No member of staff should be expected to provide expert or medical advice; however, all staff should feel comfortable in opening a conversation with colleagues and signposting to specialist support. Early action to recognise the signs of stress or mental health difficulties can help to prevent problems worsening and can help the individual with a speedy recovery. School leadership can play an important role in facilitating timely access to appropriate support, within the school, within Local Authority structures, or involving other external agencies.

When there are members of staff dealing with mental and emotional difficulties, individual conversations through performance management or supervision processes can facilitate discussion about the things that are impacting on well-being and identify actions that may help.

The regular and ongoing monitoring of staff absence, staff recruitment and retention can provide school leaders with an opportunity to identify any patterns and explore whether there may be underlying causes that are affecting staff well-being across the school.

Questions to Ask?

Does the school have a confidential, Employee Assistance Programme and do all staff know how to access it?

Does the school monitor staff absence, staff turnover and vacancies specifically looking for any patterns or information that may indicate underlying issues impacting staff well-being?

Are there examples of staff accessing and receiving help and support?

D4: *Staff who undertake specific roles in relation to emotional and mental well-being have access to professional support and supervision appropriate to their role*

Some staff will undertake specialist or leadership roles within the school in relation to emotional and mental well-being which may involve listening to and processing the challenges others are facing. Specialist staff supporting the school who have a specific role in relation to promoting emotional and mental well-being may include educational psychologists, school nurses, school counsellors often identify staff who need support in addressing challenging circumstances experienced by learners or sometimes other

staff. Many teaching staff will also have experience of supporting pupils who are facing complex issues in their lives, which may include for example, mental health difficulties, safeguarding concerns, bullying. Learners may also disclose challenges to their emotional and mental well-being to non-teaching staff, and they too need to have the competence and confidence to provide appropriate support.

There is strong evidence on the importance of effective supervision in the Health and Social Care sector for staff well-being, and there is growing recognition of the value that access to regular supervision arrangements can bring for teachers and other school staff, in terms of enabling staff to carry out their roles safely, protecting their own emotional and mental well-being. Opportunities should be available for all staff to have regular supervision or de-briefs, from colleagues, relevant line manager or another professional who are trained in providing such supervision.

The particular ongoing training needs of staff in specific roles should be regularly monitored and updated, reflecting any changes to situations, role or working practice.

Working relationships with the school's wider pastoral team, as well as links with external partner agencies may be considered as part of measures which help to reduce pressure on staff. Mentorship is a mechanism that can be utilised to help staff, who are supporting the well-being of others, to protect their own well-being. Trained mentors can help staff to reflect, discuss problems, plan and access further advice. This is particularly important for newly qualified teachers, who will have access to day-to-day support from an induction mentor. Reflective practice, where staff are encouraged to think about the impact of their work on their well-being and to talk through challenges and successes in supporting the well-being of others, can be beneficial. Reflecting on and learning from experience can increase staff wellbeing through enhancing self-efficacy, agency and a sense of belonging to the school community.

Questions to Ask?

What opportunities are provided to staff for regular supervision with someone trained to give such support?

Are all school staff, including non-teaching staff in a variety of roles, included in continuous learning and development opportunities appropriate to their role?

7 Section E: Relationships

E. Relationships – the school recognises the importance of relationships and school connectedness in underpinning good emotional and mental well-being

Why is this important?

The curriculum in Wales sets out the ambition that all our children and young people will be 'healthy confident individuals' who 'form positive relationships built upon trust and mutual respect.' There is extensive evidence that the ability to form and sustain strong and positive relationships with others is absolutely fundamental to emotional and mental well-being through the life course. It is not about the quantity of relationships, but the quality of them; fostering good quality relationships promotes mental well-being, however poor-quality relationships can be detrimental. The relationships in a child or young person's life are very important to their immediate well-being and longer-term development; the effects on well-being that emerge in childhood cascade throughout life to foster cumulative advantage or disadvantage to health and well-being.

In a school setting, this means that learner relationships with school staff and with each other, should be nurtured and supported. Schools should ensure that children and young people feel that they belong to and are a valued part of a school community. The school has a crucial role to prioritise and model good quality relationships; through those that the staff develop with one another, the relationships established with parents and carers and the way in which the school operates in a relationship with the wider community.

When people are discriminated against and not treated equally this can have a significant impact on individual and community well-being. Schools have the potential to create safe and empowering environments that build upon learners' own formal and informal learning experiences, offline and online. This enables learners to reflect and express their views and feelings on a range of relationship issues, including around social stigma and discrimination.

Social connectedness within any community, including the school community, is important for both individual and collective well-being. Feeling part of a school community has a positive impact on motivation, performance, mental health, and can be protective against health-harming

behaviors. Strong school communities are built on shared values, trust, inclusivity, and individuals feeling safe and supported.

Relationships underpinning emotional and mental well-being in action

In undertaking the self-evaluation schools will need to consider several dimensions of school relationships, these will include:

- Nurturing ethos of the school
- Quality of adult relationships, adult and learner relationships and learner peer relationships
- Effective communication that meets the needs of the school community
- Engagement opportunities for the whole school community
- Positive behaviour approaches
- Resolving conflict and restorative approaches
- Equality, diversity, and human rights

E1: *The school can demonstrate how it recognises and promotes the importance of learners, staff, parents and carers and the wider school community feeling connected to the school and having a sense of belonging*

Schools which create a caring, nurturing and respectful environment can cultivate a sense of belonging to the school community, which includes children, parents, carers, school staff, governors and outside agencies. Developing this ethos is a whole school responsibility and all school interactions can support this nurturing ethos where; learners are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential and can thrive and emotionally develop; staff who support them operate in a culture that equally values their own well-being; and the contribution that all make is recognised. School leaders have a role to model and promote positive relationships and behaviours, communicate effectively, and to create opportunities for learners and staff to engage with the wider school community on matters important to them, on well-being challenges and successes, to foster a feeling of school connectedness.

It is important that learners are connected to school life to feel valued and develop that feeling of belonging. There should be evidence that children and young people are committed and active participants in their learning, feel accepted by and able to talk to staff, and encouraged to provide their views on school, the curriculum and their own mental well-being. Positive

learner-staff relationships and feeling happy at school are important indicators of school connectedness. For secondary schools, School Health Research Network's survey can provide invaluable information about learner's feelings about school and their relationships with school staff, as well on many other indicators relevant to school connectedness, emotional and mental well-being.

Parents and carers are a key part of the school community, and it is imperative that they feel confident in approaching and communicating with the school. Developing an understanding about groups of parents/carers who may feel less comfortable in engaging with the school is essential to finding ways to build school community connectedness for all. These groups may include those who are more likely to experience discrimination or have been historically marginalised; such as those in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, refugees and asylum seekers, or single parents. Mechanisms ought to be place to enable the engagement of all parents and carers in activity relating to improving the school ethos around well-being.

Schools are an important place within communities and should be seen as belonging to the wider community as a space that can be used by all. Facilitating proactive dialogue with the wider community and being an active participant in community initiatives, including intergenerational activities, can support cohesion between the school and the community it is part of; enabling preventative approaches and helping to address any issues of concern in a timely manner. Working with the local authority, key partners and support services, can enable the physical school space to be utilised by the wider community helping to reinforce community networks and activity, contributing to the broader health and well-being needs of the communities' school are part of.

Questions to Ask?

*Does the school use data to understand how learners feel about school life?
Which groups of learners are less likely to feel connected?*

How does the school monitor engagement with parents and carers, are those who do not engage, by attending parents' evenings for example, known about and what plans are in place to address this lack of connection?

How many community groups or organisations utilise school facilities?

How does the school work proactively with the community around the school to resolve and issues that arise and build positive relationships?

E2: *The school can demonstrate how it fosters and develops healthy relationships between all members of the school community*

Schools have a crucial role to help children and young people develop healthy relationships. This can be achieved by encouraging a culture of positive behaviour, fostering positive and consistent relationships with staff, an informed curriculum, having an effective whole school bullying policy and peer support programmes.

Schools should recognise the importance of positive relationships with adults as a protective factor for learners and create a respectful environment where learners and staff feel safe. Relationships with adults in the school should be based on trust and mutual respect, where children and young people understand that school staff care about them as people as well as about their learning.

To help learners to develop healthy peer relationships it is important that school staff demonstrate positive role modelling, including prioritising the cultivation of positive relationships with one another. Through the teaching of good quality Relationships and Sexuality Education learners will be supported to understand the characteristics of positive, healthy, friendships and relationships, as well as to develop the strategies needed to navigate relationships through life.

An effective whole school challenging bullying strategy, where schools respect and promote diversity within and outside of the school community, should support an environment where learners feel accepted and included by their peers, and where they understand that these relationships evolve and change over time. In a culture of developing strong peer relationships, children and young people may feel more confident in talking about well-being difficulties with their peers. Investing in peer support programmes, which can include buddying, mentoring, listening, can help to address well-being difficulties early.

When relationships do go wrong and conflict does arise it is important that the school take appropriate action, listen to concerns and provide support to repair relationships. Embedding principles of restorative approaches across the whole school can support the prevention of damaged relationships and provides an effective framework for resolving conflict, which focuses on enabling those who have been harmed to express the impact this has had on them, and for those responsible to acknowledge this and take action to put things right.

Conflict can arise between learner-learner, staff-staff, learner-staff, and school parent/carer. In each of these relationships some patterns of behaviour can be an indicator of emotional and well-being difficulties which may need additional targeted or intensive support. These can include things such as risk-taking, disruptive behaviour, bullying and health-harming behaviours. Mediation can be a helpful tool in repairing relationships, this can be facilitated by external agencies, or developed through peer support. Whole school restorative approaches provide a consistent way to building, maintaining and repairing relationships across the school community. They require school staff to draw on a variety of tools and techniques which enable prevention of conflict, early intervention when harm is occurring, focus on accountability and responsibility, openness, mutual respect and inclusion.

Parents and carers should have the opportunity to become familiar with and understand the schools' approach to developing healthy relationships and positive behaviours that they are able to model at home. The school may wish to consider measures such as developing communication spaces with parents/carers and creating a named home-school link role.

Questions to Ask?

Is there evidence to suggest that learners feel accepted and included by other pupils and staff, and that the school has low levels of bullying and conflict?

Is conflict dealt with in a consistent manner? Are restorative approaches embedded across the whole school; in staff professional learning, school plans policies and procedures, teaching and learning and pastoral processes?

Do parents and carers have the opportunity to become familiar with and understand the school's approach to developing a positive ethos and culture? Are they supported to model this approach at home?

E3: *The school recognises and evidences the importance of equality and human rights for emotional and mental well-being*

School communities play a crucial role in establishing a more equal Wales that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. Evidence shows that discrimination, social stigma and inequality is damaging to mental health and well-being. Disadvantage and inequity in our society mean that some groups are more likely to have poorer outcomes throughout life, including in health, well-being and

education. Socio-economic disadvantage is known to be linked to inequality of outcomes, and stigma associated with social status impacts negatively on health and well-being. In addition, learners and staff with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons, or for reasons to do with past or present discrimination. The Equality Act (2010) has implications for schools and protects learners from discrimination and harassment based on the following protected characteristics for school provisions; disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Embedding equality and human rights into all subject areas strengthens the ethos of a whole school approach, promoting the rights of learners to enjoy equitable, safe, healthy and fulfilling relationships, which will support their emotional well-being, and help them to make sense of the wider world.

All learners should receive an education that enables them to fulfil their potential under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A children's rights approach to education in Wales means that schools should evidence the principles of; embedding children's rights throughout the whole school, promoting equality and non-discrimination; empowering children; participation and accountability.

Through universal and targeted provision, schools should aim to actively combat discrimination and the social stigma often felt by those from families with lower incomes, looked after children, and those learners with additional learning needs, whilst also paying attention to specific issues that affect the school community. Developing a robust Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives for the school, which uses a range of data to understand the needs of learners, staff, and the wider school community, in relation to protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage, is important to underpin all action in this area. For secondary schools, using the individualised student health and wellbeing reports provided by taking part in the School Health Research Network's survey can provide insight into whether there are particular groups of learners in your school who are more likely to experience disadvantage and discrimination which impacts their emotional and mental well-being.

Schools should ensure they are a safe and inclusive environment for staff and learners, where diversity and inclusion is understood and celebrated. All in the school community have the right to be safe, to feel accepted, be treated with dignity, equity and to be supported to develop and thrive. A range of methods to promote and embed equality, diversity and tolerance can be utilised. School activity can embrace and celebrate difference, for example through; marking a variety of religious and cultural festivals, discovering foods/music/games enjoyed by different communities, exploring the stories of figures who have experienced discrimination. Learners and staff should be able to express their thoughts and feelings, to

be involved in decisions made about them and to have equitable access to support and intervention services that will contribute to their overall emotional and mental health well-being whenever needed.

Questions to Ask?

Is there evidence that the UNCRC is at the core of school planning, teaching, decision making, policy and practice?

Does the school have a strategic equality plan and objectives that tackle discrimination and social stigma and are regularly reviewed? Is action relating to the plan appropriately resourced?

How does the school promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion across the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation?

8 Section F: Help and support

F. Help and support services - the school can evidence how it proactively recognises signs of mental health and well-being problems and works with others to facilitate access to timely help and support

Schools are well placed to recognise and respond to the emotional well-being and mental health needs of learners, as outlined previously, emotional well-being and mental health are fluid and can change dependent on circumstances. It is not the role of school staff to be mental health experts, but they are in a good position to understand when a learner may be experiencing difficulties. School senior leadership teams should have good working relationships with external support services and know how to access them when needed. Mental health services should be available and responsive to support schools in this way, particularly around issues of risk and self-harm (Welsh Government Framework).

Some learners are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence. Delays in identifying and meeting emotional health and mental well-being needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of children and young people's lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

There are a number of things schools and colleges can do for those children showing early signs social, emotional and mental health problems as well as these learners using the principles of universal, selected and targeted support.

Universal support refers to whole school approaches to promoting emotional health and wellbeing supporting individuals which aims to develop all learners' social, emotional and behavioural competencies and focuses on primary prevention, including classroom-based approaches (e.g., PSHE, SEAL and Circle Time).

Targeted support is for learners who are identified as being at risk of developing emotional or behavioural difficulties. Here school support for some pupils is embedded in a whole school approach and focuses on identifying the small number of young people who are at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour. A school support team/ pastoral team may be established in schools to support the needs of all children in school but with particular regard to the needs of this small group of children. This is usually made of group approaches and some 1:1 opportunities with pastoral staff and keyworkers that sometimes reach out to families to help prevent the onset of behaviour or emotional problems. They do not necessarily require direct involvement of an external professional to deliver them but a practitioner (e.g., school health nurse, mental health nurse, educational psychologist) may be able to add value or another dimension to the programme e.g., skills building.

A school may also have a role in supporting learners who are already showing signs of mental and emotional health problems by ensuring that these signs are recognised and that sensitive conversations take place to explore and identify problems and sign-post learners to appropriate help. Schools will also be supporting learners with more complex and enduring emotional or mental health needs. Support for learners at this level will generally be more intensive and individualised and schools will need to form good partnerships with specialist CAMHS to ensure these learners can continue to benefit from learning and return to school following any absence for treatment and care.

Help and support services in action

In undertaking the self-evaluation, schools need to consider several dimensions in relation to signposting and working with support services. These will include:

- Recognising signs of emotional and mental health problems in learners
- Understanding the help and support that is available
- Clear referral processes

- Working with parents / carers
- Working with other professionals

F1: *The school has a clear process through which concerns about learners can be discussed and reviewed with a multi-disciplinary team and agreed plan of action*

Every member of staff has a responsibility for pastoral care. It is important that staff take time to listen to learners and support them at the initial point of contact. In addition to using information management systems to share information, staff with specific pastoral responsibilities should be encouraged to meet regularly, with support from other agencies, to discuss individual learners' health and well-being.

Understanding the emotional and mental well-being needs of learners, and that these can change over time is key. Recognising the learners who may be vulnerable due to home circumstances, for example family breakdown; and that some learners may exhibit behavioural problems which give cause for concern is also important. In these instances, staff should be able to identify these learners and work to understand the cause e.g., a learner who becomes withdrawn or there are signs that they are misusing alcohol and/or substances or showing signs of self-harm. There may be learners in school who are known to be receiving specialist support with their emotional and mental well-being, these learners should be supported by all school staff, in discussion with parents/carers to enable them to remain in school during their time of support.

Some learners are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence. Delays in identifying and meeting emotional health and mental wellbeing needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of children and young people's lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

Schools should develop and foster regular multi-agency discussion drawing in professionals who support the school such as educational psychologist, school nurse, CAMHS-in-reach etc. These staff can help the school to explore the concerns they may have about learners and help to develop an action plan with appropriate input from other local services.

There should be a clear referral process that staff can access and understand, which is communicated to learners and their families. It is

important that staff know how to respond and support a learner who shows signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts. Schools should have a designated lead to support vulnerable learners. This should be supported by regular school meetings that take place to discuss the needs of learners and these are communicated effectively to relevant staff.

Questions to Ask?

Who does the school regularly involve in proactive discussions about learner emotional well-being and mental health?

Does everyone know what to do and where to access help when needed?

F2: *The school can demonstrate how it fosters relationships with parents and other agencies so that it is aware of circumstances that might mean that pupils are at greater risk of poor emotional and mental well-being e.g., family breakdown*

Working with parents and carers to identify children's emotional and mental health needs can provide valuable information; often the 'missing pieces of the jigsaw.' In many cases parents are acutely aware of the difficulties they and their children are experiencing, as such it is important that there are mechanisms in place for parents and carers to feel confident that they can approach school staff and will be actively listened to by professionals before a situation reaches crisis point.

The school can understand how they can better meet the needs of learners at greater risk of poor mental health and well-being by actively developing partnerships with other agencies who can provide additional information on identifying individual learners who may be at risk of poor mental well-being for example, health visitors and school nurses may have greater insight into family life, this information can be shared to help schools to best support learners. The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) enables the sharing of relevant information between agencies ensuring that learners experience a joined-up approach in times of distress. Primary schools will have often built a detailed understanding of learners and their family circumstances, ensuring that this information is passed on as part of transition planning is vitally important particularly as we know that transition from primary to secondary school can be a stage at which many mental health problems start to emerge.

Schools and colleges often use a range of strategies to identify children and young people at risk of poor emotional and mental health. Usually more serious cases can easily be identified, e.g., through change in academic progress or application, attendance or behaviour, or through sudden trauma or bereavement where the school has been informed. Some cases are less

easy to spot, particularly where early signs are subtle and can be attributed to various causes. Some pupils may try to 'hold it together' or want to keep their school life as 'normal' as possible, and don't want to share any worries or concerns they have. Some may fear the consequences of disclosing, not knowing what will happen next or how their disclosure will be dealt with. Sometimes low-level disruptive behaviour can also indicate that there may be an unmet mental health need.

Schools should regularly provide information on learners' emotional well-being and mental health in an accessible format to parents and carers; An example of an accessible format is the school website. Proactive discussions with parents and carers about the emotional well-being and mental health of learners, in order to highlight where a learner may need some additional support, is encouraged. Almost all schools have learners who require additional support with their wellbeing or who have physical or mental health that require specific care or attention.

Schools should consider having a named member of staff who liaises with families to support the emotional and mental health needs of learners, and who can signpost families to appropriate support services and provides a consistent home-school link.

Questions to Ask?

Does the school actively look to identify learners who may be at risk because of their social and environmental circumstances?

Does the school work closely with other agencies to share information in line with agreed protocols to help them understand the needs of learners?

How does the school actively encourage families and carers to share information that may help schools meet learners needs?

F3: *The school provides easy access to a range of support services appropriate to individual needs both within and outside the school*

Schools should have a range of support services which are effectively communicated to the whole school community, including how to access the available support. Joint working and collaboration with a range of support services will help schools to develop a seamless service for learners, enabling them to access the support they need earlier and therefore improve their outcomes.

In school services and support such as counselling and wellbeing or nurture groups and programmes can provide valuable support to pupils at risk of poorer mental health.

Schools should consider how to adopt learning from the CAMHS In-Reach pilot programme and the associated with the Welsh Government roll out which aims to build the capacity (including skills, knowledge and confidence) in schools to support mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. The CAHMS In-Reach programme provides school staff with access to specialist mental health staff who can advise/consult on individual learners and provide training, so they are better able to support learners who turn to them for help.

Collaborative working with the local authority and key partners will help schools to identify appropriate local or wider support services within the community. Schools can in turn share this information with staff, learners and their families so they are aware of how to access these services. As well as routine local authority and NHS services the third sector may provide specialist support such as for those learners with a parent in prison or experiencing bereavement or domestic abuse.

Questions to Ask?

Is there a confidential school counselling service with data available on the range of learners who utilise this?

Are there visits/links with specialist agencies with expertise of different areas e.g., domestic abuse, family breakdown, alcohol/substance misuse?

How does the school know about the circumstance of vulnerable learners and what do they do to provide timely access to support at key points through the year/recognise key times in people's lives?

F4: *Learners, staff and the wider school community understand how to access help and that help seeking behaviour is encouraged*

There will be opportunities through the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience for learners to explore connections with their experiences, emotional well-being and mental health which will enable them to recognise that feelings and emotions can change. Having an awareness of this is important in supporting learners to develop strategies to regulate their emotions and encourage a culture where discussing emotional well-being and mental health is normal.

There are also opportunities to ensure that learners develop the skills to seek help and are aware of the agencies and organisations that provide help and how to access them.

Schools should ensure that information on how and where to seek help both within the school and outside is easily available to learners. Easy access drop-in services provided by peers, outside bodies such as school nurses and youth services should be promoted as easy access non-stigmatising sources of help and support from which onward help from more specialist services can be accessed.

Positive mental health messages should be shared, physically and virtually, which encourage help seeking behaviour through the creation of safe spaces to provide privacy for both staff and learners to seek the help and support they need. _

Questions to Ask?

Is everyone aware of where to go for help? Is data available on the range of services accessed?

Are there established links with external agencies e.g., CAMHS?

Do staff know how to respond and support learners who self-harm or attempt suicide?

Is there a clear procedure to respond to traumatic events e.g., sudden death, attempted suicide / suicide that all staff are aware?

9 Section G: School Environment

G. School Environment and Facilities – the environment and facilities of the school support good emotional and mental well-being

Why is this important?

Schools should be safe environments for learners and staff that also promote respect and diversity. The school environment can help learners to make connections between their experiences and the world around them in a meaningful context. The place or context in which learning takes place is an integral part of the learning process. The place where learning happens requires thought and consideration to maximise the learning opportunities and to meet the needs and aspirations of learners. If learners have a

negative experience of the school environment e.g., not enough social spaces in schools to gather and build relationships, spaces which learners find threatening; this can affect mental health, learning and behaviour. It may also lead to disengagement. When learners feel safe, they are more likely to be able to engage in their learning, manage their emotions and ask for support when they need it.

Well-designed and thoughtfully developed school grounds enrich learning and play opportunities. Spending time in blue spaces (rivers, wetlands, beaches) and green spaces (parks, woodland, forests) has been linked to improved life satisfaction, reduced anxiety and increased happiness. Contact and connectedness with nature generates an increase in positive emotions and feelings of vitality, and a decrease in negative emotions; it also provides relief from mental tiredness, and an improvement in attention span.

Outdoor places also provide a diversity of resources and spaces that is hard to replicate in an indoor environment. Children raised with exposure to green space are as much as 55% less likely to develop mental health problems such as substance abuse, stress-related illnesses and eating disorders. Research also suggests that greener neighbourhoods and outdoor education reduce stress, encourage exercise and boost the learning process. By engaging in outdoor activities, challenges and teamwork, learners can grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children who spend more time outside during the day have also shown improved concentration, increased productivity, better behaviour and more positive relationships amongst their peer group.

Studies also show there are places within schools that learners do not find positive, which may lead to feeling unsafe. School toilets are often an example of this as are other environments which are out of the way and can provide spaces where bullying or other potentially threatening behaviour takes place. Working with the school community can help to identify these areas and positive action can be taken. Schools should also consider the journey to school which for some learners can also be a source of concern.

School Environment and Facilities in emotional and mental well-being in action

In undertaking your self-evaluation, you will need to consider a number of dimensions of the school environment and facilities, these will include:

- How the indoor and outdoor environment can influence the emotional and mental well-being of learners and staff.
- How the variety of different spaces indoors and outdoors suit learners' different needs e.g., space for active play, space for quiet refection, gardens, buddy benches, nurture, school-based counselling.

- How do you engage staff and learners in the development of physical spaces and environments that supports the emotional and mental well-being of learners, staff and the wider community?
- What opportunities are there for learners to experience natural places?

G1: *The school has a range of physical spaces and environments that supports the emotional and mental well-being of pupils and staff*

School buildings and grounds lay the foundation for learning and a well-designed school environment can enhance children's physical and mental health. Creating a warm welcome at your school and setting a positive tone for each day is important. As well as making people feel happy, the aesthetics of an environment can also improve learner and staff well-being and make them feel valued.

Examples of consideration for the internal spaces include a welcoming foyer, displays of learners' work, pleasant rooms and corridors, well-maintained toilets and actions to help learners to be sociable in the dining room e.g., round dining tables.

Every school should also have a designated 'safe space' that provide respite when learners or staff feel overwhelmed, with procedures in place to support the appropriate use of these spaces. These can be indoors or outdoors and should be accessible to all. There is evidence of consideration for 'zones' within the school environment that promotes emotional and mental well-being for individual needs, for example a quiet 'zone' indoors and outdoors, a dedicated 'zone' for one-to-one work with identified learners accessing support and/or school-based counselling. Often these areas have multi-sensory resources to help calm the learners and staff or familiar objects from within the school or from home that prove successful in calming the learners or staff members. Having a designated wellbeing room for staff that is separate from the staff room should also be a consideration.

Break and lunchtime provide an opportunity for learners to socialise with friends and to build relationships across the school community and teaches learners to value and enjoy their lunchtime experience. The school canteen should be a pleasant space in which learners want to spend time. Whatever pupils' lunch choices are in school, they all should have an equally positive dining experience that is shared with their peers.

Learners and staff should have access at all times to school toilets that are open, well ventilated, have functioning locks, and are cleaned regularly and

have appropriate sanitary disposal facilities. Toilets are a common area within a school where bullying and anti-social behaviour takes place. The school should promote washroom/toilet area environments that are safe, reliable, maintainable and user-friendly. Learners and staff need to feel comfortable and safe to encourage them to use the toilet. They should be checked regularly by staff and should be well-lit, bright and colourful to help boost morale. Involving learners in their design and decoration can also help to encourage ownership, pride and reduces vandalism.

Where there are challenges in terms of the amount of outdoor or internal space the school may have or not have, the school should make plans to continually adapt the space(s). Where there are no green spaces outdoors, the school should be able to demonstrate creative ways in which the space has been utilised. Where there is little space internally, the school should demonstrate emotional and mental well-being is at the heart of the plans the school makes for the physical environment. Where possible the school should involve learners, staff and the wider community in supporting the school to achieve a range of physical spaces and environments that supports the emotional and mental well-being of learners and staff.

Questions to Ask?

Is there signage around the school environment that signpost staff and pupils to additional support and advice if needed? Are these clear and accessible to all?

Does the school have blue and green spaces?

How do you overcome any challenges in terms of the amount of outdoor or internal space the school may have or not have?

Does the school have a safe space or zone for learners and staff?

Are the rooms/zones where learners and staff go for additional support, mentoring or counselling welcoming and calming environments?

Is your canteen an environment where learners want to eat and socialise?

Are the school toilets cleaned and checked regularly? Are they a safe environment that prevents any form of bullying or violence?

Are staff and pupils involved in the development of physical spaces and environments that supports the emotional and mental well-being of learners, staff and the wider community?

Are there displays around the school with a focus on how to look after your wellbeing?

What opportunities are there for pupils to engage with outdoor learning both in school and off site?

10 Section H: The Curriculum

H. *Curriculum – the school curriculum, teaching and learning strategies demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of building the foundations of good emotional and mental well-being*

Why is this important?

The new curriculum for Wales has six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) including Health and Wellbeing; Expressive Arts; Humanities; Languages; Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; and Science and Technology, all can develop mental and emotional wellbeing.

The four purposes are a fundamental part of the new curriculum and are a starting point and aspiration for schools' curriculum design. The aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become ambitious, capable learners; ready to learn throughout their lives; enterprising, creative contributors; ready to play a full part in life and work; ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world and healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Teaching about mental health and wellbeing as part of the curriculum will help to promote learners' well-being through an understanding of their own and others' emotions and the development of healthy coping strategies. The curriculum is designed to allow teachers to support learners to explore the connections between their experiences, emotional and mental well-being. Through gaining an understanding of the factors that impact on emotional and mental well-being learners can be supported to manage their experiences and act with empathy, compassion and kindness for themselves and others. By supporting learners to better understand their own mental health and how to take care of it, schools can encourage more open discussions and help break down the stigma around mental health. It will also contribute to safeguarding, providing learners with knowledge, understanding and strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as equipping them to support others who are facing challenges. By teaching learners about feelings and emotions and supporting them to develop strategies that will help to regulate their emotions, will also help to promote well-being.

Learning outdoors is about engaging learners in many different ways encouraging them to become involved in emotional, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and cognitive experiences as part of their learning. There should be opportunities for all learners to engage with outdoor learning environments and learning experiences that take place off the school site, including residential trips and work experience, to help learners to be more engaged in their learning and support their emotional and mental well-being. By taking learners out of their comfort zones, they get to experience success in tasks that take time and commitment to master. For example, rock-climbing, completing obstacle courses or participating in team-building exercises provide learning opportunities for learners, challenging them to overcome anxieties, to develop resilience and to solve problems (Estyn, 2020).

Estyn (2020) identified that schools that provide good learning experiences about mental health use evidence-based approaches and plan for progression over time, with plenty of opportunities for learning to be reinforced and practiced. This can be achieved by integrating social and emotional skills development within all areas of the curriculum. These skills include motivation, self-awareness, problem-solving, conflict management and resolution, collaborative working, how to understand and manage feelings and how to manage relationships with parents, carers and peers. These can help learners negotiate the challenges of growing up and making transitions, and act as protective factors by preventing the development of mental health problems and risk-taking behaviour.

Curriculum in emotional and mental well-being in action

In undertaking the self-evaluation, the school will need to consider a number of dimensions of the curriculum, these include:

- Learning and teaching being informed by sound evidence and expertise
- The visibility of emotional and mental well-being throughout the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- Opportunities to enable pupils to recognise what promotes their emotional and mental well-being and how to cope with the ups and downs of life and transitions
- Cross curricular approaches that seek opportunities to promote mental and emotional well-being not just within the health and well-being AoLE.
- The school reinforcing important messages about pupils' health and well-being through all aspects of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- How learner progress is monitored and reviewed.

H1: *The school curriculum provides developmentally appropriate learning and development in relation to emotional literacy, positive psychological development and problem-solving skills to develop resilience in line with Welsh Government Curriculum Guidance*

The curriculum provides an opportunity for a holistic approach to emotional and mental well-being that is embedded throughout the curriculum, rather than being taught in isolation in a given timetable slot or only available to a few learners.

The Health and Wellbeing AoLE provides the under-pinning learning that supports emotional and mental wellbeing. The 'what matters' statements specifically address core components of mental and emotional well-being:

- How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being
- Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others
- Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being

Within the humanities AoLE, learners can develop an understanding of how individual and collective decision-making can support ethical and sustainable responses to challenges and opportunities. Within languages, literacy and communication learners can develop skills to effectively communicate which in turn provides a foundation for developing healthy relationships and seeking help when needed. Learners can develop knowledge and understanding of the process of decision-making, including the implications of decisions and consideration of risk within the mathematics and numeracy AoLE. Learning how the brain works can help learners understand their thoughts, feelings and emotions and how lifestyle choices can impact the human body including diet, drug use and exercise.

Links to emotional and mental well-being across all AoLE's should be considered and drawn on to fully embed holistic learning.

Schools have a key role in teaching the skills and exploring attitudes, beliefs and values that lie at the heart of emotional, social and mental well-being. The curriculum should actively encourage learners to be able to practice emotional literacy skills, to manage risks, express ideas and emotions. Learners should also gain the knowledge and skills required to understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, promoting the resilience of all learners to be able to cope with the challenges facing them in their school and home contexts.

The school's curriculum design process should be informed by sound evidence and by understanding the needs of learners, this enables the school to consider equity of opportunity for all. It should be co-constructed and flexible, taking on board the views and or needs of learners, parents, carers, the local community and other professionals. Learning experiences should be carefully planned to ensure progressive development over time. A variety of approaches to learning and teaching should also be used including active, cooperative and peer learning and effective use of technology. The opportunity to explore and practice responding to a range of scenarios is particularly valuable in this area of the curriculum, helping to develop higher functions for forward planning, risk identification and management in a safe environment.

Progression and development in many aspects of health and well-being will depend upon the stage of growth, development and maturity of each pupil, upon social issues and upon the community context. Teachers should take account of these factors, ensuring that experiences are relevant and realistic for the child or young person in his or her circumstances.

Talking openly about mental health issues is an effective means of breaking down any associated stigma and teachers need to be flexible in their approach to utilise the opportunities presented by current events of learner experiences. The emphasis should be on developing learner's knowledge, understanding, skills, language and confidence to seek support, as needed, for themselves or others. They should understand when to seek help, what help is available, and the likely outcome of seeking support.

Questions to Ask?

What are the types of evidence used to help inform the design of the school curriculum?

Are learners able to talk openly about their mental health, feelings, thoughts and emotions but also those of others?

Do teaching and learning approaches maximise participatory approaches?

What opportunities do learners have to develop and practice emotional literacy skills?

What opportunities do learners have to manage risks, express ideas and emotions?

H2: *The school curriculum recognises and fosters the positive role of the arts, culture and sport in promoting emotional and mental well-being*

There is growing evidence of the impact of the arts, culture and sport in improving mental and physical health. While there are recognised links between being active through any means and mental health there appear to be particular benefits for team sports which go beyond physical activity.

At the simplest level by engaging in these activities, learners will recognise and represent feelings and emotions, both their own and those of others. They can have rich opportunities to be creative and imaginative and to experience inspiration and enjoyment. The arts can inspire and motivate learners' creativity, allowing them to find their voice and open up their imagination.

It also offers a space to explore challenging themes more openly outside of the classroom environment. It can build skills such as confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

Creative subjects and sport provide lifelong opportunities to relax and manage the stresses of day-to-day life; providing opportunities to create time and space to enable difficult situations to be considered carefully and thoughtfully.

Many activities such as team sport, group-based music, dance or theatre all develop skills of working co-operatively with others and also require a sense of commitment and discipline that some children may not receive from other aspects of their lives. These activities can also provide the benefit of collective endeavour and a sense of achievement. This sense of purpose and belonging can be protective of harm from other experiences that may have a negative effect on mental wellbeing. Finally, they can help build resilience through the collective experience of responding positively when things do not go well and through shared success.

Actively working to help all learners develop a positive and ongoing engagement in creative arts or sport should be something schools can develop; providing opportunities to experience and test out different creative arts and sports to help learners to find the ones that resonate for them. These opportunities are particularly important where learners may not have those opportunities at home.

Questions to Ask?

How does your curriculum foster the positive role of the arts, culture and sport in enriching our lives?

Does your school value and give prominence to the creative arts and sport?

What type of activities are available for learners to explore the arts, culture and sport?

Public Health Wales	Guidance – Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Self- Evaluation Tool
---------------------	--

What do the school staff do to promote the positive role that the arts, culture and sport play in promoting mental well-being?