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Children & Young People's EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING in Education Framework

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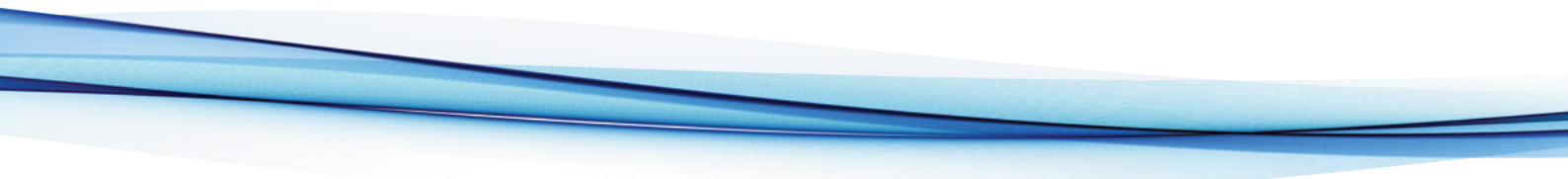




Contents

FOREWORD	iii
SECTION 1 Background	1
Why do we need a Framework?.. ..	1
Mental Health Data for Northern Ireland.	2
What is the Framework for?.. ..	5
Who is the Framework for?	5
Wider Strategic Context	6
Underpinning principles of the Framework	7
The Importance of Terminology	8
Emotional Wellbeing	9
A Model of Support... ..	10
SECTION 2 Wellbeing for All	12
A Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community Approach ..	12
What is “A Mentally Healthy School/Education Setting”	14
Early Support	16
Early Identification of difficulties and early intervention to address them	16
Enhanced Support	17
When more specialist support is needed	17
SECTION 3 Working Together: Support for Schools and Children and Young People	18
Education Authority	19
Voluntary and Community Organisations	20
Selecting Programmes and Services	20
Integrated Working with Education and Health	22
Engaging with External Services for Enhanced Support	22
Family Support Hubs.	23
When is a referral appropriate?	23
Referral process	24
Direct referral to a voluntary and community organisation	24

CAMHS	24
When is a referral appropriate?	24
How to refer	25
SECTION 4 Looking Ahead: An Implementation Plan	26
Planning for further help and support	26
ANNEXES	27
Annex 1 Useful Weblinks	28
Annex 2 References/Endnotes	31



FOREWORD

Children and young people should feel supported and encouraged as they traverse the challenges of growing up. In supporting them to develop the skills that will help them overcome these challenges, we are helping to shape the adults they will become. Indeed today they face a lot more challenges than our generations with the advent of the online world which can provide huge benefits including education and learning opportunities, but can also present a risk to our children and young people, as highlighted in the recently published 'Online Safety Strategy for NI 2020-2025'.

We recognise the Covid-19 pandemic has brought an added dimension but are nonetheless impressed at the resilience our children and young people have shown, and continue to display, during these challenging times.

This Framework recognises our collective responsibility in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our children and young people and those working with them. Increasing concern around the wellbeing of our children and young people has been expressed by those working with them in educational settings as well as their parents and carers and the children and young people themselves.

The development of this Framework has been taken forward in partnership between Education and Health along with other government departments, relevant statutory bodies and agencies, parents, carers, voluntary and community sector organisations and most importantly the children and young people themselves. We thank them all for their support. We would also like to highlight for particular mention Ms Nicole Bond, PhD student at Ulster University, and the National Children's Bureau who undertook the preliminary research to inform the development of the Framework.

As Education and Health Ministers, we are committed to working together to deliver this Framework and accompanying implementation plan to ensure our children and young people reach their full potential and receive the support they need, when they need it.



Peter Weir MLA
Minister of Education



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health



SECTION 1

BACKGROUND

Why do we need a Framework?

- 1.1 We all have a responsibility to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of our children and young people. Government Departments and Agencies continue to work collaboratively to ensure that our children and young people and those working with them will be supported to do so. Educational settings have a unique role in the lives of children & young people and play a central role in creating the optimum environment for the development of their personality, abilities and talents, supporting their disabilities, promoting their wellbeing and identifying and responding to children's mental health difficulties. Indeed for some of our most vulnerable children, educational settings can be a refuge away from other aspects of their life and in this act as a protective factor.
- 1.2 Increasing concern has been raised around the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, particularly among those working with them in Education and other organisations and settings, their parents and carers, and children and young people themselves. The "Elephant in the Room" report has indicated that 91% of participants in the research felt that mental health was a "huge issue" for children and young people in Northern Ireland, with 86% stating that large numbers of young people don't know how to talk about their mental health.¹
- 1.3 When we consider that 50% of mental health problems are established by the age of 14 the importance of promoting emotional health and wellbeing at the earliest stage is clear. Schools and other settings working with children and young people are in a prime position to help develop and instil positive emotional wellbeing. Many schools are already providing excellent support, reflected in a recent Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) report² which found clear evidence of schools creating tailored pastoral care programmes, within the preventative curriculum, to enable pupils to develop resilience and make informed choices which effect their health and wellbeing in a positive way.
- 1.4 The National Children's Bureau (NCB) review which was commissioned by the Department of Education and the Public Health Agency to inform the development of this Framework, largely reflects the findings of the ETI report.

It provides information on the perceived major issues facing children and young people and those who are working with them as they endeavour to provide support in the most effective way, and within the constraints of limited resources. The review indicates that schools are seeking help and guidance on how to maximise support, including how to work more effectively with other support services, particularly if more intensive support may be required. A copy of the full report is available at [Informing the Development of an Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Mental Health Data for Northern Ireland

CYP Mental Health Survey 2020 (Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey)³

- One in eight children and young people in Northern Ireland experienced emotional difficulties, one in ten had conduct problems and one in seven problems with hyperactivity.
- Almost one in ten (9.4%) 11-19 year olds reported self-injurious behaviour and close to one in eight (12.1%) reporting thinking about or attempting suicide.
- Children whose parents had current mental health problems were twice as likely to have an anxiety or depressive disorder themselves. The presence of parental mental health problems increased the rate of any mood or anxiety disorder by a ratio of 1:4.
- When the 20% most deprived areas were compared to the 20% least deprived areas, there were higher overall rates of emotional and behavioural problems (16.5% vs 7.8%), emotional symptoms (18.1% vs 10.6%), conduct problems (13.3% vs 6.0%), hyperactivity (19.6% vs 9.9%) and peer problems (5.1% vs 3.7%).



- Young people in NI are 25% more likely to experience common mental health problems like depression and anxiety compared to young people in England, Scotland or Wales.

Self-Harm Registry⁴

- Between 2012 and 2018 there has been a 15% increase (782 to 1096) in presentations of self-harm by under 18 years to Accident & Emergency Departments.



KLT / YLT Research

- In general, subjective wellbeing decreases with age, particularly between childhood and adolescence.
- Poorer wellbeing amongst those who have been bullied or amongst older children who have been sexually attracted to people of the same sex.

Suicide

Northern Ireland has a persistently high suicide rate, this includes disproportionately higher rates of deaths by suicide of young people.

The data from the Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Study shows that one in 10 young people self harmed and one in 8 had suicidal thoughts.



Family Support Hubs⁵

Emotional behavioural difficulty for primary school age children is year on year the most common presenting problem presented to Family Support Hubs.

Education Authority's Regional Assessment of Need 2018⁶

Age group	All respondents	Age 9-13	Age 14-25
Top 5 issues	Exam Stress (45.9%)	Bullying (40.5%)	Mental Health (37%)
	Boredom (34.5%)	Racism (31.2%)	Suicide (39.4%)
	Body Image (34.4%)	Mental Health (29.8%)	Bullying (31.8%)
	Confidence (32.7%)	Internet Safety (29.6%)	Making positive relationships (25.9%)
	Mental Health (30.2%)	Physical Health (29.5%)	Lack of confidence (25.4%)

What is the Framework for?

The overriding aims of this framework are:

- To ensure that children and young people are empowered and assisted to understand and take care or manage their emotional health and wellbeing.
- That their needs are identified early and addressed effectively when required.
- To establish an integrated model that supports an early help, support and intervention focus on children's emotional health and wellbeing needs.
- That fewer numbers of children and young people will require specialist intervention from Mental Health Services.

Who is the Framework for?

- 2.1 This is primarily a Framework for those working with children and young people in Education. While family and community are central to their wellbeing and interventions being delivered, education plays a key role in providing a nurturing environment and continuum of support as they transition and progress during the early years, through primary and post primary education, including Special Schools, Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) and EA funded youth settings. Of course family and community also have a key role in supporting the education system, thus creating a continuum of support.
- 2.2 Education plays a vital role in helping people enjoy self-esteem, self-confidence, success and good health and wellbeing. Individuals who perform well at school and achieve qualifications are more likely to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours and to find employment. They are also less likely to engage in risk taking behaviours. Alongside the importance of educational experiences to enable children and young people to maximise capabilities and have control over their lives, there is a need to also ensure physical, social and emotional wellbeing are promoted and developed, both in schools, families and communities. These are

all factors which are supported through this Framework and which will have a lifelong impact on the health and wellbeing of our children and young people.

- 2.3 While the detail in this document is mainly focused on children and young people in primary and post primary schools, the underlying principles equally apply to Special Schools, Early Years Setting, EOTAS Centres, Exceptional Teaching Arrangements and EA Funded Youth Settings⁷.
- 2.4 The context within which this is to be delivered is foremost in our thinking – the impact of Covid-19 has certainly created an added dimension to the challenges in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our children and young people. In addition the day-to-day workload concerns highlighted by staff and their trade unions are acknowledged and the focus is to ensure the necessary support is in place for staff to undertake this support role.

Wider Strategic Context

- 3.1 This Framework is being brought forward in the broad context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) then more locally the Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030⁸ which includes a commitment to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people, the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015⁹, the Protect Life 2 A Strategy for Preventing Suicide and Self Harm in Northern Ireland 2019-2024¹⁰ and the recently published Mental Health Action Plan¹¹. New Decade, New Approach reaffirms the Executive’s commitment to the development of an outcomes-focused Programme for Government which commits the Executive to improving outcomes for the citizens of Northern Ireland across strategic outcomes. The Executive has also recently announced the establishment of a new Executive Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, Resilience and Suicide Prevention demonstrating a clear commitment across the Executive to joint working to improve mental wellbeing.
- 3.2 An integral part of the context in developing this Framework is also relevant publications including NICCY’s ‘Still Waiting – A Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland’¹² report, published in 2018 along with the government response to the document and the Belfast Youth Forum’s ‘Elephant in the Room Report’.

Underpinning principles of the Framework

- 4.1 The main focus of the Framework is to provide overarching guidelines to support those working in educational settings to help them promote emotional wellbeing and strengthen self-esteem and resilience in our children and young people. It is designed to help promote wellbeing at a universal level, through a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach, and then to provide targeted support when needs are identified.
- 4.2 Improving long term outcomes for the whole population begins with ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life. This Framework takes a lead from cross government policies for early years which prepare children for life, support them to gain a desire for learning and to be ready for school. The Framework will ensure that the foundations set through early years programmes such as the Infant Mental Health Framework for NI; Healthy Child, Healthy Future; Early Intervention Transformation Programme; Sure Start and the Pre-school education programme are built upon at each stage of a child's journey throughout education.
- 4.3 The Framework is based on research which indicates that universal promotion of emotional health and wellbeing is more effective than targeted support directed solely to those considered to be in high risk groups¹³ (for example those who may be more vulnerable due to their life experiences, or those showing signs of early difficulty). An initial focus on universal support provides an opportunity to "shift the curve" and help reduce the risk of our children and young people developing mental illness now or in the future.



The Importance of Terminology

- 5.1 The terminology regarding **emotional health, emotional wellbeing** and **mental health** can often be used interchangeably. Indeed the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health was recently amended to take on a more child focused dimension, a change influenced by young people from Northern Ireland during the European Network of Ombudspersons (ENOC) Annual Conference 2018:

'A state of wellbeing that allows children to develop and become aware of their own unique personality, to build their own identity, to fulfil their own potential, to cope with the challenges of growing up; to feel loved, secure and accepted as unique individuals and to be able to be happy, play, learn and to participate and contribute to family and community¹⁴.'

- 5.2 Emotional health and emotional wellbeing generally are understood to describe when we feel healthy, happy and life is going well at the upper end of the definition, and are also there when things aren't going so well to ensure that we are able to cope with the ups and downs of life¹⁵. Mental health generally includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it is not just the absence of mental disorder. Mental Health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.
- 5.3 It is important to recognise that we all have "mental health" which is very distinct from mental illness but can often add to the stigma of talking about our mental health.¹⁶ **It is also important to acknowledge that mental distress is not mental illness.** As with physical health, which is on a continuum where we know what we need to do to care for our physical health (eat well, exercise, sleep) and we can get ill from time to time, mental health operates in the same way. Mental health is something all children & young people need to know about in the same context as they need to know how to care for physical health.
- 5.4 This Framework uses both terms "emotional health and wellbeing" to describe the positive aspects of mental health and "mental health" to include emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

Emotional Wellbeing

6.1 We know that children are not born with a fixed social and emotional skill set, but they can learn and develop social and emotional skills throughout childhood and beyond. The Early Intervention Foundation (2015) identified five key aspects of social and emotional capability¹⁷:

Self Perceptions/ Self Awareness

- sense of self direction and self esteem
- the belief that one's own actions can make a difference

Motivation

- contributes positively to significant life outcomes for example achievement, performance and wellbeing (Reeve, 2018)
- motivation is visible through gestures and facial expressions, intense effort, immediacy

Self Control/ Self Regulation

- learning about your own feelings and emotions, understanding how and why they happen, recognising them (and those of others), and developing effective ways of managing them
- greater impulse control

Social

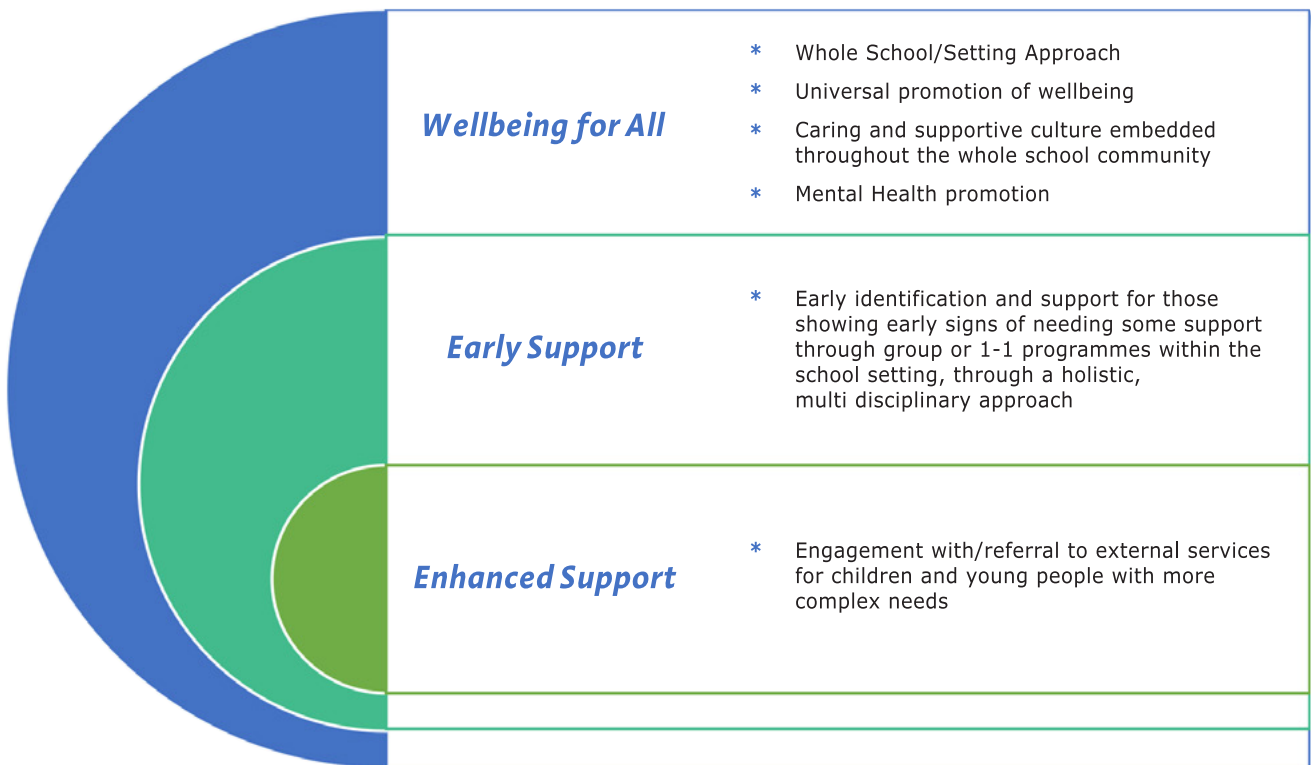
- relationship skills
- communication skills
- peer relationships

Resilience and Coping

- strongly influenced by the people and the conditions that surround us
- a focus on wellbeing with a hopeful mindset/ resilience lens, can help us mitigate future risks and allow young people to cope when they encounter the inevitable challenges as they progress through life

A Model of Support

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the structure of support which underpins this Framework



- 7.1 This Model reflects the strong focus and value of promotion, prevention and early intervention through which educational settings, the Education Authority, Health and Community services can work in an integrated way to support the child or young person both within the educational setting and where required with wider family support services.
- 7.2 The model is also designed to align with health and social care services specifically: the Stepped Care Model of service provision for Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)¹⁸ and with the Children & Young Peoples' Emotional Health & Wellbeing Services Framework developed by the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) and the Public Health Agency (PHA). The main purpose of which is to strengthen children's mental health and developmental services and build greater partnership and more integrated working across universal, early intervention and specialist services. The Services Framework aims to deliver a proactive, integrated and streamlined pathway for children

with emotional health and wellbeing needs who present to Trust children's services. The Education Framework will support educational settings to promote emotional health & wellbeing at a universal level and provide early and enhanced support for those at risk or showing signs of needing further help. Together these Frameworks, through the integration and collaboration of key services, will provide clear pathways to support our children and young people and ensure the staff tasked with supporting them are also appropriately supported.

- 7.3 Both the framework for education and the model and framework for health and social care present the opportunity for joining services together in a way that improves access and delivers a more positive experience of services for the benefit of children and young people and their families.
- 7.4 In implementing this Framework, educational settings should complete a self-assessment audit tool such as that provided by DE¹⁹ to audit and evaluate their practice, identify improvements that could be made and what further practice could/should be introduced. Sections 2 and 3 of this Framework document provides further information on the structures of support within education.



SECTION 2

- 1.1 As noted earlier, this is primarily a Framework for those working with children and young people in Education and, building on the findings of the self-assessment audit, this section aims to act as a checklist for educational settings to assess the measures already in place, provide examples of good practice and outline the steps to be taken in implementing the model of support.

WELLBEING FOR ALL

A Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community Approach

Whole Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopting a holistic, integrated approach. ➤ Recognising that a child or young person entering school feeling happy, healthy, safe and connected to school is more likely to fully engage in learning. ➤ Identifying those children who may not be feeling this way and ensuring that additional support is provided to address their individual needs. ➤ Encourage, support and challenge (where appropriate) to better prepare children and young people for further education, work and adult life. ➤ Recognising that all behaviour is communication – not just “acting out” or being aggressive, but also silent and withdrawn behaviours that can also present in a distressed or worried child or young person. ➤ Create opportunities to hear the voice of the child.
Whole School/Other Educational setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A trauma informed compassionate approach. ➤ Leadership prioritises a culture and ethos that promotes a sense of caring, belonging and respect for all and plans strategically to improve emotional health and wellbeing for all. ➤ Providing an emotionally secure and safe environment and spaces. ➤ Recognising parents and carers as being integral to the school and the child’s wellbeing. ➤ Recognising that teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships and relationship between youth workers and young people are crucial for wellbeing.

Whole Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognising the setting is a key hub within its community. ➤ Linking with local voluntary and community services including youth services, sports clubs, churches and local businesses.
Staff Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ethos and environment of the school places a high value and significance on staff wellbeing. ➤ An understanding that if staff are not effectively supported they cannot be expected to properly support the children and young people in their care. ➤ A culture of trust where all staff feel valued and know how to access support if needed, for example through the use of staff debriefing/supervision. ➤ Supporting and providing comprehensive and on-going training as deemed necessary. ➤ Support given to the emotional health & wellbeing of educational setting leaders by the employing authority.
Parents and Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage and promote the involvement of parents to contribute to the life of the educational setting. ➤ Creating a better sense of connectedness between parents and settings, and fostering mutual respect. ➤ Recognising that for some parents and carers, engaging with staff can be challenging, for example those who themselves have had a difficult relationship during their own time at school. ➤ Encouraging parental and carer engagement through a welcoming open door policy, invitations to attend informal events (class breakfast/celebrating achievement etc) helping to build up trust and mutual understanding. ➤ Empowering parents to promote emotional wellbeing within the home environment, reinforcing the wellbeing culture and ethos of the setting. ➤ Recognising that when parents are involved in an intervention there is a higher degree of success.²⁰

What is “A Mentally Healthy School/Education Setting”?

“A Mentally Healthy School/Education Setting” is one that adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, helping children to flourish, learn and succeed by providing opportunities for them, and the adults around them, to develop the strengths and coping skills that underpin resilience. The school considers positive mental health and wellbeing as fundamental to its values, mission and culture, where child, staff and parent wellbeing is seen as “everybody’s business”.²¹

Effective Practice includes:

- Commitment to whole school/setting and universal wellbeing from the Principal/leadership teams, including the importance of staff wellbeing.
- Promoting a caring, supportive culture and ethos embedded throughout the whole school/setting community involving children, young people, staff, parents and carers.
- Promoting a sense of belonging and respect for all, and providing an emotionally secure and safe environment that encourages and instils a sense of self-esteem, self-regulation, skill development and overall resilience.
- Integrating emotional health and wellbeing in all policies and practice, and throughout all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the culture and ethos impacts on teacher wellbeing and pedagogy, including the teacher-pupil relationship, the culture within individual classrooms and classroom management strategies, all of which mediate a range of pupil wellbeing and academic outcomes.²²
- Giving children & young people a voice - ensuring they have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that may impact on emotional wellbeing.
- Reviewing pastoral structures regularly to identify and meet children & young people’s need.
- Delivering universal evidence informed programmes to promote resilience and wellbeing.

NOTES

1. While there are a range of available assessment tools, DE's self-assessment audit tool for schools (2018) helps schools to consider how they currently support the development of a whole school approach. This tool was developed under the DE iMatter²³ Programme, through a working group comprising representatives from both the voluntary and statutory sectors, including teachers and educational psychologists and whilst directed to schools it can be used by a range of educational settings. The toolkit includes sections on support for pupils, staff, parents and carers and links with the local community. Further details can be found at [Self-Assessment Audit Tool - Information and Questionnaires \(opens in a new window\)](#).
2. Links to further resources and information are listed at Annex 1.



EARLY SUPPORT

Early Identification of difficulties and early intervention to address them

Early intervention means identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes. Effective early intervention works to prevent problems occurring, or to tackle them head-on when they do, before problems get worse. It also helps to foster a whole set of personal strengths and skills that prepare a child for adult life. Early intervention can take different forms, from home visiting programmes to support vulnerable parents, to school-based programmes to improve children's social and emotional skills, to mentoring schemes for young people who are vulnerable to involvement in crime.²⁴

Effective Practice includes:

- Identifying children and young people who are showing early signs of problems with their emotional wellbeing and working with them and their parents or carers in a holistic way to provide the support they need. Early signs of anxiety and emotional distress could be experienced, for example, by children who have experienced stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child or affect the environment in which they live.²⁵
- Intervening early to provide support before difficulties escalate, supporting the individual and also benefitting society as a whole by reducing the impact of mental health problems.
- Providing awareness training and capacity building for all education staff in recognising signs of difficulty and how to respond.
- Delivering school/setting based, group or 1-1 evidence informed programmes to support and improve children and young people's emotional wellbeing which would be monitored and evaluated for impact and improvement on wellbeing.
- Implementing and supporting mentoring programmes.
- Working collaboratively through integrated working with Education Authority, Health, Voluntary & Community services, within the setting and as required with wider family support services.

ENHANCED SUPPORT

When more specialist support is needed

Enhanced support for the purposes of this Framework is defined as when there is a need for more specialist service intervention for children and young people presenting with more complex needs which schools cannot be expected to provide.

Effective Practice includes:

- Working collaboratively with Education, Health and Voluntary and Community services to help deliver a seamless model to support children, young people and their families when there is evidence of need.
- Providing training and awareness for education staff to help them gain an understanding of levels of need; the range of services that are appropriate and how these may be accessed, including when to refer (including details of relevant care pathways).
- Maintaining a continuum of care and connectedness with the school/setting, even if the child or young person is unable to attend (or needs to attend another setting to address their particular needs).
- Co-delivery of specialist supports across education and health where a bespoke model of delivery is required to meet individual needs of particular children and young people and their families.
- Working in partnership with the employing authority to ensure support is provided for the wellbeing of leadership and staff, as well as to develop and deliver whole school programmes and initiatives.



SECTION 3

WORKING TOGETHER: SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 1.1 We have listened to the concerns voiced in a range of different settings that they are supporting children and young people who are presenting with more complex needs, which is becoming increasingly evident in primary school age children. We acknowledge that schools often feel they are not equipped to provide or able to access the necessary help and support to address what can be highly challenging needs of the children and young people in their care. We also know that the importance of embedding mental health and wellbeing into all educational settings has been called for by many organisations, most recently NICCY's 'Still Waiting – A Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'²⁶ report and the Belfast Youth Forum's 'Elephant in the Room Report'.
- 1.2 Delay in identifying and addressing potential needs can have a far reaching effect on young people's lives. Those working with children and young people on a regular basis are likely to have developed healthy relationships with them and may often be the first to identify behaviours that suggest there may be an underlying problem or difficulty that requires specific help and support.
- 1.3 Those children who may be vulnerable might include those who are known to Social Services, Children Looked After (including those who have subsequently been adopted) children in kinship care, those living in families where there is conflict, domestic violence or instability, Newcomer/Traveller children, those who persistently refuse to go to school, those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences or life events (such as bereavement or parental separation and those who have been exposed to abuse or violence) and also young people identifying as LGBTQ.
- 1.4 The aspiration of this Framework is that universal promotion of wellbeing with an enhanced system of integrated working within schools should ultimately lead to a reduced number of children and young people needing more specialist help for mental health difficulties. This section provides an overview of the support services available and how it is intended to integrate these services, through an enhanced model of collaborative working which will aim to deliver seamless support for children, young people and their families. The objective of this

approach is to help prevent difficulties arising and provide the right help at the right time when there is evidence of emotional health and wellbeing needs.

- 1.5 There are currently a range of programmes and services already being delivered in schools that provide support to individuals or groups, depending on their needs. Such support can be delivered by schools themselves, with assistance and/or capacity building provided by other government agencies or external organisations.

Education Authority

- 2.1 The Education Authority provides support for schools through a range of services as demonstrated below:

Figure 2:
A Co-ordinated EA approach in supporting children and young people



Voluntary and Community Organisations

- 3.1 The voluntary & community sector provide a range of early intervention support services related to emotional health & wellbeing and as noted in NICCY's 'Still Waiting' report²⁷, young people highlighted the effectiveness of support received from both statutory and voluntary & community sector organisations, working collaboratively.
- 3.2 In implementing this Framework we need to utilise this effective support and we know schools are already engaging with the voluntary & community sector to deliver programmes to their children & young people and/or staff.
- 3.2 We recognise the importance of educational settings having flexibility around the type of support provided for pupils. Therefore this framework is intentionally not prescriptive on which programmes should be provided, but rather offers guidelines on selecting programmes and services, including factors to consider before commissioning external services to ensure they will have maximum effect. This applies equally to both universal preventative programmes and tailored group or individual support.

Selecting Programmes and Services

- 4.1 Programmes developed and delivered by external providers can offer valuable support to educational settings, particularly those that are evidence based and have been subject to independent evaluation. **Indeed it is recommended that only evidence based and evaluated programmes are delivered, this is essential in ensuring provision is quality assured.**
- 4.2 It is worth noting that research has shown that practitioner delivery rather than procuring outside support is most effective²⁸. This is in part due to the opportunity provided to build trusting relationships between children and young people and practitioner, as well as the opportunities provided to integrate support within the wider culture, environment and curriculum of the educational setting, and not just seen as a "one off" event. Indeed children and young people themselves also feel that this approach is of more value²⁹.
- 4.3 We recognise however that every setting will not be in a position to offer age appropriate training. Thus programmes developed and delivered by external providers offer a means of providing needed support. When considering external

providers to deliver programmes within the setting, there are some factors to consider:

- What are the required outcomes?
- What is needed to achieve change?
- How long is it likely to take to achieve this change?
- Decide on a staged approach to delivery rather than trying to do everything at once.
- Select programmes that are congruent with the needs and context of your school or organisation.
- To what extent is there rigorous evidence to support a given programme:
 - ◆ Is there evidence that this programme has achieved positive outcomes for children and young people?
 - ◆ What is the nature of the evidence? How strong is that evidence?
 - ◆ How confident can you be that these positive outcomes are real and more likely to be replicated as a result?
- How does the programme inform the curriculum – the training provided should not be an isolated or one off event, but embedded in the ethos of the school and within classroom delivery.
- Have other schools used this programme successfully?

4.4 Further information on social and emotional learning programmes and those that have been evaluated and shown to improve outcomes for children and young people can be found at:

[Early Intervention Foundation - Guidebook \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools: Guidance report \(opens in a new window\)](#)



Integrated Working with Education and Health

- 5.1 A holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to supporting children and young people within the educational setting should help ensure they receive the right help at the right time according to their needs. Through this Framework, the relevant Health Services, including CAMHS, RISE Teams and School Nursing, will work jointly with the Education Authority and voluntary and community organisations to develop a range of enhanced services and an integrated system of service provision. This will be central to the implementation of the Framework (See Section 4). We recognise that Health & Education working together in such an integrated and cohesive way will be challenging however this Framework, the Services Framework and the overarching strategic context outlined at the beginning of this document will all contribute to making this a reality.

Engaging with External Services for Enhanced Support

- 6.1 Although a new model of integrated working within schools will be introduced, there will still be occasions where children and young people could benefit from engagement with external services for more intensive support.

Family Support Hubs

- 7.1 A Family Support Hub is a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services, or work with families who need support. The network accepts direct referrals from educational settings and uses their knowledge of local service providers to signpost families with specific needs to an appropriate service. The Family Support Hubs encourage and support help-seeking and are designed for those situations where families realise they need additional support but have not reached the stage of requiring Social Services intervention. Hubs take a whole family approach and can refer to both adult and children and young people's organisations across a wide range of needs.
- 7.2 There are currently 29 Family Support Hubs in operation covering all of Northern Ireland with each hub having a dedicated Co-ordinator who receives and processes all referrals to the Hub. Hubs coordinate existing statutory/voluntary and community services including youth work providers. Some hubs have specific attached services but this is separate from the hub function which is about coordination.

When is a referral appropriate?

- 8.1 Referrals will only be accepted on the basis of the written informed consent of the family concerned. Examples of when a referral to a local Family Support Hub may be appropriate include:

- a child or young person (and his/her family) is showing signs of needing additional help to cope with emotional difficulties they are facing; and
- the educational setting and the integrated support teams are unable to support them due to the complexities of the situation; and
- the child or young person is **not suspected** to be displaying signs of mental ill health or other condition that results in persistent symptoms of psychological stress that requires urgent attention; and
- there is **no suspected risk** that the child/young person may cause serious harm to themselves or others.

Referral process

- 9.1 Referrals should be made directly to the Family Support Hub co-ordinator for the relevant geographic area and these details can be found on the Family Support NI database at [FamilySupportNI \(opens in a new window\)](#) and are also available on the Family Support NI App which can be downloaded to a smartphone from the relevant app store. Information sharing protocols are in place in each area.

Direct referral to a voluntary and community organisation

- 10.1 It is recognised that many schools have already established relationships with local voluntary and community organisations who are available to provide external support for children and young people when needed. Educational settings may therefore quite rightly wish to continue to refer children and young people for more intensive support in the usual way, rather than through the local Family Support Hub. The Public Health Agency, while not implying any endorsement or recommendation, provides a locality based directory of services available to the public to help improve emotional health and wellbeing, including helpline details. Links to the local directories are provided at Annex 1.

CAMHS

- 11.1 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) operates a Stepped Care Model for all children and young people up to the age of 18 who are experiencing mental health issues. The Stepped Care Model is about providing children and young people with the right level of service at the right time, dependent on their need.

When is a referral appropriate?

- 12.1 CAMHS engages with a wide range of services across sectors and can provide consultation and advice in respect of concerns from a wide range of professionals engaging with children and young people. Referrals to CAMHS are appropriate where there is a clinical concern or identified need. Both of the following two conditions must be met for a referral to CAMHS:

Condition 1 (basic threshold) – A child/young person has or is suspected to have a mental ill health or other condition that results in persistent symptoms of psychological stress.

Condition 2 (complexity and severity threshold) – (at least one of the following exists):

- An associated serious and persistent impairment of their day to day functioning.
- An associated risk that the child/young person may cause serious harm to themselves or others.

12.2 The criteria applied for CAMHS is outlined in The CAMHS Integrated Care Pathway: *Working Together: A Pathway for Children and Young People through CAMHS*³⁰ which was published in March 2018.

How to refer

13.1 Referrals to CAMHS may be made from:

- General Practitioners.
- Child and Family Social Services.
- Paediatric Services.
- Child Health Services.
- Educational Welfare Services including Independent Counselling Service for Schools.
- EOTAS settings.
- Voluntary agencies within the Step Care Model and Family Support Hubs.

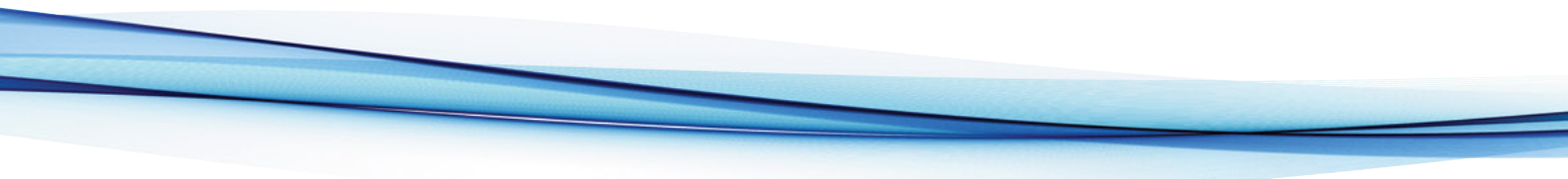


SECTION 4

LOOKING AHEAD: AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Planning for further help and support

- 1.1 The implementation plan is divided into 7 themes of support which reflect the issues highlighted by children and young people and those working with them. These will be kept under continuous review to ensure that support services and programmes are making a positive impact and addressing need.

 - 1.2 The Themes for delivery are:
 1. Empowering and supporting children and young people
 2. Curriculum resources
 3. Staff Wellbeing
 4. Training and Capacity Building for staff
 5. Enhanced Help Services
 6. Measurement of Wellbeing
 7. Evaluation
- 

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 Useful Weblinks

ANNEX 2 References/Endnotes

Annex 1

USEFUL WEBLINKS

Subject Area	Weblinks
General	<p>Mentally Healthy Schools (mentallyhealthyschools.org) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Anna Freud Centre (annafreud.org) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Resources - Anna Freud Centre (annafreud.org) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Mental health resources for schools (place2be.org.uk) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Minding Your Head (mindingyourhead.info) (opens in a new window)</p>
Whole School Approach	<p>Academic Resilience (youngminds.org.uk) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Whole-school approach (mentallyhealthyschools.org) (opens in a new window)</p>
Staff Wellbeing	<p>10 steps towards school staff wellbeing - Anna Freud Centre (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Guide to supporting staff wellbeing in school - Anna Freud Centre (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Supporting staff wellbeing - Mentally Healthy Schools (opens in a new window)</p>
Engaging with parents and carers	<p>Engaging with parents and carers - Childrens mental health and wellbeing in schools - Anna Freud Centre (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Parent/carers engagement - Mentally Healthy Schools (opens in a new window)</p>

Subject Area	Weblinks
Early Intervention/ Programmes of Support	<p>What is early intervention? - Early Intervention Foundation (eif.org.uk) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools: Guidance report - Early Intervention Foundation (opens in a new window)</p> <p>EIF Guidebook - Early Intervention Foundation (opens in a new window)</p>
CCEA Guidance, Resources and Support for Wellbeing	
Wellbeing and the Northern Ireland Curriculum	<p>Wellbeing Hub (ccea.org.uk) (opens in a new window)</p>
Relationships and Sexuality Education	<p>Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) - CCEA (opens in a new window)</p>
Public Health Agency Directory of Services to Help Improve Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing	<p>Directory of services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing (publichealth.hscni.net) (opens in a new page)</p> <p>Psychological First Aid (Guest) (hsclearning.com) (opens in a new window)</p> <p>Quality Standards for Services Promoting Mental and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention (publichealth.hscni.net) (opens in a new window)</p>

Subject Area	Weblinks
"SHOUT"	Crisis Text Line UK (opens in new window) Share the number - Give Us A Shout (opens in a new window)
EA Youth Service (support for any young person aged 9 to 25 years)	Stay Connected – Youth Online (opens in a new window)
Family Support Hubs	Family Support Hubs – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (opens in a new window)

Annex 2

REFERENCES/ENDNOTES

- 1 [ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 2 [An evaluation of the effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-Being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 3 [Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey 2020 - HSCB \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 4 [Northern Ireland Registry of Self-Harm Annual Report 2017-2018 | HSC Public Health Agency \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 5 [Family Support Hubs Report Card 2019/20 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 6 [Education Authority - Regional Assessment of Need February 2018 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 7 The Framework does not extend to Further Education.
- 8 [Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 9 [Children's Services Co-operation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 10 [Protect Life 2 - Suicide Prevention Strategy \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 11 [Mental Health Action Plan \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 12 [Mental Health Review - Still Waiting \(opens in a new window\); Interdepartmental Action Plan in response to the "Still Waiting" Report - Department of Health \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 13 [Geoffrey Rose's Prevention Paradox \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 14 [ENOC Position Statement on Child Mental Health in Europe \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 15 [What is mental health? \(opens in a new window\)](#)

- 16 [ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 17 [Social and emotional learning: Skills for life and work \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 18 [Working Together: A Pathway for Children and Young People through CAMHS \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 19 [Circular 2018/07 - Self-Assessment Audit Tool for Schools \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 20 [An evaluation of the effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well-Being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 21 [Whole-school approach : Mentally Healthy Schools \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 22 Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Banerjee et al 2014
- 23 [Child Centred Provision \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 24 [What is early intervention? \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 25 Bellis et al 2016 Public Health Wales
- 26 [Mental Health Review - Still Waiting \(opens in a new window\); Interdepartmental Action Plan in response to the "Still Waiting" Report - Department of Health \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 27 ['Still Waiting' - A Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 28 (Rones et al, 2000)
- 29 [ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- 30 [Working Together: A Pathway for Children and Young People through CAMHS \(opens in a new window\)](#)



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EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
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