September 2022



**Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being**

**Self-Evaluation Tool**

**Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Emotional Well-being**

**Self - Evaluation Tool**

**Introduction:**

The World Health Organisation defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. It further defines mental health as ‘a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.’ (WHO, 2019). Mental well-being includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Education and mental well-being are closely linked and promoting the health and well-being of learners within schools can positively impact learner cooperation, commitment, learning and engagement (Public Health England, 2014). This means having a school culture, ethos and environment that nurtures learners’ health and well-being can improve their educational outcomes.

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, which enables learners to make progress to these purposes. The whole-school approach supports these aims and the evidence points to academic and social development as being intrinsically linked. Within the new curriculum, the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience is the anchor around which the whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being will be built. It will ensure mental health is given parity with physical health and emotional well-being and attainment (Welsh Government- Framework guidance on embedding a whole-school approach, 2021).

**A whole school approach:**

A whole school approach recognises that every aspect of the life of the school can impact on our health and wellbeing and all of those within the school community; students, 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 working across the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. It should involve learners, parents and carers, staff and governors all working together as a school community to improve well-being based on a shared 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.

**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 and a process that should be returned to as part of a process on ongoing enquiry and review. 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. Completing the tool will draw on multiple sources of evidence from hard data as well as an exploration of thoughts and feelings from the whole school community. 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, this will support them in developing the culture which supports the well-being of children and young people and to embedding the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being.

**How to use the tool:**

The evaluation tool uses key questions from the Welsh Government statutory framework on ‘embedding a whole-school approach’ to emotional & mental well-being and will replace the existing National Quality Award Emotional Health and Well-being criteria of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS). The process of completing the tool and the discussions that the school has, involving all parts of the school community, is the most valuable 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 support schools in undertaking this evaluation, your local Whole School Approach Implementation Lead and your local Healthy Schools Team will be available to support you in this process.

The evaluation tool should be utilised in the following way:

* The evaluation 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.
* Guidance is available to help you complete the tool and it is intended that this will be developed over the next year to be more comprehensive
* The school should agree priorities for action following the assessment 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 assessment 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.
* The Implementation Lead / Healthy Schools practitioner will maintain support with the school, and review progress of an agreed timescale. They will gather information on priorities for development so that common areas are identified and fed into the regional and national working where additional guidance, training or support is needed
* This process is a live document and needs to be kept under review. We would suggest that schools review action annually with a more in depth review every two years

**Scoring System**

You are asked to select one of the following descriptors to identify your school’s progress against each indicator. There are no right and wrong answers, what is important is that you can evidence your scoring as a group. Benchmarking and peer review exercises will help to refine these.

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|  | **Excelling**  Our school can identify a range of supporting evidence and examples of policies, practice and initiatives that put Emotional and Mental Wellbeing at the heart of our school’s ethos and culture, this is acknowledged by all stakeholders. These policies and practices are consistently embedded across the school. |
|  | **Embedding**  Our school is responding to emerging themes relating to the Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Framework and have some strategies/interventions in place, but areas of development and input from all stakeholders are still required and/or are not consistent across the school or fully embedded. |
|  | **Emerging**  Our school is beginning to identify emerging themes relating to the Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Framework and there is some evidence to support this, however there is a consensus that further development is required. |

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| **A** | **Leadership and commitment – our 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** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  | |
| 1 | A senior member of staff is designated as lead for health and well-being including the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being framework; supported where appropriate by other members of staff |  |  |  |  | |
| 2 | Our school development and improvement plans include measurable action to promote emotional and mental well-being in the whole school community |  |  |  |  | |
| 3 | Our school can evidence a continuous improvement approach in which plans are regularly reviewed against outcomes and change is made as necessary. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4 | Communication within our school and with our wider school community provide evidence of our commitment to learners and staff health and well-being, including emotional and mental well-being |  |  |  |  | |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  | |  | |
| 5 | Our school can evidence that, within available resources, support is provided for activities which promote emotional and mental well-being |  |  |  | |  | |
| 6 | Our 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. |  |  |  | |  | |
| **B** | **Understanding the emotional and mental well-being needs of learners and staff – our school understands emotional and mental well-being issues within the school** | | | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  | |  | |  |
| 1 | Our school understands the emotional and mental well-being needs of the learners and staff in the school and how these have changed over time |  |  | |  | |  |
| 2 | Our school can identify and describe the needs of specific groups of learners who may be at greater risk of experiencing poor emotional and mental well-being. |  |  | |  | |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 3 | Our school actively monitors a range of emotional and mental well-being outcomes against key indicators e.g. free school meals, ethnicity, to minimise inequalities in emotional and mental well-being. |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Our school is aware of emerging health priorities and topics relating to emotional and mental well-being and is connected to wider strategic plans and priorities in the area. |  |  |  |  |
| **C** | **Involvement and Engagement – our 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** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our school can demonstrate how it ensures that learner voice is prominent in all activity and that this reflects all learners. |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Our school can demonstrate how it ensures that parents / carers and families are actively engaged in school life. |  |  |  |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 3 | Our school can demonstrate how it ensures that all staff are actively engaged and involved in decisions that impact on school life. | |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | The school can evidence a range of partnerships with public and third sector agencies with expertise in emotional and mental well-being and how their expertise is informing action | |  |  |  |  |
| **D** | **Workforce – our school can evidence how it supports staff within the school to maintain their own well-being and effectively promote emotional and mental wellbeing in others** | | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** | |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our school can demonstrate how it supports staff in maintaining and improving their emotional and mental well-being |  | |  |  |  |
| 2 | Our school has considered the skills and competencies required by staff in undertaking their role to support emotional and mental well-being in our school and has a process in place to ensure they are able to develop and maintain these |  | |  |  |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 3 | Our 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. |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Our staff who undertake specific roles in relation to emotional and mental well-being have access to professional support and supervision (a regular reflective conversation not linked to performance management) appropriate to their role. |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | **Relationships – our school recognises the importance of relationships and school connectedness in underpinning good emotional and mental well-being** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our 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 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Our school can demonstrate how it fosters and develops healthy relationships between all members of the school community |  |  |  |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 3 | Our school recognises and evidences the importance of equality and human rights for emotional and mental wellbeing. |  |  |  |  |
| **F** | **Help and support services – Our school can evidence how it proactively recognises signs of emotional and mental well-being problems and works with others to facilitate access to timely help and support** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our school has a clear process through which concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of individual learners can be discussed and reviewed with a multi-disciplinary team to agree a plan of action. |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Our school can demonstrate how it fosters relationships with parents and other agencies so that it is aware of circumstances that might mean that learners are at greater risk of poor emotional and mental well-being e.g. family breakdown. |  |  |  |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Evidence Sources** |  |  |  |
| 3 | Our school provides easy access to a range of support services appropriate to individual needs both within and outside the school. |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Learners, staff and the wider school community understand how to access help and that help seeking behaviour is encouraged. |  |  |  |  |
| **G** | **School Environment and Facilities – the environment and facilities of the school support good emotional and mental well-being** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our school has a range of physical spaces and environments that support the emotional and mental well-being of learners and staff. |  |  |  |  |
| **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** | | | | |
|  | **Indicators** | **Evidence Sources** |  |  |  |
| 1 | Our school curriculum provides developmentally appropriate learning in relation to emotional literacy, positive psychological development and problem solving skills to support resilience in line with Welsh Government Curriculum Guidance. |  |  |  |  |

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|  | **Indicators** | **Analysis of current provision in relation to each indicator, and the evidence sources used to determine the RAG rating.** |  |  |  |
| 2 | Our school curriculum recognises and fosters the positive role of the arts, culture and physical activity in promoting emotional and mental well-being |  |  |  |  |