

Why Focus on Mental Health and Well-Being?

What is mental health and well-being?

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how a person thinks, feels, and acts in different situations. Good mental health allows people to cope with the challenges of life, make positive contributions to society, and achieve their full potential.

Well-being refers to a state of being happy, healthy, and prosperous. It encompasses physical, emotional, and social aspects of a person's life. Good mental health is an essential component of overall well-being.

Why are young people interested in their mental health and well-being?

1. **Increased Awareness:** There has been a significant increase in public awareness and understanding of mental health issues in recent years
2. **Personal Experience:** Many young people have personal experiences with mental health challenges
3. **Social Media:** Social media has created a platform for conversations around mental health, allowing young people to share their experiences and connect with others who are going through similar challenges
4. **Stressful Environment:** Young people today are often faced with high levels of stress and pressure, whether it's related to school, work, or personal relationships. This can make them more interested in maintaining good mental health

Why is mental health an important subject for schools to teach?

Teaching young people about mental health and well-being in schools is essential for several reasons:

- **It promotes awareness and understanding:** Many young people may not clearly understand what mental health is and how it can affect their overall well-being. By teaching them about mental health in school, they can learn about the common mental health conditions, the symptoms, and how to recognise when someone needs help.

- **It reduces stigma:** There is still a lot of stigma around mental health issues, which can prevent people from seeking help or speaking up about their struggles. By educating young people about mental health in school, we can reduce the stigma and create a more open and accepting society.
- **It helps with prevention:** Prevention is always better than cure. By teaching young people about the importance of maintaining good mental health and well-being, they can learn strategies to cope with stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges before they become too overwhelming.
- **It supports early intervention:** Early intervention is critical for improving mental health outcomes. By teaching young people about mental health, they can learn to recognize when they or someone they know may need help and where to seek it.
- **It encourages positive habits:** Mental health and well-being are closely linked to lifestyle factors such as exercise, nutrition, and sleep. By educating young people about the importance of these habits, we can encourage them to adopt healthy behaviours that can support their mental health and well-being throughout their lives.

Overall, teaching young people about mental health and well-being in schools is crucial for building a healthier and more resilient society.

What does Ofsted expect schools to teach on mental health and wellbeing?

Due to its importance, the Ofsted Framework requires inspectors to routinely assess and report on young people's mental health and well-being under Personal Development. Section 412 - 415 of the Ofsted handbook requires inspectors to assess and report on pupils' mental health and wellbeing under the key judgement area of personal development. This includes aspects such as resilience, confidence, independence, and how to stay mentally healthy to provide "high-quality pastoral support....where pupils keep.... mentally healthy" In addition, as part of the behaviour and attitudes outstanding grade descriptors, young people should 'actively support the well-being of other young people'.

Grade descriptors for Personal Development

Outstanding	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The school consistently promotes the extensive personal development of pupils. The school goes beyond the expected so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are of exceptional quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The curriculum and the school's effective wider work support pupils to be confident, resilient and independent and to develop strength of character.The school provides high-quality pastoral support. young peoples know how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and of protected characteristics.

Keeping Young People Safe in Education KCSIE 2020

The Mental Health and Behavior in Schools guidance sets out how schools and colleges can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school/college approach to social and emotional well-being tailored to their young people's needs.

The guidance makes a clearer link between mental health and safeguarding and stresses schools' role in detecting possible problems and supporting good mental well-being.

The definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (para 4) has been updated to include preventing impairment of children's mental (as well as physical) health and development, and all staff should be aware that mental health problems can be an indication of abuse, neglect or exploitation (paras 34 – 38).

The guidance recognises that, while only professionals should diagnose mental health problems, staff are well placed to identify behaviour which may indicate that a child is experiencing mental health problems or is at risk of developing one. Staff should immediately raise any mental health concerns, which are also safeguarding concerns, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy, and follow their child protection policy.

Staff must be aware of how adverse experiences, like abuse and neglect, can impact a child's mental health, behaviour and education.

Relevant policies and procedures should be reviewed to ensure they include clear information on how to identify and manage mental health problems and that mental health is a possible indicator of safeguarding concerns.

Although schools are not required to have a standalone policy on mental health, policies should be consistent with schools' duties under the Equality Act 2010. This Act recognises that a mental health condition that adversely affects behaviour amounts to a disability.

Staff should receive training on how to identify behaviour which may indicate that a child is experiencing mental health problems or is at risk of developing one.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive guide to delivering mental health. These resources can be used as part of the resources, and they include advice and guidance on who to contact for further information.

Throughout the project it's essential that the young people are aware of who to contact when they need additional advice and support for themselves or someone else they are concerned about.