

Social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education

This quick reference guide presents the recommendations made in 'Promoting young people's social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education'. It is for those who have a direct or indirect role in, and responsibility for, the social and emotional wellbeing of young people in secondary education. This includes teachers, support staff, governors and professionals with public health as part of their remit working in education (including the independent sector), local authorities, the NHS and the wider public, voluntary and community sectors. It may also be of interest to parents of young people in secondary education, young people themselves and other members of the public.

The guidance complements, but does not replace, other NICE guidance relating to children and young people: social and emotional wellbeing in primary education; physical activity; alcohol and drug misuse; depression; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and managing children with conduct disorders (see related NICE guidance on page 8 for a list of publications).

NICE public health guidance 20

This guidance was developed using the NICE public health intervention process.

NICE public health guidance makes recommendations on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health. This guidance represents the views of the Institute and was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Social and emotional wellbeing

Young people's social and emotional wellbeing is important in its own right but also because it affects their physical health (both as a young person and as an adult).

Good social, emotional and psychological health helps protect young people against emotional and behavioural problems, violence and crime, teenage pregnancy and the misuse of drugs and alcohol (Adi et al. 2007¹; Colman et al. 2009²; Graham and Power 2003³). It can also help them to learn and achieve academically, thus affecting their long-term social and economic wellbeing.

Young people's social and emotional wellbeing is influenced by a range of factors, from their individual make-up and family background to the community within which they live and society at large. As a result, activities in secondary education to develop and protect their social and emotional wellbeing can only form one element of a broader, multi-agency strategy.

Secondary education establishments can provide an environment that fosters social and emotional wellbeing. They can also equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to learn effectively and to prevent behavioural and health problems.

Organisation-wide approaches⁴ in secondary education help all young people to develop social and emotional skills, as well as providing specific help for those most at risk (or already showing signs) of problems. This guidance focuses on universal interventions used as part of an organisation-wide approach (that is, interventions that can be used to support all young people). Targeted approaches are outside the scope of this guidance.

¹ Adi et al. (2007) Systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions to promote mental wellbeing in children in primary education. London: NICE

² Colman et al. (2009) Outcomes of conduct problems in adolescence: 40 year follow-up of national cohort. *BMJ* 338: a2981

³ Graham and Power (2003) Childhood disadvantage and adult health: a lifecourse framework. London: Health Development Agency

⁴ 'Whole-school' is commonly used to refer to organisation-wide approaches in schools

Definitions

- 'Secondary education' refers to **all** education establishments for young people aged 11–19 years including further education colleges, technology colleges, academies and private sector establishments.
- For the purposes of this guidance, 'social and emotional wellbeing' encompasses:
 - happiness, confidence and not feeling depressed (emotional wellbeing)
 - a feeling of autonomy and control over one's life, problem-solving skills, resilience, attentiveness and a sense of involvement with others (psychological wellbeing)
 - the ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid disruptive behaviour, delinquency, violence or bullying (social wellbeing).

National initiatives

This guidance complements existing national initiatives to promote social and emotional wellbeing including:

- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme⁵
- National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP)⁶
- 'Healthy lives, brighter futures'⁷.

The guidance also supports secondary education establishments in meeting their statutory responsibilities to promote social and emotional wellbeing, provide personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and provide education on citizenship and community cohesion.

These national initiatives (and the related statutory duties) all put the emphasis on ensuring young people can participate fully in the development of any relevant programmes.

⁵ Department for Education and Skills (2005a) Excellence and enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning. London: Department for Education and Skills

⁶ Department for Education and Skills (2005b) National healthy schools status – a guide for schools. London: Department for Education and Skills

⁷ Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) Healthy lives, brighter futures – the strategy for children and young people's health. London: Department of Health

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Strategic framework

Who is the target population?

- Practitioners working with young people in secondary education.

Who should take action?

- Commissioners and providers of services to young people in secondary education including those working in:
 - children's trusts
 - local authorities (in particular, children's services)
 - schools and other secondary education establishments
 - primary care trusts (PCTs)
 - child and adolescent mental health services
 - voluntary agencies.
- Governors.

What action should they take?

- Enable all secondary education establishments to adopt an organisation-wide approach to promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of young people. This should encompass organisation and management issues as well as the curriculum and extra-curriculum provision. The approach should form part of the local children and young people's plan and joint commissioning. It should also be linked to the local area agreement. It should help achieve the Every Child Matters (ECM) Outcome Framework wellbeing objectives and targets (HM Government 2004). It should also contribute towards efforts to gain National Healthy Schools Status (NHSS).
- Encourage the appropriate local authority scrutiny committee to assess the progress made by secondary education establishments in adopting an organisation-wide approach to social and emotional wellbeing.

- Help secondary education establishments to develop the necessary organisational capacity to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This includes leadership and management arrangements, specialist skills and resources.
- Help secondary education establishments to share practical advice on how to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of young people.
- Ensure secondary education establishments have access to the specialist skills, advice and support they require. This may be provided by public, private, voluntary and community organisations. It may involve working with local authority advisory services, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education services, educational psychology and child and adolescent mental health services.
- Ensure policies and arrangements are in place to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of those who work with young people in secondary education.

Recommendation 2 Key principles and conditions

Who is the target population?

- Young people in secondary education, their parents and carers.

Who should take action?

- Head teachers, governors, teachers, support staff and other practitioners working with young people in secondary education.
- Those working in (and with) education, children's and youth services (including healthy schools teams) within local authorities, primary care (including school nurses), child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary agencies.

What action should they take?

- Head teachers, governors and teachers should demonstrate a commitment to the social and emotional wellbeing of young people. They should provide leadership in this area by ensuring social and emotional wellbeing features within improvement plans, policies, systems and activities. These should all be monitored and evaluated.
- Foster an ethos that promotes mutual respect, learning and successful relationships among young people and staff. Create a culture of inclusiveness and communication that ensures all young people's concerns can be addressed (including the concerns of those who may be at particular risk of poor mental health).
- Provide a safe environment which nurtures and encourages young people's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, reduces the threat of bullying and violence and promotes positive behaviours.
- Systematically measure and assess young people's social and emotional wellbeing. Use the outcomes as the basis for planning activities and evaluating their impact (informed by Ofsted guidance on social and emotional wellbeing).
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur. (Specialist services include child and adolescent mental health services.)

Recommendation 3 Curriculum approaches

Who is the target population?

- Young people in secondary education, their parents and carers.

Who should take action?

- Head teachers, governors, teachers, support staff and other practitioners working with young people in secondary education.
- Those working in (and with) education and children's and youth services (including healthy schools teams) within local authorities, primary care (including school nurses), child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary agencies.

What action should they take?

- Provide a curriculum that promotes positive behaviours and successful relationships and helps reduce disruptive behaviour and bullying. This can be achieved by integrating social and emotional skills development within all areas of the curriculum. Skills that should be developed 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.
- Tailor social and emotional skills education to the developmental needs of young people. The curriculum should build on learning in primary education and be sustained throughout their education.
- Reinforce curriculum learning on social and emotional skills and wellbeing by integrating relevant activities into all aspects of secondary education. For example, such skills might be developed through extra-curricular activities, using projects set for homework or via community-based and individual voluntary work.

Recommendation 4 Working with parents and families

Who is the target population?

- Parents, carers and other members of the family of young people in secondary education.

Who should take action?

- Head teachers, governors, teachers, support staff and other practitioners working with young people in secondary education.
- Those working in (and with) education and children's and youth services (including healthy schools teams) within local authorities, primary care (including school nurses), child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary agencies.

What action should they take?

- Work in partnership with parents, carers and other family members to promote young people's social and emotional wellbeing.
- To help reinforce young people's learning from the curriculum, help parents and carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by appropriately trained health or education practitioners.
- Ensure parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This should include support to participate fully in any parenting sessions (for example, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare). This might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Recommendation 5 Working in partnership with young people

Who is the target population?

- Young people in secondary education, their parents and carers.

Who should take action?

- Head teachers, governors, teachers, support staff and other practitioners working with young people in secondary education.
- Those working in (and with) education and children's and youth services (including healthy schools teams) within local authorities, primary care (including school nurses), child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary agencies.

What action should they take?

- Develop partnerships between young people and staff to formulate, implement and evaluate organisation-wide approaches to promoting social and emotional wellbeing.
- Introduce a variety of mechanisms to ensure all young people have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that may impact on their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it. This could involve developing a peer education or peer mediation approach. Note, young people who act as peer supporters need training and the support of staff and other professionals.
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality. Make young people aware of their rights on confidentiality.
- Involve young people in the creation, delivery and evaluation of training and continuing professional development activities in relation to social and emotional wellbeing.

Recommendation 6 Training and continuing professional development

Who is the target population?

- Professionals working with young people in secondary education.
- Governors.

Who should take action?

- Those working in (and with) education, children's and youth services (including healthy schools teams) within local authorities, primary care (including school nurses), child and adolescent mental health services and voluntary agencies.
- Head teachers in secondary education.
- Organisations concerned with the training and continuing professional development of those working in secondary education.

What action should they take?

- Integrate social and emotional wellbeing within the training and continuing professional development of practitioners and governors involved in secondary education.
- Ensure practitioners have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to develop young people's social and emotional wellbeing. Training may cover:
 - listening and facilitating skills and the ability to be non-judgemental
 - how to manage behaviours effectively, based on an understanding of the underlying issues
 - identifying and responding to the needs of young people who may be experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties
 - how to access pastoral care based in secondary education or specialist services provided by other agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services

- the issues in relation to different medical conditions (such as diabetes, asthma and epilepsy) to ensure young people with these conditions are not bullied, inappropriately excluded from school activities or experience any undue emotional distress
- opportunities to reflect upon and develop their own social and emotional skills and awareness.

Implementation tools

NICE has developed tools to help organisations put this guidance into practice. For details see our website at www.nice.org.uk/PH20

Further information

Ordering information

You can download the following documents from www.nice.org.uk/PH20

- A quick reference guide (this document) for professionals and the public.
- The guidance – the recommendations, details of how they were developed and evidence statements.
- Details of all the evidence that was considered and other background information.

For printed copies of the quick reference guide, phone NICE publications on 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote N1985.

The NICE website has a screen reader service called Browsealoud which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on the Browsealoud logo on the NICE website to use this service.

Related NICE guidance

For more information about NICE guidance that has been issued or is in development, see www.nice.org.uk

Published

- Promoting physical activity for children and young people. NICE public health guidance 17 (2009). Available from www.nice.org.uk/PH17
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). NICE clinical guideline 72 (2008). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG72
- Social and emotional wellbeing in primary education. NICE public health guidance 12 (2008). Available from www.nice.org.uk/PH12

- School-based interventions on alcohol. NICE public health guidance 7 (2007). Available from www.nice.org.uk/PH7
- Interventions to reduce substance misuse among vulnerable young people. NICE public health guidance 4 (2007). Available from www.nice.org.uk/PH4
- Parent-training/education programmes in the management of children with conduct disorders. NICE technology appraisal 102 (2006). Available from www.nice.org.uk/TA102
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) – methylphenidate, atomoxetine and dexamfetamine. NICE technology appraisal 98 (2006). Available from www.nice.org.uk/TA98
- Depression and anxiety: computerised cognitive behaviour therapy. NICE technology appraisal 97 (2006). Available from www.nice.org.uk/TA97
- Bipolar disorder. NICE clinical guideline 38 (2006). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG38
- Obsessive compulsive disorder. NICE clinical guideline 31 (2005). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG31
- Depression in children and young people. NICE clinical guideline 28 (2005). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG28
- Self-harm. NICE clinical guideline 16 (2004). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG16
- Eating disorders. NICE clinical guideline 9 (2004). Available from www.nice.org.uk/CG9

Under development

- Personal, social and health education focusing on sex and relationships and alcohol education. NICE public health guidance (publication date to be confirmed).

Updating the recommendations

This guidance will be updated as needed. Information on the progress of any update will be posted at www.nice.org.uk/PH20

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