

A whole organisation framework



Evidence shows the only effective, sustainable way to improve mental health is to adopt a whole organisation approach where all parts of the organisation and its community are encouraged to work together in their commitment to wellbeing.

This diagram is an adaptation of the **What Works framework** created by the Partnership for Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools coordinated by the National Children's Bureau. Any organisation that works with or supports young people can be guided by these principles.

Engage the whole community

- Encourage young people's voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision making, and peer-led approaches
- Genuine participation with parents/carers/families, particularly those of young people in difficulty whose families may feel blamed or stigmatised

Professional learning and staff development

- Understand risk factors to wellbeing, help young people develop resilience
- Raise staff awareness about mental health and the school's role in intervening early
- Base responses on a sound understanding of adolescent development
- Help young people cope with predictable life changes
- Keep on top of new challenges posed by technology

Whole organisation thinking

- All parts of the organisation work together to promote wellbeing and prevent issues
- Nurture a supportive learning environment and ethos. Emphasise sense of connectedness, focus and purpose, acceptance of emotion, respect, warm relationships, communication and celebrating differences
- Start early with skills-based programmes and preventative work. Identify difficulties early and make targeted, supportive interventions. Work intensively, coherently and sustainably
- Promote staff wellbeing, address stress levels

Supportive policy

Robust policies and practice on behaviour, anti-bullying, diversity, tackling prejudice and stigma around mental health

Targeted programmes

- High-quality implementation of specific programmes and interventions
- Teach social and emotional skills, attitudes and values, using well-trained and enthusiastic teachers and positive, experiential and interactive methods. Integrate this learning into everyday life

Targeted responses and specialist pathways

- Provide more intense work on social and emotional skill development for young people in difficulty, including one-to-one and group work
- Use specialist staff to initiate innovative and specialist programmes to ensure they are implemented authentically, then transfer responsibility to mainstream staff whenever possible, to ensure sustainability and integration
- Where young people experience difficulties, provide clear plans and pathways for help and referral, using a coherent teamwork approach, including in the involvement of outside agencies e.g. CAMHS

Behaviour management

- Respond actively to 'difficult' behaviour with clear consequences, while understanding its deeper roots
- Model positive alternatives