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Guidance

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Find out what help you can get to develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published 2 June 2021

Last updated 21 September 2021 — [See all updates](#)

Applies to England

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Before you start

You will find it helpful if you first understand your pre-existing statutory responsibilities on the [SEND code of practice](#), [safeguarding](#) and [RHSE curriculum](#)

Whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing

Taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges leads to improved pupil and student emotional health and wellbeing which can help readiness to learn.

The latest edition of the [whole school or college approach](#), updated for autumn 2021 by Public Health England (PHE) and the Department for Education, defines the areas to be considered to enable good mental health and wellbeing practice.

Support available locally

Your local authority may be able to signpost you to relevant training and services in your local area, or offer additional support through routine school improvement, health promotion or educational psychology functions, or one of the initiatives mentioned here.

Senior mental health leads training

School staff are not expected to, and should not, diagnose mental health

conditions or perform mental health interventions.

Eligibility

All state schools and colleges in England will be eligible for a training grant.

Features

Senior lead training gives senior leaders the knowledge and skills they'll need to develop an effective whole school or college approach to mental health.

Benefits

This programme will help you to:

- use your existing resources more effectively
- promote good mental health and wellbeing in your setting
- quickly identify individual pupils or students who need support with their mental health
- work effectively with local children and young people's mental health services, including [Mental Health Support Teams](#) where they are established.

Availability

Funding is available to offer a grant to around a third of all state-funded schools and colleges in England in the 2021 to 2022 financial year, and a waitlist will be created for grants beyond this period. Settings ready to further develop or introduce their whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing, with capacity to commence training before March 2022, are now encouraged to consult the guidance and arrange training.

We aim to provide the opportunity for all state schools and colleges to access the training by 2025.

Get more information

Senior mental health leads can now search for and book a training course. [Senior mental health lead training](#) provides further information on how you can do this.

Training providers

Training providers interested in providing senior mental health lead

training can find out more on [Contracts finder](#).

Wellbeing for Education Recovery

The Wellbeing for Education Return programme was launched in August 2020 to offer additional training and support to staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional mental health and wellbeing challenges as a direct result of the pandemic. The national training resources for local area experts can be found at [Wellbeing for Education Return](#) and a ready-to-use webinar for schools and colleges is available at [Every interaction matters](#).

DfE has invested a further £7m in 2021/22 in extending the programme which is now called Wellbeing for Education Recovery.

Features

This programme funds local authorities to provide additional support to schools and colleges, including:

- helping with navigation of existing provision to make the best use of the recovery and [pupil premium funding](#)
- continuing to deliver wellbeing for education return training, on issues such as bereavement and loss, understanding anxiety and low mood, and actions for building resilience and recovery
- providing ongoing support and advice supporting schools and colleges to assess their needs and provision

How to access this support

Contact your local authority to find out what support they are offering to schools and colleges. Local authorities can explain their offer of training, support and advice.

The Link Programme

Only certain local areas are participating in the Link Programme which aims to improve joint working between health and education.

[Resources to support joint working](#) are available to all schools and colleges and will help you engage with mental health services.

To find out if your local area is participating, visit [The Link Programme](#).

Eligibility

Around 50 upper tier local authorities are taking part in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, including:

- 25 in wave 1 (from September 2021)
- 25 in wave 2 (from January 2022)

Local authorities can email linkprogramme@annafreud.co.uk to be informed about future recruitment rounds.

Schools and colleges concerned about local partnership working should contact their local authority and NHS Clinical Commissioning Group or Integrated Care System.

Features and benefits

This programme:

- brings together local partners who can support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- offers structured sessions to identify priorities and agree goals to promote and support good mental health and wellbeing
- supports the locality to develop a tailored action plan that will feed into strategic planning
- delivers tailored support sessions focussed on improving joint working between education and mental health professionals, based on the needs assessment and goals
- offers a progress review and support at three and six months to help embed change locally

Time commitment

10 hours over approximately 8 weeks.

Get more information

Go to your Local Authority.

General information is available at [The Link Programme](#).

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE): Mental wellbeing training module

Who is it for

Subject leads and teaching staff in primary and secondary schools.

Features

This resource helps subject leads and school staff:

- get the content they need to teach young people about managing their mental health and wellbeing
- see examples of good practice
- access training resources and templates you can customise

Benefits

This resource will help you to:

- understand what you should be teaching
- become more confident in training teachers or teaching about mental health and wellbeing
- respect sensitivities

Availability

Ongoing.

Time commitment

The training lasts between 90 and 180 minutes.

How to access the support

- Access the [Teaching about mental wellbeing training module](#)
- Get further guidance on [planning your RSHE curriculum](#)

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)

Who is it for

Schools and colleges in participating MHST areas who want to work more closely with mental health professionals in their local area, receive additional mental health and wellbeing support and extra capacity for early intervention and help for mild to moderate mental health issues.

Eligibility

Only certain local areas will be participating in this programme. The approach to working with schools and colleges will be determined by each MHST site with their education partners.

MHSTs are designed to support all types of education settings but support is being targeted in the areas where there is greatest need alongside the ability to establish the teams effectively. Use the [NHS website](#) to find out more.

Features

This resource:

- delivers evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health issues
- supports the senior mental health lead in your school or college to introduce and develop a whole school or college approach to mental health
- provides timely advice to school and college staff to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education

Benefits

This resource will help you to:

- support pupils and students with mild to moderate mental health issues in their setting without having to refer to external providers
- map what provision is already in place in and around settings and where the gaps are
- coordinate quickly with external agencies where this is needed

Evaluation

- [Early evaluation of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Trailblazer programme](#), a summary of interim findings for schools and colleges (Policy Innovation and Evaluation Research Unit (PIRU))
- [Early evaluation of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Trailblazer programme: Interim report](#) (University of Birmingham)

Psychological first aid training

Who is it for

All school and college staff who help children and young people, aged up to 25 years.

Features

The programme:

- offers resources and content to teach young people about managing their mental health and wellbeing
- provides examples of good practice
- provides access to training resources and templates that you can customise

Benefits

This resource will help you to:

- support young people who have recently experienced an emergency or crisis
- offer training to all school or college staff that want it
- get access to a globally-accepted level of training that is recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO)

Availability

Ongoing.

Time investment

One session which lasts between 1 hour 30 mins and 3 hours.

How to access the support

Go to [Psychological First Aid: Supporting Children and Young People](#).

Mental health and wellbeing resources

This list provides sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders in all maintained schools, academies and free schools.

It will help you:

- find help and support in response to any feelings you are experiencing as a result of COVID-19
- signpost pupils and students to appropriate support, help and advice
- provide pupils and students with a list of resources so they can get support on a range of issues independently
- access advice on prioritising your own wellbeing and mental health

Download the [list of mental health and wellbeing resources](#).

Also:

- these [mental health resources for parents and carers](#) have been put together so that children and young people, parents, carers, and school and college staff can get the advice and help they need
- the [behaviour hubs](#) programme encourages schools to work with each other to develop good behaviour cultures
- the [School Sport and Activity Action Plan](#) helps you encourage physical activity, which helps to promote wellbeing
- the [Character education framework](#) helps you to help pupils spiritual and mental development
- children and young people can also play an active role in creating a supportive school environment. You can use the findings from the [Anna Freud peer-support programme](#) to develop your own in-school activities

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