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PRESS RELEASE

New NICE public health guidance on promoting young people's social and emotional wellbeing

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today (23 September) issued guidance on promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of young people in secondary education.

Between the ages of 11 and 19 years, young people undergo numerous physical and emotional changes which will help shape their adult life. Recent reports suggest that one in ten young people are unhappy at school¹ and over a third are worried about being bullied². The new guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education outlines how secondary education providers and service commissioners can help protect and nurture young people by providing a friendly, supportive environment that meets their social and emotional needs.

Professor Mike Kelly, Public Health Excellence Centre Director, NICE said "The social and emotional wellbeing of young people is important in their development, not only in terms of the ability to learn and achieve at school but it can also help protect children against poor physical health, emotional and behavioural problems, violence and crime, teenage pregnancy and the misuse of drugs and alcohol. A range of factors affect how young people feel, including their individual family background and the community they live in, so different agencies need to work together to agree effective strategies.

¹ Morgan A, Malam S, Muir J et al. (2006) Health and social inequalities in English adolescents. Findings from the WHO health behaviour in school-aged children study. London: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

² MORI (2004) Youth survey. London: Youth Criminal Justice Board for England and Wales.

“This guidance aims to help schools, colleges and Children’s Services to ensure young people’s social and emotional needs are recognised during secondary education, allowing them to continue to develop and learn, uninterrupted by emotional concerns or behavioural problems. The guidance highlights the importance of young people participating in the development of programmes relating to their social and emotional wellbeing”

Recommendations made for commissioners and providers of services to young people in secondary education include:

- Enable all secondary education establishments to adopt an organisation-wide approach to promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of young people. The approach should form part of the local children and young people’s plan and joint commissioning.

Recommendations for those working with young people in secondary education, including head teachers and governors and those working in children’s and youth services include:

- 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.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and other family members to promote young people’s social and emotional wellbeing.
- Develop partnerships between young people and staff to formulate, implement and evaluate organisation-wide approaches to promoting social and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Ensure practitioners have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to develop young people’s social and emotional wellbeing. Training may cover a variety of issues including listening and facilitating skills and the ability to be non-judgemental

Professor Catherine Law, Chair of the Public Health Interventions Advisory Committee (PHIAC) at NICE and Professor of Public Health and Epidemiology, University College London Institute of Child Health said: “We have produced

evidence- based recommendations that will complement existing programmes, such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Healthy Schools, helping local authorities, schools and parents in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of the children and young people in their care.”

Ms Joyce Rothschild, PHIAC member at NICE and School Improvement

Adviser, Solihull Local Authority said: “Secondary schools have a clear and important role to play in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of their students. Many schools are developing, or already have well established systems and processes in place. This guidance builds on good practice and evidence- based research, highlighting the key indicators which are shown to have the most impact in the development of young people’s social and emotional skills and wellbeing.”

Dr Ann Hoskins, Director children young people and maternity.NHS North West

said: “We adopted a holistic approach to promoting social and emotional wellbeing within secondary education, emphasising the importance of a supportive and secure environment. We felt that this approach would offer greater support to students with special needs, including those with long-term health conditions and disabilities.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About the guidance

1. The promoting children’s social and emotional wellbeing in primary education guidance is available at: www.nice.org.uk/PH020
2. Primary education refers to all educational settings serving children aged 4–11 years.

About NICE

3. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.
4. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
 - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.