

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Guideline scope

Social and emotional wellbeing in primary and secondary education

This guideline will update and replace NICE guidelines on [Social and Emotional Wellbeing in primary education \(NICE PH12; 2008\)](#) and [Social and Emotional wellbeing in secondary education \(NICE PH20; 2009\)](#).

NICE worked with Public Health England to develop this scope.

The guideline will be developed using the methods and processes outlined in [developing NICE guidelines: the manual](#).

1 Why the update is needed

New evidence that could affect recommendations was identified through the surveillance process. Topic experts, including those who helped to develop the existing guideline, advised NICE on whether areas should be updated or new areas added. Full details are set out in the surveillance review decision [\[Surveillance report 2017\]](#)

Currently there is no universally accepted definition of social and emotional wellbeing but there is consensus that social and emotional learning includes an interrelated set of cognitive, emotional and behavioural competencies that include: self-awareness, self-regulation (for example managing emotions, thoughts and behaviours), social awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills ([Early Intervention Foundation, 2018](#)). Wellbeing is viewed as a dynamic state where an individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to their community. It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society ([UK Government Office for Science, 2008](#)).

1 Within the context of primary and secondary education, social and emotional
2 wellbeing also encompasses academic resilience - defined as the ability to
3 achieve academic goals in spite of difficulties or adversity.

4 Social and emotional competencies can be positively associated with health
5 and wellbeing outcomes and educational achievement ([Public Health
6 England, 2014](#)). Primary and secondary schools play an important role in
7 helping children and young people learn social and emotional skills through
8 both the taught and wider curriculum. Schools are also key settings through
9 which to identify and provide early intervention for children and young people
10 at increased risk of mental ill health.

11 Interventions to develop or improve social and emotional wellbeing can
12 include topics such as resilience, self-esteem, coping skills (such as dealing
13 with bereavement or adverse childhood events) mental health awareness and
14 managing social relationships to prevent online/offline bullying and promote
15 safe and appropriate use of social media. The interventions may also seek to
16 improve the strategic framework or the principles and conditions underlying
17 the way in which education is delivered to pupils.

18 **Key facts and figures**

19 ***General wellbeing***

- 20 • Childhood and adolescence can be a time of change or upheaval. In an
21 average class of 30 15 year old students: 10 are likely to have witnessed
22 their parents separate, 7 are likely to have been bullied, 6 may be self-
23 harming and one could have experienced the death of a parent ([Public
24 Health England, 2015](#))
- 25 • Having adverse childhood experiences increases the risk of having
26 difficulties learning and engaging with others and negative physical and
27 mental health consequences in later life ([Bellis 2014](#), [Bellis 2017](#))
- 28 • 18% of 11 to 15 year olds report having experienced some form of bullying
29 via online platforms ([Public Health England 2017](#)). Being bullied is
30 associated with lower achievement in both primary and secondary
31 education ([Department for Education 2012](#)).

- 1 • Children with SEND are at greater risk of being bullied, being excluded,
2 having absences from school or having emotional difficulties ([Department
3 of Education, 2017](#))

4 ***Mental health***

- 5 • Over the past 20 years the prevalence of mental disorders in children and
6 young people age 5 to 15 has increased from 9.7% to 11.2% in 2017
7 Emotional disorders amongst 5 to 15 year olds increased from 4.3% to
8 5.8% during this period ([Mental Health of Children and Young People in
9 England, 2017](#)).
- 10 • The number of referrals by schools in England seeking mental health
11 treatment has increased significantly with more than half (55%) coming
12 from primary schools ([NSPCC 2018](#))

13 **Current practice**

14 There are a range of duties to ensure schools take positive action to establish
15 environments where children and young people are supported and can fully
16 engage. These duties encourage schools to promote a range of approaches
17 and activities to develop respectful school communities and to support mental
18 health and wellbeing.

19 Many schools follow a 'whole school approach' to social and emotional
20 wellbeing ([Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges, Department for
21 Education 2017](#)). A whole school approach goes beyond the learning and
22 teaching in the classroom to include school culture, ethos and environment. It
23 also involves proactive engagement with children and young people, their
24 parents and carers, teacher and school leaders and outside agencies.

25 The promotion of student social and emotional wellbeing may occur through
26 timetabled curriculum subjects such as personal, social, health and economic
27 education (PSHE) as well as being embedded more broadly through a
28 school's commitment to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
29 (SMSC) of their pupils.

30 However key challenges for schools include

- 1 • having ready access to knowledge about what approaches work to improve
2 student outcomes when translated into a specific school setting and
3 • how to accommodate effective teaching of social and emotional wellbeing
4 within an already crowded curriculum
5 Schools also may not have time or resources to assess the effectiveness or
6 provide quality assurance of these interventions.

7 Schools use various methods of identifying children that may benefit from
8 targeted interventions to support their social and emotional wellbeing
9 approach. Special schools or alternative provision/pupil referral units
10 (AP/PRU) make more use of formal needs assessment tools when planning
11 interventions ([Department for Education 2017](#)). However, schools do not
12 necessarily know which assessment tools work best.

13 **Policy, legislation, regulation and commissioning**

- 14 • This guideline will complement legislation such as [Keeping children safe in](#)
15 [education](#) (Dept for Education updated 2018) and [Supporting pupils with](#)
16 [medical conditions at school](#) (Dept for Education updated 2017)
17 • The Department for Education has issued guidance on [Preventing and](#)
18 [tackling bullying](#) (updated 2017) and [Mental health and behaviour in](#)
19 [schools](#) (updated 2018)
20 • There are legislative requirements for schools to publish online policies or
21 information in relation to: school behaviour and anti-bullying, special
22 education needs, equality, school values, curriculum and pupil premium.
23 There are no legislative requirements to publish policies on sex and
24 relationship education, child protection, mental health, supporting children
25 with medical conditions or accessibility.
26 • The Government is making Relationships Education compulsory for all
27 primary pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for
28 secondary pupils and Health Education compulsory for all pupils in all
29 primary and secondary state-funded schools. This includes a requirement
30 for pupils to learn about mental health and wellbeing. Schools will be
31 encouraged and supported to teach the new subjects from September

1 2019 and the requirement will become compulsory from September 2020.

2 ([Department for Education, 2018](#)).

- 3 • The government is incentivising and supporting all schools and colleges to
4 identify and train a Designated Senior Lead for mental health that will
5 oversee implementation of a whole school approach ([Transforming children
6 and young people's mental health provision: a green paper](#) and the
7 Government [response](#) to the public consultation on this paper)
- 8 • Mental health support teams are being rolled out targeting support for
9 school age children experiencing low to medium level mental health
10 problems ([Children and young people's mental health – policy, services,
11 funding and education](#)).
- 12 • Ofsted is consulting on updating its framework for inspection [Education
13 inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education](#) and has
14 proposed a new judgement on personal development, behaviour and
15 attitudes and schools' leadership and management. This places an
16 emphasis on a broad and balanced curriculum and preparing for adult life.
17 There is also a focus on skills not just knowledge.
- 18 • The UK Chief Medical Officers have published a [commentary](#) on 'Screen-
19 based activities and children and young people's mental health and
20 psychosocial wellbeing: a systematic map of reviews'.

21 **2 Who the guideline is for**

22 This guideline is for:

- 23 • Teachers, school support staff and others working in schools with – or
24 responsible for – children and young people.
- 25 • School leadership teams, including governors and leadership teams of
26 Multi-Academy Trusts
- 27 • Practitioners with a health or social care remit (including public health,
28 mental health and social workers) working within the NHS or local
29 authorities
- 30 • Commissioners and providers of interventions and services for child social
31 and emotional wellbeing and

- 1 • the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors working with
2 children and young people.

3 It may also be relevant for:

- 4 • Children, young people, their parents and carers
5 • Researchers and policy makers.
6 • Individuals providing or receiving home schooling
7 • Organisations with a responsibility for inspection

8 NICE guidelines cover health and care in England. Decisions on how they
9 apply in other UK countries are made by ministers in the [Welsh Government](#),
10 [Scottish Government](#), and [Northern Ireland Executive](#).

11 ***Equality considerations***

12 NICE has carried out [an equality impact assessment](#) during scoping. The
13 assessment:

- 14 • lists equality issues identified, and how they have been addressed
15 • explains why any groups are excluded from the scope.

16 **3 What the guideline will cover**

17 **3.1 Who is the focus?**

18 **Groups that will be covered**

19 Children and young people in primary or secondary education, key stages 1 to
20 5, and individuals with SEND up to and including 25 years of age in further
21 education colleges.

22 Where there is evidence that allows such analysis, specific groups of children
23 and young people vulnerable to poorer outcomes will be considered such as
24 those listed in the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

25 Specific consideration will be given to

- 1 • Children and young people who have been absent from school for
2 extended or regular periods of time, for example those with a long-term
3 condition or those that have skipped a year due to their age.
- 4 • Children who have been excluded from school on a temporary or
5 permanent basis.

6 **Groups that will not be covered**

- 7 • Children receiving Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) educational
8 curriculum (this is typically children age 4 to 5 years old)
- 9 • Young people not in education
- 10 • Young people with SEND in higher education

11 **3.2 Settings**

12 **Settings that will be covered**

- 13 • Schools providing primary and secondary education including maintained
14 schools, schools with a sixth form, academies, free schools, independent
15 schools, non-maintained schools, alternative provision, including pupil
16 referral units (see Department for Education's [Types of school](#)).
- 17 • Further education colleges for young people, generally between the ages of
18 16-18 years.
- 19 • Young offender institutions
- 20 • Secure children's homes

21 **Settings that will not be covered**

- 22 • Higher education institutions such as universities.
- 23 • Home schooling

24 **3.3 Activities, services or aspects of care**

25 **Key areas that will be covered**

26 We will look at evidence in the areas below when developing the guideline,
27 but it may not be possible to make recommendations in all the areas.

1 ***Whole-school approach***

- 2 • The integrated approach that goes beyond teaching and learning in the
3 classroom to all aspects of the life of a school including culture, ethos and
4 environment, learning and teaching as well as partnerships with families,
5 outside agencies, and the wider community in order to promote consistent
6 support for children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing.

7 ***Curriculum content focussed on social and emotional wellbeing*** 8 ***(Universal approaches)***

- 9 • Curriculum content and classroom-based interventions¹ focussed on social
10 and emotional wellbeing. This includes lessons on resilience, self-esteem,
11 coping skills (such as dealing with bereavement or adverse childhood
12 events) and mental health awareness and information on managing social
13 relationships (to avoid bullying including online bullying) and the
14 appropriate and safe use of social media
 - 15 • The identification of vulnerable children and young people
- 16

17 ***Targeted approaches***

- 18 • Targeted social or emotional support such as play therapy, counselling, or
19 individual or small group interventions for areas such as self-esteem,
20 resilience or coping skills.
- 21 • Targeted mental health support

22 ***Transition***

- 23 • Supporting the emotional and social wellbeing of children and young
24 people in primary and secondary education (and further education colleges
25 for young people with SEND) during periods of transition

¹ This will also cover alcohol prevention in primary education to complement the draft guidance on [Alcohol interventions in secondary and further education](#). This is because of the likely lack of alcohol outcomes in this age group and also the curriculum content and interventions used in primary education are likely to focus on encouraging resilience that would impact on a range of health outcomes, rather than alcohol alone.

1 **Areas that will not be covered**

- 2 • Treating depression or anxiety.
- 3 • Managing disruptive or violent behaviour.
- 4 • Strategies focused on preventing self-harm or suicide as this is covered in
- 5 the NICE guidelines on [Preventing suicide in community and custodial](#)
- 6 [settings](#), Self-harm in over 8s: long-term management and [Self-harm: the](#)
- 7 [short-term physical and psychological management and secondary](#)
- 8 [prevention of self-harm in primary and secondary care](#)

9 **Related NICE guidance**

10 ***Published***

- 11 • [Preventing suicide in community and custodial settings](#) (2018) NICE
- 12 guideline NG105
- 13 • [Social and emotional wellbeing: early years](#) (2014) NICE guideline PH40
- 14 • [Looked-after children and young people](#). (2015). NICE guidance PH28
- 15 • [Bipolar disorder: assessment and management](#). (2014). NICE guideline
- 16 CG185
- 17 • [Antisocial behaviour and conduct disorders in children and young people:](#)
- 18 [recognition and management](#) (2013). NICE guideline CG158.
- 19 • [Psychosis and schizophrenia in children and young people: recognition and](#)
- 20 [management](#) (2013). NICE guideline CG155.
- 21 • [Self-harm in over 8s: long-term management](#). (2011), NICE guideline
- 22 CG133
- 23 • [Depression in children and young people: identification and management in](#)
- 24 [primary, community and secondary care](#). (2005). NICE guideline CG28
- 25 • [Obsessive compulsive disorder: core interventions in the treatment of](#)
- 26 [obsessive compulsive disorder and body dysmorphic disorder](#). (2005).
- 27 NICE guideline CG31
- 28 • [Self-harm: the short-term physical and psychological management and](#)
- 29 [secondary prevention of self-harm in primary and secondary care](#). (2004).
- 30 NICE guideline CG16

1 ***In development***

- 2 • [Alcohol interventions in secondary and further education](#). Publication
3 expected August 2019
- 4 • [Depression in children and young people: identification and management](#).
5 Publication expected TBC
- 6 • [Children and young people with disabilities & severe complex needs:
7 integrated health & social care support & service guidance](#). Publication
8 expected February 2021
- 9 • [Looked after children and young people](#). Publication expected April 2021

10 ***NICE guidance that will be updated by this guideline***

- 11 • [Social and Emotional wellbeing in primary education](#) (2008) NICE public
12 health guideline PH12
- 13 • [Social and Emotional wellbeing in secondary education](#) (2009) NICE public
14 health guideline PH20

15 **3.4 *Economic aspects***

16 We will take economic aspects into account when making recommendations.
17 We will develop an economic plan that states for each review question (or key
18 area in the scope) whether economic considerations are relevant, and if so
19 whether this is an area that should be prioritised for economic modelling and
20 analysis. We will review the economic evidence and carry out economic
21 analyses, using NHS and personal social services (PPS), public sector and
22 local authority perspective, as appropriate.

23 **3.5 *Key issues and draft questions***

24 While writing this scope, we have identified the following key issues and draft
25 questions related to them:

- 26 1 Whole school approach
- 27 – 1.1 What principles or combination of principles of the 'whole school
28 approaches' to promote social and emotional well-being in children
29 and young people in primary and secondary education, or young

- 1 people with SEND in further education are effective and cost-
2 effective?
- 3 – 1.2 What are children and young people's experiences of the 'whole
4 school approach' in promoting social and emotional well-being?
- 5 – 1.3 What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of 'the whole-
6 school approach' to promote social and emotional well-being in
7 children and young people?
- 8 2 Curriculum content focussed on social and emotional wellbeing
9 (Universal approaches)
- 10 – 2.1 What universal classroom-based interventions to promote social
11 and emotional well-being in children and young people in primary and
12 secondary education, or young people with SEND in further education
13 are effective and cost-effective?
- 14 – 2.2 Are universal classroom-based interventions acceptable to the
15 children and young people receiving them and to those delivering
16 them?
- 17 – 2.3 What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of universal
18 classroom-based interventions to promote social and emotional well-
19 being in children and young people?
- 20 3 Targeted social and/or emotional support such as play therapy,
21 counselling, or individual or small group interventions for areas such as
22 self-esteem, resilience or coping skills
- 23 – 3.1 What targeted approaches to promote social and/or emotional
24 well-being in children and young people in primary and secondary
25 education and young people with SEND in further education are
26 effective and cost effective?
- 27 – 3.2 Are targeted approaches to promote social and emotional well-
28 being acceptable to those receiving them and to those delivering
29 them?
- 30 – 3.3 What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of targeted
31 approaches to promote social and emotional well-being in children
32 and young people?

- 1 4 Risk factors to identify children and young people at risk of poor social
2 and emotional wellbeing
- 3 – 4.1 What are the risk factors associated with poor social and
4 emotional wellbeing?
- 5 – 4.2 What are the barriers and facilitators to the identification of
6 children and young people at risk of poor social and emotional
7 wellbeing?
- 8 5 Targeted mental health support
- 9 – 5.1 What targeted mental health support approaches for children and
10 young people in primary and secondary education and young people
11 with SEND in further education are effective and cost effective?
- 12 – 5.2 Are targeted mental health support approaches acceptable to the
13 children and young people receiving them and to those delivering
14 them?
- 15 – 5.3 What are the barriers and facilitators to the use of targeted mental
16 health support?
- 17 6 Supporting the emotional and social wellbeing of children and young
18 people during periods of transition
- 19 – 6.1 What are effective and cost-effective interventions to support the
20 emotional and social wellbeing of children undergoing transition
21 between primary and secondary education or further education
22 colleges for young people with SEND?
- 23 – 6.2 Are interventions to support the emotional and social wellbeing of
24 children and young people undergoing transition between primary and
25 secondary education acceptable to children and young people?
- 26 – 6.3 What are the barriers and facilitators to supporting the emotional
27 and social wellbeing of children and young people during periods of
28 transition?
- 29
- 30 The key issues and draft questions will be used to develop more detailed
31 review questions, which guide the systematic review of the literature.

1 **3.6 Main outcomes**

2 The main outcomes that may be considered when searching for and
3 assessing the evidence for interventions are:

4 Social and emotional wellbeing outcomes (subjective or objective) such
5 as:

- 6 • Communication skills
- 7 • Confidence or self-esteem
- 8 • Planning and problem-solving skills
- 9 • Relationships skills, cooperating with others and negotiating
10 conflict
- 11 • Resilience and determination
- 12 • Managing feelings
- 13 • Engagement, belonging or connectedness

14 School-related and academic outcomes such as:

- 15 • Educational attainment (for example reading, maths and
16 science)
- 17 • Absenteeism
- 18 • Exclusion

19 E

20 Other outcomes

- 21 • Quality of life
- 22 • Unintended consequences

23 The main outcomes that may be considered when searching for and
24 assessing the evidence for acceptability of interventions are

- 25 • Satisfaction
- 26 • Adherence

27 The main outcomes that may be considered when searching for and
28 assessing the evidence for barriers and facilitators of interventions are

- 29 • Physical environment (including time)

- 1 • Staffing (including staff numbers, training and skills)
- 2 • Attitudes (such as those of teachers, parents, carers and/or
- 3 pupils)

4 The main outcomes that may be considered when searching for and
5 assessing the evidence for identification of vulnerable children and young
6 people such as:

- 7 • Individual factors
- 8 • Familial factors
- 9 • School factors
- 10 • Peer factors

11 **4 NICE quality standards and NICE Pathways**

12 **4.1 NICE quality standards**

13 **NICE quality standards that may need to be revised or updated when**
14 **this guideline is published**

- 15 • [School based interventions](#). Quality standard Publication expected
16 February 2019

17 **4.2 NICE Pathways**

18 When this guideline is published, we will update the NICE Pathway on social
19 and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, which brings together
20 everything we have said on [social and emotional wellbeing for children and](#)
21 [young people](#) in an interactive flowchart.

22 **5 Further information**

This is the draft scope for consultation with registered stakeholders. The
consultation dates are 26 April 2019 to 28 May 2019.

The guideline is expected to be published in August 2021.

You can follow progress of the [guideline](#).

Our website has information about how [NICE guidelines](#) are developed.

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