

# curriculum for excellence: health and wellbeing

principles and practice

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## Health and wellbeing Principles and practice

*Curriculum for Excellence* has an important role to play in promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people and of all of those in the educational communities to which they belong. This paper is intended to support discussion and planning between practitioners in all sectors and services and in local authorities.

This paper is closely related to the Guidance on the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/foodnutrition>). Together, these documents describe the expectations upon individuals, schools and local authorities for promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

### What are the main purposes of learning in health and wellbeing?

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to:

- make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- experience challenge and enjoyment
- experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
- establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life, and which will help to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation of Scottish children.

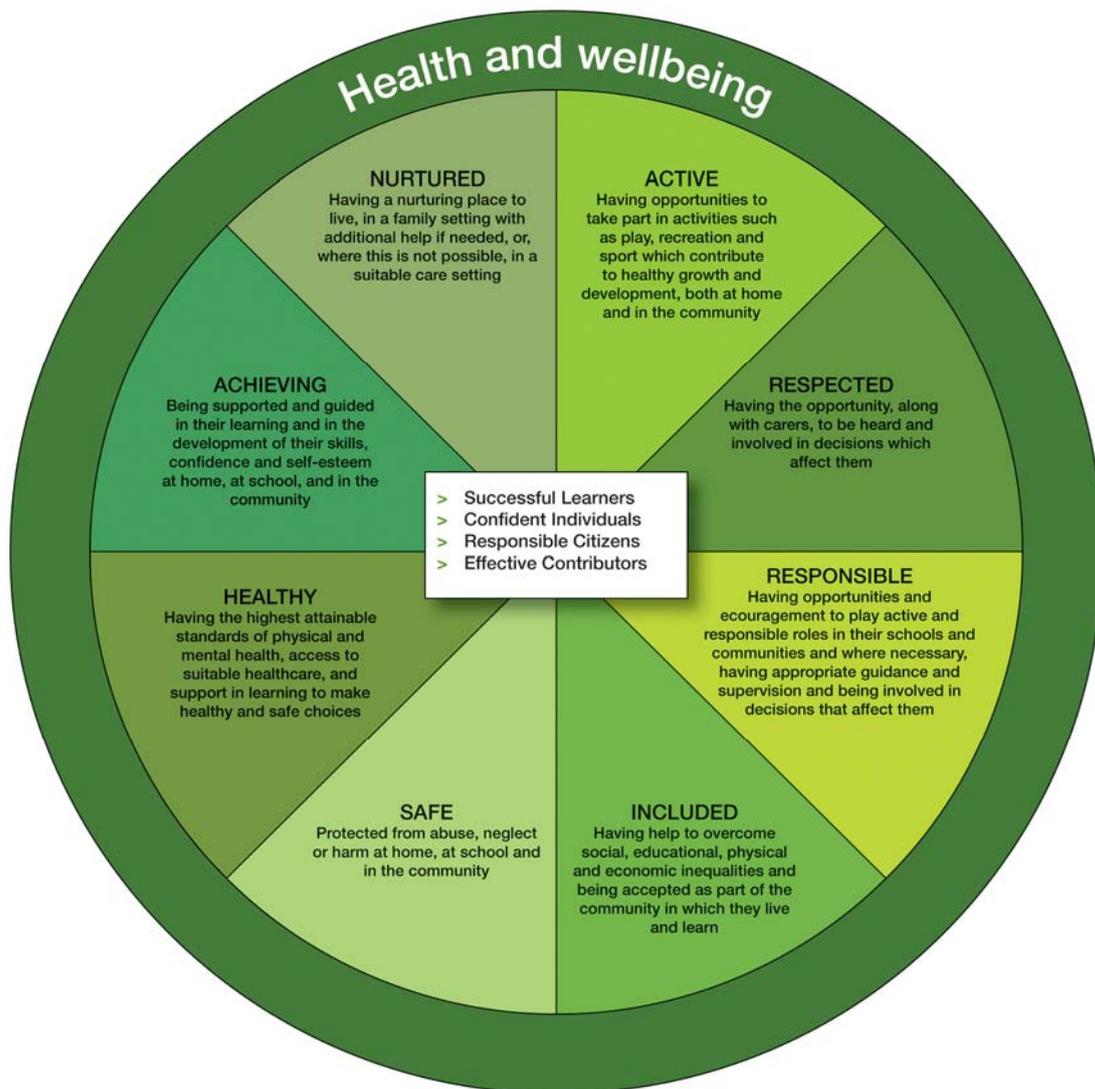
It also enables some to perform at high levels in sport or prepare for careers within the health and leisure industries.

### What does the health and wellbeing framework mean for practitioners?

The statements of experiences and outcomes in health and wellbeing reflect a holistic approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of all children and young people. They are consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the right for all children and young people to have access to appropriate health services and to have their health and wellbeing promoted. They build on the considerable work of Health Promoting Schools and the publication of *Being Well, Doing Well* which underlines the importance of a 'health enhancing' school ethos – one characterised by care, respect, participation, responsibility and fairness for all. The framework complements the duty in the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 for Scottish Ministers and local authorities to endeavour to ensure that all schools are health promoting.

Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and the wider school community. Robust policies and practice which ensure the safety and wellbeing of children should already be in place. In addition, there are many ways in which establishments can assist young people. These include peer support, buddies, breakfast or lunch clubs, safe areas, mentors, pupil support staff and extended support teams.

Good health and wellbeing is central to effective learning and preparation for successful independent living. This aspiration for every child and young person can only be met through a concerted approach: schools and their partners working together closely to plan their programmes for health and wellbeing explicitly, taking account of local circumstances and individual needs. Planning to provide and manage the many different and complementary contributions may be challenging but is needed. Each individual practitioner must be aware of his or her roles and responsibilities. The diagram below illustrates this shared vision and common goal.



Learning through health and wellbeing promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions. Because of this, it is the responsibility of every teacher to contribute to learning and development in this area.

*Building the Curriculum 1*

### How is the health and wellbeing framework structured?

The framework begins by describing features of the environment for learning which will support and nurture the health and wellbeing of children and young people, including a positive ethos and relationships, and participation in activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. These statements are intended to help to inform planning and practice within establishments or clusters and also by individual practitioners.

The statements of experiences and outcomes are then structured into the following organisers:

- Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- Planning for choices and changes
- Physical education, physical activity and sport
- Food and health
- Substance misuse
- Relationships, sexual health and parenthood.

The aspects of the health and wellbeing framework which are the responsibility of all adults who are working together to support the learning and development of children and young people are identified through the use of italics.

Many of the experiences and outcomes span two or more levels; some are written to span from early to fourth because they are applicable throughout life. All of these should be revisited regularly in ways which take account of the stage of development and understanding of each child and young person and are relevant and realistic for them.

## **What are practitioners' roles and responsibilities across health and wellbeing?**

Some contributions are the responsibility of all, while other contributions relate to specific stages or are more specialised.

## **Health and wellbeing across learning: the responsibilities of all practitioners**

Everyone within each learning community, whatever their contact with children and young people may be, shares the responsibility for creating a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust – one in which everyone can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of each individual within the school and the wider community. There are many ways in which establishments can assist young people. These include peer support, buddies, breakfast or lunch clubs, safe areas, mentors, pupil support staff and extended support teams.

The responsibilities include individuals' contributions to the features set out in the introductory statements, and experiences and outcomes in mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing, planning for choices and changes, and relationships. They include each practitioner's role in establishing open, positive, supportive relationships across the school community, where children and young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives; in promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure; in modelling behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing, and encouraging it in others through using learning and teaching methodologies which promote effective learning, and by being sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each child and young person. Practical responsibilities include understanding of anti-discriminatory, anti-bullying and child protection policies by all staff and knowledge of the steps to be taken in any given situation, including appropriate referral.

## **Focused programmes**

Children will experience certain aspects of health and wellbeing through focused programmes such as personal and social education programmes. Within these programmes, schools will often draw on the expertise of others. For example, when substance misuse is being considered, specialists within and outwith the learning community working together are able to ensure that children and young people learn in the most effective ways. Subject teachers, including teachers of home economics and physical education, play a very important role in the teaching and learning of health and wellbeing through the experiences and outcomes for food and health, and physical education, physical activity and sport. Sports specialists play an important part in physical activity and sport provision.

## **Partnership working across sectors and services**

Children's and young people's learning in health and wellbeing benefits strongly from partnership working between teachers and colleagues such as home link staff, health professionals, educational psychologists and sports coaches who can make complementary contributions through their specialist expertise and knowledge.

## Personal support for children and young people

The health and wellbeing of every child and young person is greatly enhanced through the individual support and pastoral care which they receive through having an identified member of staff who knows and understands them and can support them in facing changes and challenges and in making choices. Members of staff are often best placed to identify even minor changes of mood in a child or young person which could reflect an important emotional, social or mental health issue with which that child or young person needs help or support. It is important that children and young people feel that they can share their anxieties with an appropriate individual who has the skills, rapport, responsibility and the time to listen and to help, or can identify appropriate sources of support.

## What factors need to be taken into account in planning for health and wellbeing?

Children's capacities to learn are shaped by their background and home circumstances as well as by their individual development. Exposure to different social and environmental influences contributes to the way that attitudes, values and behaviours are formed. These in turn affect their ability to make and take decisions.

Progression and development in many aspects of health and wellbeing will depend upon the stage of growth, development and maturity of the individual, upon social issues and upon the community context. Teachers and other practitioners in planning together will take account of these factors, ensuring that experiences are relevant and realistic for the child or young person in his or her circumstances. Particularly within experiences and outcomes which span more than one level, careful planning will be required to ensure appropriate pace and coverage, and teachers and other practitioners will need to decide when and how the experiences and outcomes are introduced. The planning arrangements within which local authorities, schools and teachers work must ensure that these decisions are taken in the best interests of each child and young person and take account of his or her social and personal circumstances as necessary.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes identified within the various aspects of the health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes are interrelated; teachers and other practitioners will plan and present learning in ways that enable learners to see them as closely linked.

The experiences and outcomes support learning which is challenging and enjoyable; they provide the necessary breadth and depth to meet the needs of all learners; they ensure that account is taken of individual and/or community contexts. The experiences and outcomes thus offer flexibility to allow school staff and partner agencies to plan health and wellbeing programmes which take account of local needs and are innovative, use relevant learning contexts and ensure coherence and progression. It is important that all aspects of health and wellbeing, including events, are planned as part of a whole school strategy, to ensure that they have sustained impact.

## What features are required to effectively promote health and wellbeing?

Effective learning through health and wellbeing which promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and actions requires:

### **Leadership** which:

- establishes a shared vision of health and wellbeing for all
- is open, collaborative and responsive
- engages and works with parents and carers and all stakeholders to provide children and young people with coherent and positive experiences which promote and protect their health
- promotes the health of all within the school community and develops arrangements to support their mental, social, emotional and physical wellbeing
- responds sensitively and appropriately if a critical incident takes place within the school community, and has contingency plans in place to enable this to happen.

### **Partnership working** which:

- engages the active support of parents and carers
- reinforces work across transitions and cluster planning across sectors
- maximises the contributions of the wider community

- draws upon specialist expertise
- ensures, through careful planning and briefing, that all contributions come together in ways which ensure coherence and progression.

#### **Learning and teaching which:**

- engages children and young people and takes account of their views and experiences, particularly where decisions are to be made that may impact on life choices
- takes account of research and successful practice in supporting the learning and development of children and young people, particularly in sensitive areas such as substance misuse
- uses a variety of approaches including active, cooperative and peer learning and effective use of technology
- encourages and capitalises on the potential to experience learning and new challenges in the outdoor environment
- encourages children and young people to act as positive role models for others within the educational community
- leads to a lasting commitment in children and young people to follow a healthy lifestyle by participation in experiences which are varied, relevant, realistic and enjoyable
- helps to foster health in families and communities through work with a range of professions, parents and carers, and children and young people, and enables them to understand the responsibilities of citizenship
- harnesses the experience and expertise of different professions, including developing enterprise and employability skills.

### **What are broad features of assessment in health and wellbeing?**

As important aspects of health and wellbeing are the responsibility of all staff in educational establishments in partnership with others, and because of the importance of health and wellbeing to learning and development, everyone should be clear about their areas of responsibility and their roles in assessment. In health and wellbeing, assessment has to take account of the breadth and purpose of the wide range of learning experienced by children and young people within this curriculum area. It will focus on children and young people's knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes in relation to physical education, food and health, substance misuse, relationships, sexual health and parenthood, and their social and life skills.

Teachers and learners can gather evidence of progress as part of day-to-day learning inside and outside the classroom and, as appropriate, through specific assessment tasks. From the early years through to the senior stages, children and young people's progress will be seen in how well they are developing and applying their knowledge, understanding and skills in, for example, key features of healthy living and relationships, and in approaches to personal planning, assessing risk and decision making. For example:

- To what extent do they understand the role of healthy eating and physical fitness in contributing to their wellbeing?
- How well are they applying personal and interpersonal skills as part of their daily lives, and developing them as they grow and mature?
- Through their involvement in planning, managing and participating in individual and group activities in school and in the community, do they demonstrate skills, attitudes and attributes which will be important for the world of work, such as judgement, resilience and independence?

Progression in knowledge, understanding and skills can be seen as children and young people demonstrate that they are:

- applying their knowledge and skills with increasing confidence and competence in dealing with familiar circumstances and new challenges
- developing an increasing depth of understanding of their own and others' motivations, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours
- extending the range of their relationships within and outwith the school.

Assessment should also link with other areas of the curriculum, within and beyond the classroom, offering children and young people opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in more complex, demanding or unfamiliar learning or social contexts.

### **How is personal safety addressed in the framework?**

Each organiser includes statements of experiences and outcomes relating to relevant aspects of personal safety: for example travelling safely, responses in emergencies, food safety, substance misuse and safety in relationships.

### **What is the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport to health and wellbeing?**

Regular physical activity is essential for good health. Physical education should inspire and challenge children and young people to experience the joy of movement, to develop positive attitudes both individually and as part of a group and to enhance their quality of life through active living. This will give children and young people an important foundation for participation in experiences in physical activities and sport and in preparation for a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle. Children and young people will participate in and enjoy physical activity and sport, in addition to planned physical education sessions, at break times and lunchtimes, during travel and beyond the school day. Outdoor learning can contribute to physical activity and enhance learning in different areas of the curriculum.

Taken together, the experiences and outcomes in physical education, physical activity and sport aim to establish the pattern of daily physical activity which, research has shown, is most likely to lead to sustained physical activity in adult life.

### **How can a whole school approach to food and health contribute to health and wellbeing?**

Schools contribute to improving children's diets through the promotion of consistent healthy eating messages enabling them to make healthy food choices and to develop lifelong healthy eating habits. A good diet is essential for good health. Research shows that many children fall short of national dietary recommendations. A poorly balanced diet can contribute to the risk of developing a number of diseases and conditions including tooth decay, obesity, certain cancers, diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke.

*Hungry for Success* encouraged the adoption of a whole school approach to food and health. This approach is now reinforced through the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 and forms the basis of this framework for food and health.

Practical food activities feature across the food and health experiences and outcomes so that children and young people will enjoy a variety of opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to plan and safely prepare dishes for a healthy balanced diet to meet their own needs and the needs of others. In this way they will gain an appreciation that preparing and eating food can be a pleasant, enjoyable and social experience.

### **How can I make connections within and beyond health and wellbeing?**

The health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes are designed to encourage links with all other areas of the curriculum, to reinforce learning and to provide relevant, enjoyable and active experiences.

- The health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes provide valuable opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy.
- There are important links between health and wellbeing, and religious and moral education and religious education in Roman Catholic schools in the establishment of values and growth of spiritual wellbeing, and in considering relationships.
- Participation in expressive arts activities can make an important contribution to a child's or young person's sense of wellbeing and can bring learning to life. Using the expressive arts as a medium for

learning, for example through role play, can engage learners in issues such as bullying, in more engaging and accessible ways.

- There are very close connections between dance and physical education, in particular through the shared outcomes in evaluating and appreciating.
- There are clear connections between science and several aspects of health and wellbeing; between the technologies and, for example, food and health; and between the social studies and the aspects relating to citizenship and participation.

In all of these cases staff have the scope to group experiences and outcomes together in different and imaginative ways which enrich, consolidate and enhance progression in learning.