**Transcript: Health and wellbeing across the learning community - Mary Russell School**

**Julie McCallum DHT:** Mary Russell School is based in Paisley. It's a school which caters for youngsters from the ages of five through to 18 with additional support needs. Health and wellbeing is very much central to what we do here in Mary Russell School. The Curriculum for Excellence says that health and wellbeing should be everyone's responsibility and that is very much the case here. It's not just about physical wellbeing but also the mental, social and emotional wellbeing of our young people.

The course that we currently have, which is our senior phase 2, is very much about preparing young people for life after school. The design principles of Curriculum for Excellence are very much key to what we do, ensuring that we do cover all the seven areas but focusing particularly on choice, personalisation that allows our young people to decide where they're going in their learning and what they want to find out about.

**Female:** It was very, very clear to me that the children were learning in isolated situations across the curriculum. I wanted them to bring all their learning together and to use these skills so that they could actually apply them to the situations they'll face once they've left school, because in the past, everything was handed to our children. I wanted them to learn to seek out their own information so as they could make their own informed decisions.

**Female:** In maths, we do your own banking and how to deal with your own money like bills and stuff if you get your own house.

**Female:** They could use these skills, for example, in running their own bank accounts. I wanted them to learn that when they're learning about health and eating that they could apply these skills to living healthily and making good choices when they were shopping and when they were maybe feeding themselves and their families in the future. I wanted them to know that there was - PE didn't just happen in school timetables, but they may well be faced with lots of leisure time and that if they had the opportunity to experience wide, wide ranges of activities they could make choices that would encourage them to take maybe even minimum exercise in a week and therefore improve their overall health and wellbeing.

**Female:** This year we've been studying about poverty.

Male: One of the countries that we were learning about poverty was - I think it was India. We saw a film about that as well. It gave you an idea what life was like in that poverty area. It taught you how fortunate I am to live in this country where I have clean water, good housing conditions and a roof over my head and that.

**Female:** What they could contribute to society, either locally or globally, could make a difference to how they felt about themselves and how they also approached other people.

**Female:** This year's helped me because it's made me become more confident, handle my money carefully and become more responsible.

Female: The course is delivered over a whole morning. Every member of staff who's involved in delivering the course are all timetabled to be involved in the course at the same time. The barriers are sometimes that it's more difficult to get staff together to plan for that, so we've set aside time within class, [staff non-class] contact time.

**Female:** The course does run over two years, but we have our same themes going through the two years. We get together as a department. We have evaluated every topic as they finish it, so we look at our evaluations - what worked, what didn't work. We asked our students what they wanted to learn. We take on board their interests and topics they would like to learn about.

**Female:** The course itself demonstrates that young people are much more able to take on responsibility, being much more independent in their learning. I think that's coming out in some of the things we're asking them to do in the senior phase. Themselves, they will ask to take on board certain activities and tasks. They'll plan for them and they'll drive them forward.

**Female:** The benefit of this approach, especially in the senior phase, is that our students are included in the decision making and they're also included in the courses as it develops. What we notice is we have a higher attendance at school on days when these activities are to the forefront. We have a community of students who actually have a huge depth of understanding about world issues and about issues that affect themselves.

**Female:** There is no doubt that our interdisciplinary approach in Mary Russell is about preparing young people for life after school, ensuring that skills for life learning and work are very much taught and embedded in everything that we do. I feel very strongly that young people in Mary Russell in terms of independence, responsibility and preparation are very much the key aims of what we try to do. The health and wellbeing aspect of that, which permeates everything that we do in the curriculum, is very much key to that as well.