

West Midlands
Violence Reduction Unit

**EDUCATION
TOOLKIT**

SUPPORTING INCLUSION AND WELLBEING



CONTENTS

Authors and contributors	3	Building resilience through sport.....	22
Foreword	4	Building resilience through parental engagement.....	22
Section 1: Childhood adversity and taking a whole-school approach	6	Tell parents about school policies on inclusion behaviour and early intervention /prevention activities.....	22
Risk and protective factors.....	7	Spread messages on how parents can support their child's learning.....	22
Taking a whole-school public health approach.....	9	Work with parents to improve key parenting skills and encourage non-violent strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour.....	22
Section 2: Promoting school inclusion	10	Further resources.....	23
Section 3: Establishing a trauma-informed approach	14	Section 5: Creating the right school environment	24
What are trauma and adversity?.....	15	Promoting positive behaviour and relationships.....	25
Race and culture as traumatic factors.....	15	Managing and supporting behaviour that challenges.....	25
What is a 'trauma-informed' school?.....	16	Discipline represents an opportunity to teach and nurture.....	25
How can we help children and young people in a trauma-informed way?.....	16	Internal exclusion.....	25
Create a safe and supportive environment.....	16	Managing crisis situations.....	26
Build trust and help children and young people to regulate their emotions.....	16	Further resources.....	27
Raise awareness and understanding amongst staff.....	16	Section 6: Supporting special educational needs and disabilities, vulnerability and emotional wellbeing	28
Modify teaching strategies.....	16	Support through transition points.....	30
Cultural competence.....	16	Who is affected?.....	30
How do you transform your school into a trauma-informed school?.....	18	How to spot if a child is struggling.....	30
Further resources.....	18	Supporting mental health.....	30
Section 4: Building resilience	20	Supporting vulnerability and preventing violence.....	31
How can schools build resilience in children?.....	21	What can schools do?.....	31
Strengthen core life skills.....	21	Ensuring vulnerability does not equate to violence.....	31
The school as a community hub.....	22	West Midlands VRU Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP).....	31

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The material in this toolkit has been adapted, with permission, from **School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019.**

In several locations throughout the document, the text has been either adapted or used verbatim from the source and referenced accordingly.

Other national examples of violence prevention lessons in school.....	31
Further resources.....	32
Concluding statements	33
References.....	34
Appendix 1: Taking a whole-school approach	36
Leadership.....	37
Ethos and environment.....	38
Curriculum teaching and learning.....	38
Pupil voice.....	38
Staff development.....	38
Identifying needs and monitoring impact.....	39
Working with parents and carers.....	39
Targeted support.....	39
Appendix 2: Children with special educational needs and disabilities	40
Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH).....	41
Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).....	42
Traumatic brain injury.....	43
Appendix 3: Mentors in violence prevention	44
Key principles and approach.....	45
Appendix 4: Resources for lessons relating to violence prevention	46
Appendix 5: COVID-19: supporting the return to school	50



FOREWORD

FOREWORD



This toolkit is one of the first working documents by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit, which is being shared in order to support our work with the education sector. It is a collection of promising practice that aims to help schools support vulnerable children and to facilitate a trauma-informed approach to education. We hope it will provide a conversation starter and a foundation for the work to be undertaken by our education intervention advisers this academic year.

In 2020, the important role of educational settings in the reduction of vulnerability within society has been writ plain. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the incredible efforts of educators and school communities, particularly this year. You have sought to stay connected to and to provide a safe haven for our most vulnerable children in the most challenging of circumstances. I am so glad that you were there for so many of them.

There are clearly strong foundations across the West Midlands in terms of promoting wellbeing for all young people, understanding and responding to difficulties when they emerge and providing support to young people and their families.

Approaches to identifying trauma and supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing are high on the agenda due to COVID-19 and the recognition of the impact of racial prejudice in so many systems across society. We will learn a lot, I fear, this school year about how to support young people through loss, poverty and systematic disadvantage.

I hope that educators will help us to capture that learning and use it to strengthen this toolkit during the course of this year. I encourage you to engage with our team and each other through our **online forum**. I hope that, by working together, we can support the sector to further strengthen its response. I also hope we can shine a spotlight on policy-level issues beyond the remit of any one school or education body.

The toolkit offers practical steps to help embed an inclusive approach in all aspects of the setting, with a focus on trauma-informed training and practice,

supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and re-examining behavioural management techniques and risk points. It emphasises providing a positive approach to building children's resilience and in giving them the life skills they need to overcome any adversity that they may have experienced.

Schools are a key partner in the recognition of a wide range of conditions of vulnerability. We know that vulnerability increases the chances of young people being exploited or becoming drawn into violent lifestyles, either as a perpetrator or a victim. Early supportive interventions can help reduce vulnerability, prevent exclusions and ensure children can make the most of their education.

As such, schools and other education settings play an essential role in helping to ensure all of our children and young people are safe, feel safe and thrive. Your work has a huge impact on the wellbeing of the community, within and beyond the school gates. As such, you are natural partners and key stakeholders in the violence reduction partnership. I hope that this toolkit goes some way to supporting you and we look forward to refining it further, based on your experiences this year.

Clare Gollop
Director of West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit

For further support and to join our Education community of practice, please email vrueducation@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

SECTION 1:

Childhood adversity and taking a whole-school approach

SECTION 1



Without a doubt, COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of children, young people and their families. A recent report by the Children's Society recognises that not only is the pandemic an unprecedented public health emergency but it also presents a challenge for society, for those who work in the education sector and across the wider economy. In particular, vulnerable risk factors are likely to have been exacerbated as children have been excluded from mainstream systems of support, leading to an increased risk of abuse, neglect and worsening health and wellbeing outcomes.

Therefore, it is clear that now, more than ever, schools have a role in supporting vulnerable children. This toolkit aims to provide tools and resources to assist teachers to support the mental and emotional needs of all children, but in particular those who are most vulnerable. There is a range of vulnerabilities which children face, and those who may be at particular risk are:

- + Looked after children
- + Children from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds
- + Children with diagnosed and undiagnosed special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- + Children living in poverty (and those on Pupil Premium)
- + Children who have experienced bereavement
- + Young carers
- + Those from the travelling community.

Schools are in a unique position to identify early, address and prevent the trajectory of vulnerability and subsequent adverse outcomes, such as exclusion (of which vulnerable children face the most considerable risk). Not only are schools accountable for ensuring that their premises are safe, but they can also take an active role in engaging the community on issues related to vulnerability and the wellbeing of children. This can include persistent disruptive behaviour and violence that takes place in schools, such as physical violence and bullying. Promoting an inclusive school, giving extra early support to children who are having difficulties and promoting a trauma-informed environment will help to reduce school exclusions and, in the long term, contribute to reducing youth violence in our communities. It is essential to highlight that violence itself may be a reaction to underlying stress or vulnerability, and so the purpose of this guidance is an

opportunity to focus on working on those underlying concerns.

Supporting the emotional wellbeing of pupils in schools can play an important role in raising aspirations and life chances, helping to improve life skills such as communication, managing emotions, resolving conflicts and solving problems. This also helps to deliver skills as part of the curriculum.

Risk and protective factors

Some socio-economic disadvantages and stressors can have a negative impact on pupils and, ultimately, can act as risk factors for violence. It is unlikely that children will go through life without experiencing some form of adversity; however, those who experience multiple risk factors concurrently (such as poverty, domestic violence, bullying, refugees and asylum seekers and young people with special educational or complex needs) may face more significant challenges in school than their peers. Some of these risk factors are highlighted in Box 1 (see overleaf).

Despite experiencing adversity, not all children go on to be involved in violence (violence can be internal and include experiences of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and neglect), and one of the critical reasons for this is the presence of protective factors in their life. Protective factors are at the core of asset-based or strengths-based prevention strategies. Multiple protective factors can even offset the potentially harmful influence of risk factors that have accumulated over a child's development. The presence of these factors may play a role in the development of academic resilience, the ability to mean that students achieve good educational outcomes despite adversity. Box 2 highlights some of the protective features in schools that may act to offset adversity (see overleaf).

Box 1: Examples of risk factors (taken from Young Minds)

- + Stress effects and malnourishment in the womb
- + Poverty
- + Parents with little formal education
- + Family instability
- + Parental alcoholism
- + Poor parental mental health
- + Poor educational attainment
- + Poor relationships with others
- + Poor school attendance
- + Low peer and adult support
- + Not engaging with the wider community
- + Being exposed to negative life experiences, such as domestic violence or drug abuse in the family
- + Not mastering life skills
- + Low self-esteem and self-confidence
- + Having the feeling of little control or influence over one's own life.

Box 2: Examples of protective factors within an educational setting (taken from Young Minds)

- + At least one trusted adult, with regular access over time, who lets the pupils they hold in mind know that they care
- + Preparedness and capacity to help with basics, i.e. food, clothing, transport and even housing
- + Safe spaces – quiet, safe spaces for pupils who wish to retreat from 'busy' school life
- + Knowing it's OK not to feel OK, but we move on
- + Making sure vulnerable pupils actually access activities, hobbies and sports
- + Help to map out a sense of future (hope and aspirations) and developing life skills
- + Help to develop and practise problem-solving approaches at every opportunity
- + Help for pupils to calm down and manage their feelings
- + Support to help others, e.g. volunteering and peer mentoring
- + Opportunities for all staff, pupils and parents to learn about resilience
- + Active listening.

Taking a whole-school public health approach

To successfully facilitate the embedding of protective factors into the system, all key stakeholders relevant to the life of that child must be involved. It has been shown that early intervention approaches involving all the people who are important in a young person's life are associated with enhanced wellbeing outcomes and inclusion of pupils. Taking such an approach in a school setting (including students, parents, school staff and the wider community) works towards making sure that the all-important stakeholders relevant to each child share the same vision of supporting the social, emotional and mental health of young people.

Figure 1, taken from the **Public Health England (PHE) report "Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing: A whole school and college approach"**, presents eight key features that work together to promote emotional health and wellbeing in schools and colleges. Appendix 1 highlights in detail the steps required in each of the sectors in Figure 1 to facilitate a whole-school approach to violence prevention.



Figure 1: Actions towards taking a whole-school approach (taken from Public Health England report "Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing: A whole school and college approach").

SECTION 2:

Promoting school inclusion



SECTION 2



Recent evidence from the 2019 Timpson Review of School Exclusion suggests that excluded children have worse trajectories in the long term. These include failure within the academic curriculum, aggravated anti-social behaviour and an increased likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system.

Multiple and long-term exclusion should act as a warning signal that young people are at risk and need help. The Department for Education (DfE) has described that exclusion disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in school: looked after children, ethnic minorities, those who come from disadvantaged economic backgrounds and those presenting special educational needs.

It is important that schools shift towards inclusion, rather than exclusion, identifying risk factors early and taking steps to give support to children who may be struggling academically, emotionally or with problems outside of the home. Some recommendations by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (WMVRU) to support children at risk of disengagement and to help reduce exclusions are listed in Box 3.



Box 3: Recommendations to support children at risk of engagement and to reduce exclusions

- + Create an underlying positive school culture that fosters how behaviour is understood and subsequently managed, and promote the ethos that inclusion is part of the school's core purpose.
- + Support and equip teachers with the skills to do this.
- + Emphasise the importance of early identification and intervention before problems become entrenched and provide support for families alongside the children. To support this, every school needs timely access to high-quality external provision.
- + Provide a range of targeted and individual approaches that can be tailored to the needs of pupils vulnerable to exclusion. This targeted provision may at times take them out of mainstream classes and give them respite of some kind, or provide them with specialist one-to-one tuition or counselling.

Some Resources and Actions Required for the Above to Happen:

- + Ensure that pastoral leads and Designated Safeguarding Leads have undertaken appropriate training to spot signs of distress and poor mental health. Ensure staff are able to identify where changes in behaviour may be an indication of an underlying issue.
- + Where further support is needed, staff should consider what additional help or reasonable adjustments are needed and put a plan in place to deliver them, with regular points to review. Where pupils already have education, pastoral support or multi-agency plans, this should be updated.

A **recent review*** on school exclusions identified the five conditions necessary for change to promote a more inclusive environment:

- + Every child has a strong relationship with a trusted adult in school
- + Every child's parents or carers are engaged as partners in their education
- + Every child attends a school with an inclusive ethos
- + Every child is assessed for learning and other needs throughout their school career and there is the capacity to provide appropriate support
- + We know where every child is in the system to ensure they can benefit from the four conditions above.

Nurture groups are in-school, teacher-led psychosocial interventions focused on supporting the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) of children and young people. They are founded on evidence-based practice and offer a short-term, inclusive, targeted intervention that works in the long term. Nurture groups are classes of between six and twelve children or young people, run by two members of staff trained in nurture interventions. Nurture groups can be set up in early years, primary or secondary settings, as well as in special needs schools.

Nurture groups are now in over 2,000 schools in the UK and offer the opportunity to experience the early nurturing experiences that some children and young people lack, giving them the skills to do well at school, make friends and deal more confidently and calmly with the trials and tribulations of life, for life.

One such approach to reducing the number of days lost to exclusion relates to the introduction of **nurture groups**:

“Overall, since the first year the nurture group began, we have reduced exclusions in our school by 84%. In 2017 we enrolled on the National Nurturing Schools Programme and as a result, from the start of this current academic year, we have achieved three out of four terms with no exclusions at all.”

“Overall, since the first year the nurture group began, we have reduced exclusions in our school by 84%.”

Kent Nurture Group

Kent Nurture Group

*Recent review by the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce on school exclusions.



SECTION 3:

Establishing a trauma-informed approach

SECTION 3



Transforming your school into a 'trauma-informed' school will help to promote a nurturing environment.

The WMVRU can give support to schools to help to develop this approach as part of a violence reduction programme. If you are interested in getting support, please email vrueducation@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

This section gives a brief overview of trauma and its potential impact on children. It has been adapted from the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network **report on post-COVID-19 trauma-informed guidance for schools.**

What are trauma and adversity?

"Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that are experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing." (**Substance abuse and mental health services administration**). Box 4 lists some examples of traumatic experiences.

Adversity, in this context, refers to any difficulties or obstacles encountered by individuals in their home or community environment. This could include poverty, community violence or a 'dysfunctional household'. An individual or family may experience complex trauma within a dysfunctional household if, for example, there is substance misuse, neglect or domestic abuse present. There are therefore potential links between trauma and adversity.

Race and culture as traumatic factors

It is extremely important to highlight that children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds may face and experience different forms of racism or prejudice in the education setting. Inequality and racism as a result of race and culture are also fundamentally traumatic experiences associated with negative educational outcomes.

Box 4: Examples of traumatic experiences

- + Illness and medical procedures (particularly life-threatening health situations)
- + The death or loss of a loved one
- + Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- + Abandonment, betrayal of trust or neglect
- + Witnessing domestic violence or abuse
- + Serious accidents (e.g. road traffic collisions)
- + Bullying
- + Witnessing or experiencing community violence
- + Incarceration of a parent
- + Life-threatening natural disasters
- + Threats or acts of terrorism
- + Parental substance abuse
- + Parental mental health issues.

What is a 'trauma-informed' school?

We define a 'trauma-informed' school as one that is able to support children and young people who suffer with trauma and whose experience of trauma acts as a barrier to learning.

Children and young people who have experienced traumatic events may show signs of academic or behavioural problems; however, in other pupils, their suffering may not be apparent at all. We suggest to be alert to children who act out and also to quiet children who don't appear to have any issues. The quiet and withdrawn students can often go unnoticed, which means their needs are not addressed. They may have symptoms that are equally serious as those of children who outwardly display academic and behavioural difficulties. Some children and young people, with support, will recover within a few weeks or months from the fear or trauma caused by COVID-19 or other traumatic events. However, other children need help over a longer period of time in order to heal, and may require continuing support from school staff, parents, extended family, social care and mental health experts. Anniversaries of an event, special occasions (e.g. birthdays or Christmas) and media coverage of reminders of trauma can cause recurring symptoms, feelings and behaviours.

The accumulation of traumatic experiences may impact on their school performance and can impair learning. Some important signs to look out for, suggesting exposure to traumatic experiences, include:

- + Inconsistent/changes in academic performance
- + Higher rate of school absence
- + More suspensions or exclusions
- + Difficulties with concentration, memory and cognition

- + Reduced ability to focus, organise and process information
- + Lower reading ability and/or language skills
- + Difficulties with effective problem-solving, organisational skills and/or planning ability.

How can we help children and young people in a trauma-informed way?

Create a safe and supportive environment

Prioritise emotional and physical safety. A return to 'normal' can help a child feel safe and to understand that life will go on. Reinstate usual school routines as far as possible. A child who experiences trauma can feel that life is unpredictable, chaotic and out of his or her control. Give children choices or control when appropriate. A safe school environment is one that is consistent, organised and has clearly stated, reasonable expectations. Provide extra reassurance and explanation if there are any changes.

Build trust and help children and young people to regulate their emotions

Let the child or young person know that you are available to talk if he or she wants to. When talking to a child, show them that they can trust you; listen carefully, don't judge but accept their feelings and remind them that it is normal to experience emotional difficulties following trauma. Children need to feel able to share their worries and feelings and they need to know it's okay to take time to recover. Designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed. Provide a safe place and set aside time to talk about what has happened.

Raise awareness and understanding amongst staff

Promote understanding about the connection between emotions and behaviours. Anyone has the potential to misinterpret changes (e.g. as 'bad behaviour'); however,

changes to a child's usual conduct or performance can be a sign of trauma. Whilst it is important to protect and respect a child's privacy, it can be helpful to share information with school staff who have contact with a child to make sure that they are aware that the child has experienced trauma and may be having difficulties (e.g. concentrating, controlling emotions and/or performing academically) as a result.

Modify teaching strategies

Balance routines and normal expectations with a flexible approach. You might avoid or postpone tests, events or projects that require intense concentration and energy, for a while. Be sensitive to students who are experiencing difficulties and anticipate difficult times further down the line (e.g. birthdays or anniversaries). Support students by rescheduling or adapting classwork and homework. Use teaching methods that help concentration, retention and recall. Warn and remind pupils when there's going to be a loud noise, if possible (e.g. school bell or fire alarm test).

Cultural competence

As highlighted, racism and discrimination as a result of race and culture play an important role in mediating outcomes for schoolchildren. It is important that any form of racism is addressed and that teachers have a good understanding of cultural differences. Teachers and staff may need to develop new skills, such as the ability to see learning through a multicultural screen, to achieve inclusive educational achievement for all. This means that, as well as being able to teach an academic subject, staff must have the knowledge and the skills to connect with students from diverse racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Figure 2 is taken from the Project Ready programme developed by the **University of North Carolina and partners.**

Box 5 highlights some key lessons for encompassing what cultural competency may look like in practice. Ultimately, cultural competency is a commitment to change school

culture through the review of school policy, staff development and community involvement. Further strategies can be found in **Strategies for Building Cultural Competency 2014.**

Becoming culturally competent and practising cultural humility are ongoing processes that change in response to new situations, experiences and relationships. Cultural competence is a necessary foundation for cultural humility.

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Holding Systems Accountable

How can I work at an institutional level to ensure that the systems I'm part of move toward greater inclusion and equity?

Understanding and Redressing Power Imbalances

How can I use my understanding of my own and others' cultures to identify and work to disrupt inequitable systems?

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

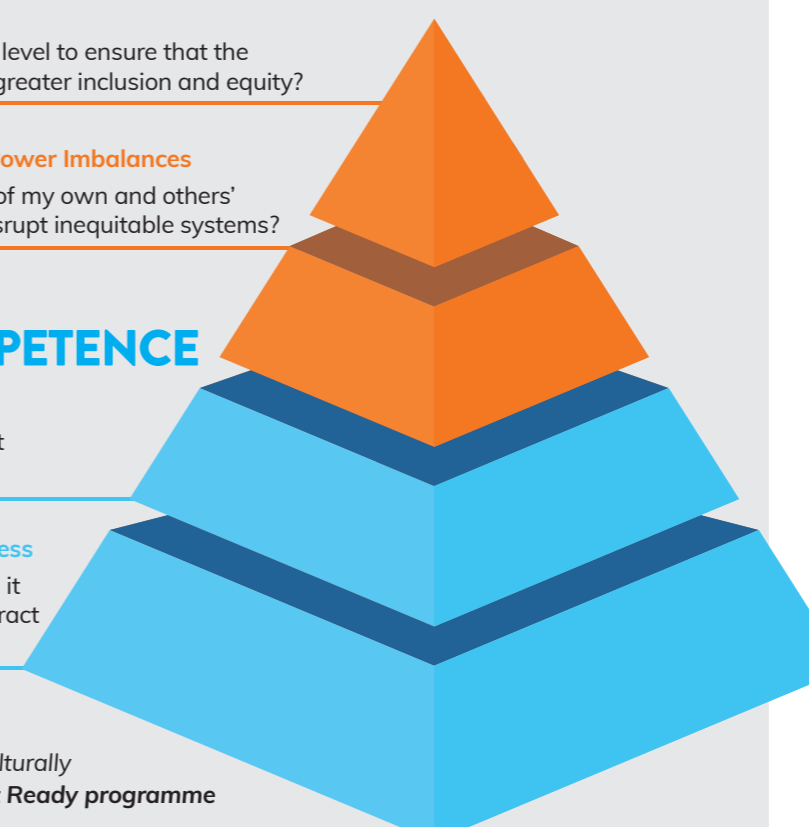
Gaining Cultural Knowledge

What are other cultures, and what strengths do they have?

Developing Cultural Self-awareness

What is my culture, and how does it influence the ways I view and interact with others?

Figure 2: The path to becoming culturally competent, taken from the **Project Ready programme**



Box 5: Meeting the aims of cultural competence (advice adapted from Faculty Focus and Ed Tech Review)

Culturally competent teaching and learning involves:

- + Professionals critically reflecting upon their own personal and professional cultural views, as well as encouraging students to do the same
- + Showing mutual respect for the cultural background of others and encouraging students to do the same
- + Accommodating specific learners who require additional or alternative support
- + Developing intercultural communication skills
- + Offering intentionally challenging activities and environments that provoke cultural learning and understanding
- + Developing relationships with local multicultural faith and community groups (Diverse CYMRU) www.diverseecymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cultural-Competency-Toolkit.pdf
- + Making use of multicultural resources in the learning environment
- + Encouraging students to share their cultural experiences and norms.

How do you transform your school into a trauma-informed school?

Each educational setting will have unique circumstances, cohorts and communities that they serve. There can't therefore be a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing trauma-responsive approaches into the whole-school culture. However, the following could be considered as helpful processes for beginning to review trauma-informed practice within your setting and developing local solutions.

- 1 Creating a working party with minimal hierarchy to lead trauma-informed change across the organisation. This is best if it has the backing of senior leaders and commitment to implement the findings that the group generates. Ideally, this working party includes representation from pupils and from parents/carers or other members of the community. This group could consider the strengths of the school and areas for development in relation to trauma-informed principles.
- 2 Promoting trauma-informed training for all staff members. An example of free online software is ACEs' **Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences: Early Trauma Online Learning**.
- 3 Completing walkthrough exercises of the daily functioning of the school, considering how it might feel if you were a child with an experience of trauma, adversity or losses of different kinds. This can be extended to parents and the communications with the community at large. Ideally, these exercises are also informed by young people themselves. Collect the learning from these exercises and begin to implement changes to processes and policies.
- 4 Operating a trauma-informed champions' model, either within school or through a cluster model with other schools in the locality or within a multi-academy trust.
- 5 Seeking to establish or join a local community of practice with other schools or organisations to share best practice on embedding a trauma-informed approach or accessing trauma training. This community of practice could form out of a champions' model such as that described above.
- 6 Use an action learning set model to disseminate trauma-informed practice throughout the organisation or the local cluster.

Further resources

**West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit,
COVID-19 Educational Resources**

WAVE Trust



SECTION 4:

Building resilience

“Resilience describes a person’s capacity to cope with changes and challenges and to bounce back during difficult times. The more resilient someone is, the better they are at getting through tough times, and the better their chances at recovering from experiences of adversity and trauma.”

Gilligan, 2004

SECTION 4



Some of the information in this section has been adapted from the evidence produced by the Center on the Developing Child, at Harvard University.

Evidence shows that not all children experience lasting harm as a result of adverse early experiences. Some may demonstrate resilience, or an adaptive response to serious hardship. A better understanding of why some children do well despite early adversity is important, because it can help to create a supportive environment that helps more children to achieve their full potential.

One way to understand the development of resilience is to visualise a balance scale or seesaw (see Figure 2). **Protective experiences** and adaptive skills on one side counterbalance significant adversity on the other. Resilience is evident when a child’s health and development are tipped in the positive direction, even when a heavy load of factors is stacked on the negative side. Understanding all of the influences that might tip the scale in the positive direction is critical to devising more effective strategies to promote healthy development in the face of significant disadvantage.

How can schools build resilience in children?

Schools can support children by adopting a trauma-informed approach, as outlined earlier in the toolkit. They can focus on providing children with supportive

relationships and being a source of support, especially for children who face difficulties in their home life. In addition to academic activities, a school can adopt an ethos of strengthening executive function and self-regulation skills and also core life skills.

Strengthen core life skills

Children facing significant adversity can develop core life skills, and schools can strengthen them through the curriculum. Life and social skills are defined as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (World Health Organization) – WHO. The top 10 life skills identified by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO are:

- 1 Problem-solving
- 2 Critical thinking
- 3 Effective communication skills
- 4 Decision-making
- 5 Creative thinking
- 6 Interpersonal relationship skills
- 7 Self-awareness building skills
- 8 Empathy
- 9 Coping with stress
- 10 Coping with emotions.

Life and social skills development programmes help young people to increase their self-awareness and more accurately read and regulate their emotions. They also help young people to establish and maintain positive relationships and see the perspective of – and empathise with – others (WHO, 2015).



Figure 2: Visual representation of resilience, taken from Harvard Center on the Developing Child

The school as a community hub

As well as supporting good relationships and building and recognising the achievements of pupils, there are ways in which a school can function as an institution that acts as a local hub, connecting individuals, groups and services to each other. In this way, and by working with the local population and reinforcing community networks, schools can help to build trust, cohesion, influence and cooperation within the community, thereby increasing social capital and community resilience, which can have positive effects on health and reduce inequalities.

Building resilience through sport

Sport, in its role as a positive activity, is well placed to take a universal, preventative role in reducing violence. School and community programmes have been proven to build supportive friendships – a protective element of resilience. Regular participation in sports groups contributes positively to the development of resilience in childhood and adulthood, improved mental health (**Public Health Wales, 2018**) and, more broadly, the development of social skills (**Allen, 2014**). Engaging young people in community activities has been positively associated with improvement and development in self-esteem and problem-solving, which in turn may lead to a reduction in behavioural incidents and an improvement in academic outcomes.

In 2015, **StreetGames UK** in partnership with Loughborough University, developed its 10 critical success factors to effective sport and youth crime interventions, as seen in Figure 3. These principles should be considered by schools when designing, delivering and/or commissioning sport-based provision. You can read the full report **here**. Schools can link with community providers to help those children most at risk to access extra-curricular activities, which will help build their resilience.

Building resilience through parental engagement

Parents are an important influence on children's values, attitudes and behaviour. Building positive and meaningful relationships between schools and parents can help your efforts to support emotional wellbeing and improve academic progress. Violence prevention programmes in schools might not be effective if children are exposed to violence in their homes. Children may also replicate behaviours learned at home when they are in school. Therefore, schools have a role to play in identifying and addressing violence in the homes of students and other potential risks to children's wellbeing.

Initiatives at school level to get parents more involved include the following:

Tell parents about school policies on inclusion behaviour and early intervention/prevention activities

Telling parents about inclusion policies and prevention activities can increase awareness and gain support. Parents need to understand why the school is addressing vulnerability, the strategies you are using, the messages you are giving, and how parents can talk about vulnerability and wellbeing with their children and support them. Schools can involve parents through learning sessions, support groups, websites and written information. Parent-teacher associations may help to reach out to parents and plan activities that involve them.

Spread messages on how parents can support their child's learning

A parent's interest in their child's school life can help improve the child's behaviour and academic achievement. Talking to parents about school life can get them more interested and can increase opportunities for parents and children to discuss and practise the skills and messages learned at school. Good two-way communication is key. Schools should offer opportunities for parents to find out what their children are learning and to discuss any concerns they might have.

Work with parents to improve key parenting skills and encourage non-violent strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour

Harmful parenting practices can increase the risk of violence among children. Schools can help by providing sessions on positive parenting, parent-child communication skills and non-violent strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour. Sessions that are interactive and provide opportunities to practise new skills are most effective. Parents may be more willing to take part in these initiatives if they realise that by doing so they will be enhancing their relationship with their children and, through this, helping to make the school's violence prevention measures a success. Schools can also engage with any parenting initiatives that there may be in the community.



Figure 3: 10 critical success factors for effective sport and youth crime interventions, taken from **Streetgames UK**

Further resources

The Center on the Developing Child is committed to helping leaders and teams not only to understand the science of early **childhood development**, but also use it to transform the way they work. The website has extensive resources on adversity and resilience.

InBrief series: developingchild.harvard.edu/inbrief-series

Boing Boing is a charity helping schools to establish systems to build 'resilience approaches' that support disadvantaged pupils over time through a whole-school approach. It has developed resources and a framework to help schools to implement approaches that strengthen resilience.

www.boingboing.org.uk/academic-resilience-approach

www.boingboing.org.uk/resilience/schools-resources

Public Health England, Institute of Health Equity. *Local action on health inequalities: Building children and young people's resilience in schools.* London, 2014.

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355766/Review2_Resilience_in_schools_health_inequalities.pdf

For additional information on effective intervention design, read **Loughborough University's Sport & Serious Youth Violence Literature Review**, which provides an insight into evidence-based practices, presenting the most effective ways of utilising sport in the context of preventing and reducing serious youth violence – its appendices on pages 11-13 are particularly useful.

StreetGames UK Sport & youth crime report 2015.

Further evidence compiled by **Public Health Wales** supporting the vital role of sport and physical activity during childhood, and progressing into adulthood, can be found **here**.

Early Intervention Foundation – A range of evidence-based resources to help increase early intervention and prevention.

Welsh Government. *FaCE the challenge together: family and community engagement toolkit for schools in Wales.* A toolkit on family and community engagement for schools that includes welcoming families to engage with the school and helping them to actively support their child's learning.



SECTION 5:

Creating the right school environment

SECTION 5



Creating the right school environment is often challenging. This section provides help in promoting positive behaviour, recognising the need for cultural competency. Information in this section has been adapted from the City of York’s Trauma-informed behaviour policies and approaches: A guide for schools and settings.

Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

Research suggests that “when schools place a strong emphasis upon the emotional health and wellbeing of all members of the school community, and this ethos is driven by the school’s senior leadership team and is evident in practice, this leads to better outcomes for all – e.g. staff retention, pupil attendance and attainment, positive home-school relationships” (Banerjee, Weare and Farr, 2014).

Figure 4 is a summary of the approach to promote whole-school wellbeing.

Managing and supporting behaviour that challenges

A clear school behaviour policy, consistently and fairly applied, underpins effective education. School staff, pupils, parents and volunteers should all be clear on the high standards of behaviour expected of all pupils at all times. The behaviour policy should be enacted consistently by all members of the school community.

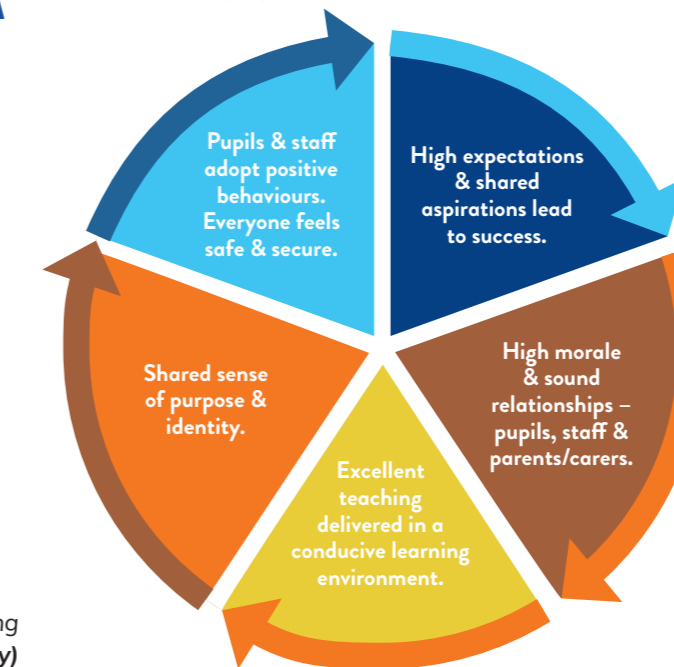


Figure 4: Whole-school approach to promoting wellbeing, reproduced from: EA (Education Authority)

Discipline represents an opportunity to teach and nurture

When considering the range of options to effect changes in pupils’ thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, the following should be considered:

- + What was the function of (i.e. the reason behind) the behaviour?
- + What lesson do I want to teach in this moment?
- + How can I best teach this lesson?

Internal exclusion

Where pupils repeatedly struggle to meet the expectations of the setting, they may be vulnerable to the repeated use of internal exclusion over an extended period of time. Where this is the case, it is anticipated that there will be further analysis and consideration in order to attempt, at all possible cost, to restore quality of life and social inclusion for that individual. Some suggestions are listed below:

- + **Identifying and meeting the need** being communicated through a behaviour at the earliest opportunity (rather than continuing sanctions where they are not working to change that behaviour)
- + **Restorative conversations** between the child or young person and a key attachment figure within the setting, at a point where the child or young person is calm enough to reflect on triggers, thoughts, feelings and what might help in the future
- + **Using a relational approach to behaviour management.** A relational approach is one in which staff “are aware of and explicitly focus on the quality of their interactions with students to develop classroom communities that promote academic, social, and emotional growth” (Reeves and Le Mare, 2017)

+ **Using emotional containment approaches** such as Zones of Regulation or Emotion Coaching to provide co-regulation and to support a child or young person to understand their emotions.

Lastly, there is some **evidence** to suggest that learning support units may act as another route to reduce exclusion and also serve to improve student outcomes and promote inclusion.

Managing crisis situations

There will be times when staff must intervene quickly and immediately to protect and keep people (adults and pupils) safe from harm. In such situations, the following principle must take precedence:

“What is in the best interests of the child and/or those around them in view of the risks presented?”

DfE, 2019

Solihull Local Authority utilised many of the approaches above, and they proved to be highly successful (see Box 6).

In an unplanned/emergency intervention, it is good practice for staff to use the SAFER dynamic risk assessment approach: a quick, on-the-spot assessment prior to acting, as in Table 1, right:

Step back	Don't rush into an intervention. Is it really necessary and do you have suitable justification?
Assess threat	Assess the person, the objects, the environment and the situational factors. What poses the greatest risk?
Find help	Can you reduce the risk by getting help from other trained colleagues or by using the physical environment, space, natural barriers, etc?
Evaluate options	Proactive/ Primary – proactive actions to reduce the triggers Active/ Secondary – use of interpersonal skills, non-verbal body language, e.g. open palms, directing, defusing, calming, switching staff, etc. Reactive/ Tertiary – avoid assaults; disengagement
Respond	Apply the principle of the least adverse method in responding. Continue to re-evaluate the situation and your response. Continually monitor for changes in risk

Table 1: Guidance on unplanned and emergency intervention, taken from **Staffordshire County Council**

Box 6: Solihull’s restorative approaches

Solihull aims to encourage all children to try their best to achieve their goals; however, sometimes children struggle to adhere to school rules. Restorative approaches help pupils understand the impact of their actions and how to put it right. By using a restorative approach, schools are giving pupils the skills to independently make better and more-informed choices in the future. Restorative approaches encourage pupils to think about how their behaviour affects others, both pupils and staff. It helps children to develop respect, responsibility and truth-telling.

What is a Restorative Approach?

A restorative approach in schools helps develop a healthier learning environment, where children and young people take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. The minds of those in a restorative school are focused on strengthening and repairing relationships, are inquisitive about what needs to happen and avoid attributing blame (Thorsborne and Blood, 2013). When embedded across the whole school, using restorative approaches can:

- + Develop emotional literacy, responsibility and empathy
- + Create a more positive learning environment, with better attendance and fewer behaviour incidents
- + Raise children and young people’s awareness of the impact of choices on others
- + Reduce the number of exclusions.

Through developing a school ethos based on needs and values, we can avoid assigning blame and punishment by creating an environment where children involved in conflict can reflect, repair and avoid repetition of the same behaviours.

Responding to Conflict

How we manage incidents of conflict in school is important; the response needs to deliver useful outcomes for all those involved. When choosing how to respond, we need to think about what the benefits would be and what the risks would be. We need to consider whether, by choosing a punitive response such as time out or

exclusion, we are enabling the pupil to learn from their mistake. Will it prevent a repeat of the same behaviour?

By acknowledging that the ‘offender’ may have had unmet needs as well as the needs of the ‘victim’, we reduce the likelihood of the incident recurring. A restorative discussion can also open our eyes to information about the child and why they might be using certain behaviours.

Restorative Conferencing

A restorative conference can be used to bring those involved in conflict together to listen to each other and hear how each person has been affected. They will then decide on a resolution that will help prevent a repeat of the same incident.

Restorative conferences can be used for:

- + Friendship issues
- + Conflict
- + Bullying
- + Disruptive behaviour in lessons.

Asking the child to participate in a conference can be used as an alternative to exclusion (**Russell, 2015**). The process of conferencing is possible only when those involved in the incident wish to take part. There also needs to be an element of the ‘offender’ taking responsibility for their actions, although this may develop as the conference progresses. The conference allows all involved to hear the impact that their choices have had on others, giving them an opportunity to feel safe and tell the truth, accept some accountability and be able to make amends for choices that they hear have adversely impacted on others.

Further resources

DfE **Behaviour and discipline in schools: Guidance for headteachers**

DfE **Getting the simple things right: Charlie Taylor’s behaviour checklists**

DfE **Checklist for school leaders to support full opening: Behaviour and attendance**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). **Positive discipline in the inclusive, learning-friendly classroom. A guide for teachers and teacher educators.** Paris: UNESCO, 2015

City of York Council **Trauma-informed behaviour policies and approaches – A guide for schools and settings**

SECTION 6:

Supporting special educational needs and disabilities, vulnerability and emotional wellbeing



SECTION 6



Children with SEMH (Social emotional and mental health) needs are more vulnerable to exclusion. Evidence shows that those with a recognised need are seven times more likely to be excluded than their peers (DfE, 2017a).

Children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional and social development may have gaps in their neurosequential development, which may make it difficult to make and sustain healthy relationships. These difficulties may be displayed through the young person becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as through challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. It is vital that children with SEND have the right support in school and early diagnosis. Speech, language and communication needs, or SLCN, refers to those who have difficulties or conditions affecting aspects of their communication. Speech refers to spoken sounds. Language refers to comprehension and expression. Communication broadly refers to the unification of a range of skills to allow interaction with others. Individuals with SLCN have difficulty in one or more of the above domains. For some, these difficulties may be mild and limited to particular situations. For many, these

difficulties are persistent, pervasive and complex. Over 60% of young people within the youth criminal justice system have undiagnosed SLCN (CYCJ, 2018).

Further information on how to support these children can be found in Appendix 2.

There are times when children may be particularly vulnerable, and there are actions that schools can take to help support them and also to reduce risk factors for vulnerability and strengthen protective factors. Figure 5 below shows points of interventions during transitions. Schools have a role to play in promoting good mental health, and this includes the early diagnosis of mental health conditions. Some children will also need extra support as they transition from primary to secondary school and then as they leave school, or if they move to a new school.

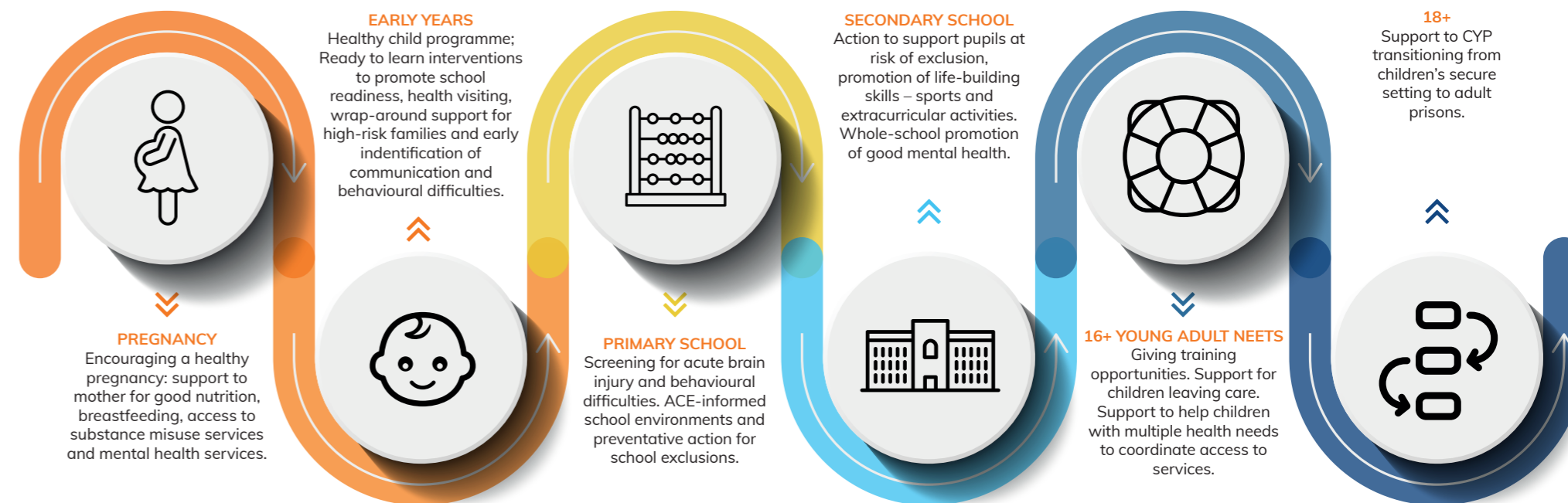


Figure 5: Points of intervention in school settings, taken from Peden et al. 2019

Support through transition points

Change is a normal part of life and can provide opportunities for children to develop their resilience. Whether a child is starting primary school, changing schools or moving from infants to juniors or primary to secondary school, this transition period needs to be carefully managed. If a child struggles with a transition it can have a negative impact on their wellbeing and academic achievement.

Who is affected?

It's important to prepare students who are more likely to struggle with moving to a new school, and these include children in care and

Early Help/Children in Need, and those with:

- + Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - this includes children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, as well as those diagnosed with neurological disorders (such as speech and communication problems or traumatic brain injuries)
- + Mental health problems/behavioural problems
- + Limited parental support
- + Anxiety
- + Experience of being bullied.

Children who don't feel that they belong in their school, who struggle to develop good relationships with school staff and peers and who struggle with changes to a routine may also find this transition challenging.

How to spot if a child is struggling

If children struggle with moving to a new school, they are at an increased risk of poorer attendance, lower grades, feeling disengaged with school and having reduced confidence and self-esteem. It may also increase their chances of developing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some further advice from the WMVRU may be found in Box 7.

Supporting mental health

The designated lead for mental health in a school or college will have oversight of a whole-school/college approach. This provides schools with an opportunity to develop trauma-informed practices and to provide supportive, inclusive and flexible school environments.

Ensuring that children get the right support for social, emotional and mental health issues is an important preventative step in violence reduction. Specifically, children with diagnosed or unsupported SEMH needs, SLCN, looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children with undiagnosed traumatic brain injury are most at risk of mental health and exclusions. There are certain points when children are more vulnerable and it is vital that children have the right support to help them through transition points to avoid further exacerbating their vulnerability and social exclusion. Providing a nurturing school environment and a trauma-informed environment can help to reduce school exclusions.

One such approach is the utilisation of local Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), which are newly established in some areas and jointly delivered with the Department for Education. MHSTs are intended to

Box 7: How to spot a child struggling with transition

Here are a few things to look out for which may suggest a child is struggling with their transition:

- + Struggles to make friends
- + Doesn't feel that they belong
- + Has ongoing difficulties coping with daily routines
- + Increased number of unauthorised school absences
- + Challenging or disruptive behaviour
- + Lower than expected grades or a disinterest in school.

Key Actions

- + Primary schools to provide the new secondary with all relevant information on the students.
- + Schools can soften the transition process by introducing the new students slowly to the fact they are changing schools. This is to include taster days, the transition lead meeting new students in their primary school and speaking to parents about any concerns they may have.

provide early intervention on some mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, such as mild to moderate anxiety, as well as helping staff within a school or college setting to provide a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The teams will act as a link with local children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and be supervised by NHS staff.

Supporting vulnerability and preventing violence

A contextual safeguarding approach recognises that children and young people risk experiencing significant harm in extra-familial contexts. It seeks to include these contexts within prevention, identification, assessment and intervention safeguarding activities, and this is of particular note to those most vulnerable.

Schools play an essential role in protecting children from abuse. Your school can safeguard children by creating safe environments for children and young people through robust safeguarding practices and by ensuring that adults who work in the school, including volunteers, don't pose a risk to children.

Contextual safeguarding is not a model – it is an approach to practice and system design that seeks to create a response to extra-familial forms of abuse/exploitation that can target the contexts in which that abuse/exploitation occurs, from assessment through to intervention. It helps to focus on the fact that young people experience harm beyond their families and recognise that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Contextual safeguarding extends the traditional remit of child protection systems, which generally focus on threat, harm and risk posed by families and in the home, to recognise that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

What can schools do?

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020 specifically refers to **contextual safeguarding** and it has been referred to in previous editions. Schools and educational settings need to consider the **location and culture of their school or college** and assess the risks that young people may be exposed to, both inside and outside of the school or college community.

A contextual safeguarding approach recognises that children and young people risk experiencing significant harm in extra-familial contexts and seeks to include these contexts within schools' safeguarding activities.

It may be necessary for schools to consider interventions to change the systems or social conditions of the environments in which abuse/exploitation has occurred.

KCSIE advises that, when completing social care referrals, schools should consider wider environmental factors and provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process: "This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse."

Ensuring vulnerability does not equate to violence

Vulnerable children are particularly at risk of being victims and/or perpetrators of violence. This section outlines programmes and resources that could be used in a classroom setting to teach all children vital knowledge and skills regarding violence and how to protect themselves and prevent it from happening.

West Midlands VRU Mentors in Violence Prevention

One such approach to prevent the cycle of vulnerability and violence in the region is the Mentor in Violence Prevention programme, or MVP. This is a peer-led programme delivered via the curriculum to address and challenge young people's beliefs, values and attitudes towards violence. A key ingredient of school-based

violence prevention initiatives/programmes is working directly with students to explore root causes of violent behaviour that will support providing some reasoning behind the behaviour from a pupil and bystander perspective.

The core components of effective intervention are identified as:

- + Developing children's life skills
- + Building knowledge around safe behaviours
- + Challenging social and cultural norms and promoting equitable relationships
- + Developing teachers' skills to manage behaviour and promoting positive interaction with children.

The MVP programme is available for schools in the West Midlands, and the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit is supporting its roll-out. For further information, please contact vru@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Further information about the programme can be found in Appendix 3.

Other national examples of violence prevention lessons in school

Across the country, there have been numerous other approaches to tackle violence in the classroom relating to vulnerability. Appendix 4 includes some of the resources for violence prevention lesson planning. In particular through the use of ready-made films and activities, the resources listed in the table should provide teachers with materials to 1) address issues relating to carrying knives, and 2) cover important topics relating to keeping safe outside of the classroom.

Further resources

SEND Gateway

Centres for Excellence in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Justice Evidence Base

International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, Winter Lecture, Professor Karen Bryan (December 2014) Language Impairment and Difficulties and Criminal Justice Processes, PowerPoint presentation

A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland: Policy, practice and legislation, Section 9: Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Youth Justice

CYCJ information sheet *Communicating with Young People with Learning Disabilities*

Young Minds has a range of resources to support transition, including films, activities and lesson plans:

Film, *Find Your Feet*, to help prepare for transition between primary and secondary school

Hope Clouds activity fits well with the beginning of the new academic year and is a good way to encourage staff and pupils to think about their aspirations, especially in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

Find Your Feet: Transitions activity for Year 6 pupils

Find Your Feet: Transition tips for parents

Public Health England, Transition to secondary school lesson plan pack

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities: Resource to help children with disability through transition

Institute of Health Equity. *Improving School Transition for Health Equity*. Summarises the latest evidence on school transitions to determine the nature of and extent of their impact on health outcomes. It also considers whether or not school transition interventions and strategies can help to reduce health inequalities.

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. *Mentally Healthy Schools*:

10 practical tips for school staff to help children settle when starting primary school

What a good transition process from primary to secondary looks like – five simple steps

Tips sheet for pupils transitioning to secondary school

CEPS Transition guidance

Safeguarding 7 minute brief



CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

We hope that you found this document and its associated links and appendices useful. We understand that the new normal as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (further support and resources for the return to education can be found in Appendix 5) has led to substantial changes in teaching and the education sector as a whole. However, where possible the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit would like to support educational organisations in establishing trauma-informed practice in order to reduce violence and improve student outcomes. We thank you for your time and would like to leave you with some concluding thoughts...

Remember:

- + It's about relationships and trust, not structures and hierarchies
- + You can start small, and from where you are
- + Use narratives and framing to change the way people perceive issues
- + Work with coalitions of the willing, including families and communities, from the outset
- + Make connections, form networks and use offline conversations to build support; use existing networks to find out who should be involved
- + Look to make progress rather than to solve an issue immediately
- + Children need to be the centre of the work, which means meaningful, not tokenistic, gestures.

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APPENDIX 1:

Taking a whole-school approach

APPENDIX 1

Leadership

Support from the senior leadership team is essential to ensure that efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing are accepted and embedded.

KEY ACTIONS

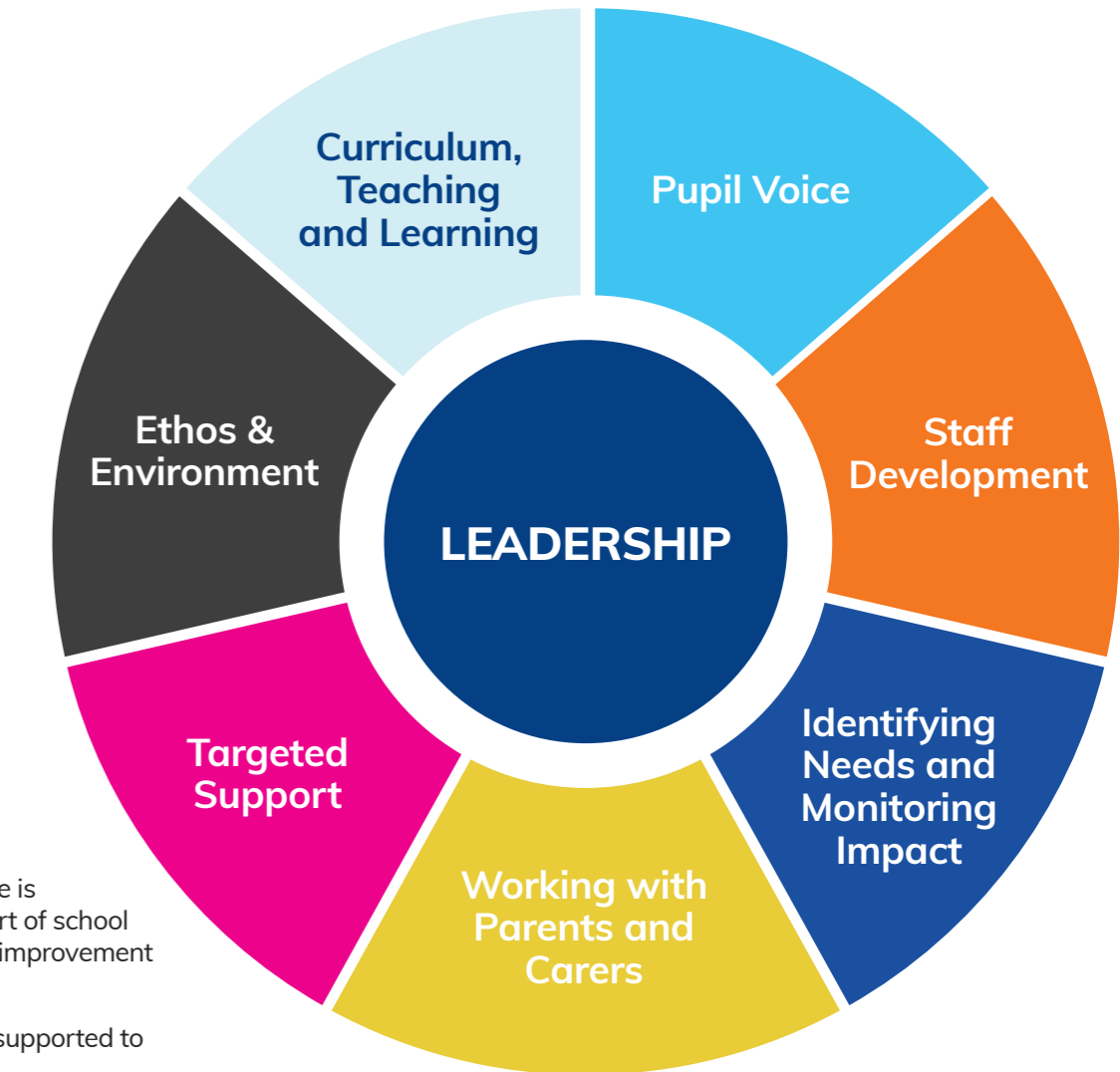
- + Senior commitment to addressing social and emotional wellbeing is referenced within improvement plans and policies
- + Appointing a champion who will promote emotional health and wellbeing across the organisation
- + Lead on mental health issues who is responsible for linking schools with expertise, identifying issues and making referrals.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

One of the four key Ofsted judgements is “The quality of leadership in, and management of the school”. Schools have to demonstrate how effectively leadership and management enable all pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning, for example through effective use of the pupil premium and extra-curricular activities, and the extent to which leaders and managers create a positive ethos in the school. The framework also specifies that schools should demonstrate capacity for further improvement, for example by promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing, by working in partnership with other schools, early years providers, external agencies and the community, and by engaging with parents.

KEY ACTIONS

- + Lead professional is part of SLT
- + Lead professional role is acknowledged as part of school structure and school improvement plan
- + Lead professional is supported to attend training
- + SLT supports the implementation of whole-school work in the area of SEMH
- + Links to governing body are evident.



Taken from Public Health England, “Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing: A whole-school and college approach”

Ethos and environment

The physical, social and emotional environment in which staff and students spend a high proportion of every weekday has been shown to affect their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, as well as impacting on attainment. Relationships between staff and students, and between students, are critical in promoting student wellbeing and in helping to engender a sense of belonging to and liking of school or college.

Links with OFSTED inspection framework

When judging behaviour and safety, Ofsted looks for evidence of a positive ethos that fosters improvements in the school as well as the promotion of safe practices and a culture of safety. As part of the inspection process, inspectors will ask to see records and analysis of bullying, including racist, disability and homophobic bullying, and will ask young people about their experiences of learning and behaviour in the school, including bullying. The school will be judged on the effectiveness of its actions to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment.

KEY ACTIONS

- + An explicit approach to bullying, which everyone is aware of
- + A clear behaviour policy that is underpinned by positive principles and high expectations
- + A welcoming environment and positive interactions with office staff for visitors
- + Positive messages about the school ethos are clearly visible.

Curriculum teaching and learning

School-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic

progress, as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing. Opportunities exist to develop and promote social and emotional skills through both a dedicated Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum and the wider curriculum.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

The quality of teaching in the school is a key Ofsted judgement area. The inspection criteria state that the role of teaching is to promote learning and the acquisition of knowledge by pupils and to raise achievement, and also to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

KEY ACTIONS

- + Close working relationship with Local Authority inclusion teams
- + An approach to marking that includes a high ratio of positive feedback about work
- + Quality first teaching, differentiation and personalisation for pupils with Additional Educational Needs
- + Evidence of approaches such as SEAL and Behaviour Recovery to support teaching and learning
- + General and specific teaching opportunities are in place to enable pupils to develop the qualities and skills required for effective learning.

Pupil voice

Involving students in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have a sense of belonging and some control over their lives. Individually, the benefits help students to gain belief in their own capabilities, including building their knowledge and skills to make healthy choices and developing their independence. Collectively, students benefit through having

opportunities to influence decisions, to express their views and to develop strong social networks.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

Ofsted Inspectors must have regard to the views of pupils. When assessing the level of behaviour and safety in schools, inspections should look at a small sample of case studies in order to evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, looked after children and those with mental health needs.

KEY ACTIONS

- + A well-established and well-supported school council is in place
- + Pupils with SEND are supported in giving their views in a range of appropriate ways
- + Comments boxes are used in school
- + Young people are involved in the recruitment of staff.

Staff development

It is important for staff to access training to increase their knowledge of emotional wellbeing and to equip them to identify mental health difficulties in their students. Promoting staff health and wellbeing is also an integral principle of the whole-school approach to emotional health and wellbeing.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

The quality of teaching is a key judgement area for Ofsted. The inspection criteria refers to the importance of ensuring that all teaching staff benefit from appropriate professional development and that performance is rigorously managed. When assessing leadership and management, inspectors must consider the school's use of performance management and the effectiveness of strategies for improving teaching. Staff wellbeing forms part of the leadership and management judgement.

KEY ACTIONS

- + A structured induction process for new staff and NQTs
- + Training for staff on social and emotional development, recognising the needs of pupils and addressing these needs
- + Access to a broad repertoire of CPD
- + Structured support and signposting for staff experiencing adversity
- + Explicit messages given to staff about being valued, e.g. a shout out board.

Identifying needs and monitoring impact

There are lots of measurement tools that schools can use as ongoing commitment to identifying pupils' needs in a range of ways, responding to their needs and monitoring the impact of the work that they do to support pupils. (BOXHALL Profile, WEMWBS, Stirling children's wellbeing scale).

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

The 'personal development' judgement evaluates your intent to provide for the personal development of all pupils, and the quality with which you implement this work. Quality of leadership in and management of the school Ofsted inspectors should consider the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation and the extent to which they are shared with governors. They should also consider how well the school meets the needs of all vulnerable groups of pupils. Assessing and responding to the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and learners, and taking steps to mitigate the impact that these have on their capacity to learn, could provide supportive evidence in relation to all key judgement areas.

KEY ACTIONS

- + Whole-school emotional wellbeing surveys are regularly undertaken

- + All children are given the opportunity to express how they feel
- + The school uses evidence-based measures to assess wellbeing and monitor the impact of interventions.

Working with parents and carers

The family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. There is strong evidence that well-implemented universal and targeted interventions supporting parenting and family life that offer a combination of emotional, parenting and practical life circumstances have the potential to yield social as well as economic benefits.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

The Ofsted inspection criteria expect schools to be engaging parents in supporting pupils' achievement, behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Ofsted inspectors have a duty to have regard for the views of parents. Inspectors will also take account of the results of any surveys carried out or commissioned by the school.

KEY ACTIONS

- + Parents have access to the school nurse to discuss health concerns relating to pupils
- + Regular opportunities for parental engagement, e.g. coffee mornings, Inspire days, clubs and activities
- + Adult education opportunities available on site
- + Make easily accessible signposting information available to parents.

Targeted support

Some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health, for example those who are in care, young carers, those who have

had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence. Delays in identifying and meeting emotional wellbeing and mental health needs can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of children and young people's lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework

Ofsted inspections focus on safeguarding, and how monitoring ensures that individual children or groups of children with identified needs are targeted and appropriate interventions are secured so that children receive the support they need, including through effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers. They look closely at how the behaviour of learners is being managed, the strategies the school has to develop alternatives to exclusion and, importantly, evidence that the school is taking account of any safeguarding risks to pupils who may not be excluded.

Where pupils are attending off-site units, inspectors may visit units and assess safeguarding procedures, the quality of education and how effectively the unit helps to improve pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance.

KEY ACTIONS

- + A wide range of activities that are used to promote SEMH across the school, in which all pupils are included
- + Small-group and targeted interventions are in place to address early signs of difficulty
- + The school works creatively and collaboratively with staff from other agencies to support pupils
- + The school liaises well with other agencies, making high-quality referrals, and works in partnership with parents through this process.

APPENDIX 2:

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

APPENDIX 2

In this appendix, further details can be found on the management of children with social, emotional and mental health problems, those with speech and language issues and those with traumatic brain injuries.

Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)

How can SEMH present as behaviour?

- + Defiance of staff
- + Persistent rule-breaking
- + Bullying others
- + Disruptive behaviour in class
- + Social isolation
- + Refusal to engage in learning tasks/refusal to complete learning tasks.

Strategies

- + Take time to find the pupil's strengths and praise these
- + Give the pupil a classroom responsibility to raise self-esteem
- + Communicate in a calm, clear and consistent approach
- + Provide lots of opportunities for kinaesthetic learning
- + Make expectations for behaviour explicit by giving clear targets and 'chunking' instructions.
- + Have a range of simple, accessible activities that the pupil enjoys to use as 'calming' exercises
- + Listen to the pupil, giving them an opportunity to explain their behaviours, and use Restorative Justice approaches.

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

This section and diagram have been adapted from source material produced by the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust and Sandwell Youth Offending Team.

What is communication?

How can SLCN present as behaviour?

Interrupts a lot
Doesn't understand the rules of a conversation

Rude and inappropriate
Doesn't know how to use language differently in different situations

Swears all the time
Poor vocabulary

Always late
Poor organisational skills

Aggressive for no reason
Doesn't understand jokes/sarcasm

Strategies

- + Say the person's name and make sure they're looking at you before you start talking to them
- + Make instructions short and simple
- + Pause between instructions so the person has time to process information
- + Check understanding by getting them to summarise what they know
- + Don't say 'Do you understand?'

Avoid

- + Trying to get them to rationalise when upset
- + Asking 'how?/why?' questions before they've calmed down
- + Being sarcastic or using banter.



Traumatic brain injury

In the UK, a large number of children have experienced Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), but this is not always being diagnosed early. A greater severity of TBI (as measured by loss of consciousness) is associated with higher likelihood of impairments in cognition (to plan, pay attention and remember, and to control impulses). TBI leads to earlier onset, more violent and repeated offending, and to greater mental health problems, substance misuse and suicidality. Key time points for injury are around 3 years for both genders, and particularly in adolescence for boys. Socio-economic deprivation increases risk of injury fivefold in the most deprived children under 5 years of age.

Young people at risk of later antisocial behaviour can often be identified early within the education system by their challenging behaviour or problems with academic engagement or attainment. Indeed, young people exhibiting early signs of difficulty should be routinely assessed for underlying cognitive and emotional needs so as to support appropriate attempts to maintain educational engagement. For example, identification of neurodevelopmental difficulties with early signs of language difficulties can promote support during changes to classroom teaching at age 8, while awareness of need at primary school can allow young people to be appropriately supported on transition to secondary school.

What are the signs of traumatic brain injury?

The signs of brain injury can be very different, depending on where the brain is injured and how severely. Children with TBI may have one or more difficulties, including:

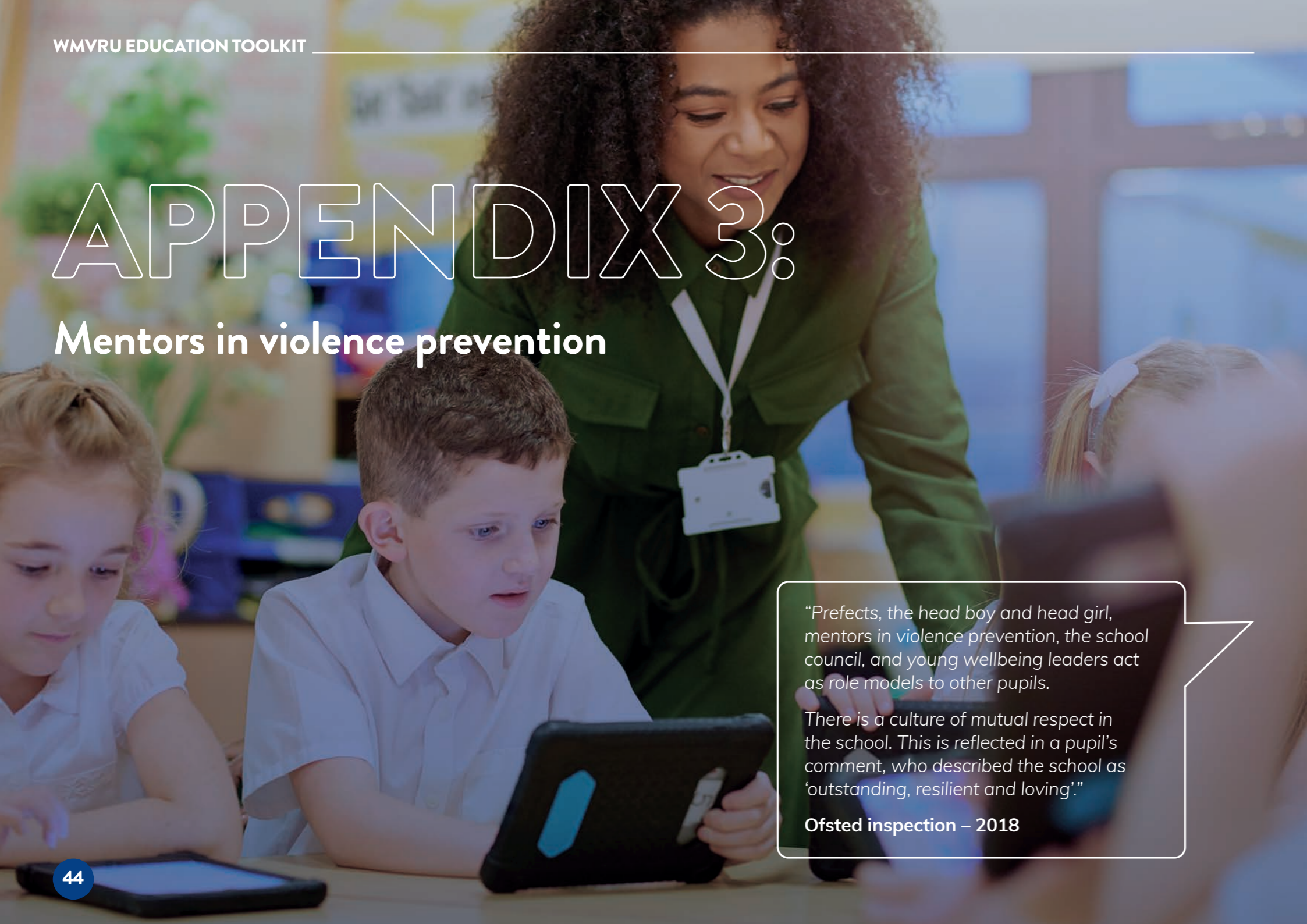
- + Physical disabilities
- + Difficulties in thinking
- + Social, behavioural or emotional problems.

For further information: **Headway – The Brain Injury Association/ Child Brain Injury Trust.**



APPENDIX 3:

Mentors in violence prevention



“Prefects, the head boy and head girl, mentors in violence prevention, the school council, and young wellbeing leaders act as role models to other pupils.
There is a culture of mutual respect in the school. This is reflected in a pupil’s comment, who described the school as ‘outstanding, resilient and loving’.”
Ofsted inspection – 2018

APPENDIX 3

Key principles and approach

DFE STATUTORY AND CURRICULUM LINKS	MVP CORE VALUES
Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance) RSE (statutory guidance 2020) Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (DfE guidance May 2018 schools and colleges)	YOUNG PEOPLE-LED APPROACH MVP mentors raise awareness, identify and select areas of concern within their school and community. These could be gender based, online, bullying or violence its various forms. Trained mentors lead open dialogue sessions to challenge stereotyping, violence and abuse.
	PARTNERSHIP APPROACH Empowering young people to overcome the challenges, risks, vulnerabilities through education, and wider partnership building.
New Ofsted framework judgement 2019 - Behaviour and attitudes - Personal development	ACTIVE BYSTANDER APPROACH Empowered bystanders can learn to safely challenge, support and shape compassionate schools and communities. This builds upon their cultural capital of knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviour.
New Ofsted framework judgement 2019 - Behaviour and attitudes - Personal development	DEVELOPING CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP Mentors become influencers and positive peer role models in their schools and communities. They are able to develop their leadership skills of confidence, empathy and resilience and keep themselves mentally healthy.
New Ofsted framework judgement 2019 - Behaviour and attitudes - Personal development	ATTITUDINAL CHANGE Young people provide a counter-narrative and challenge their peers about the acceptability and inevitability of violence and abuse in a safe way. Mentors become influencers by encouraging all to be active bystanders rather than victims or perpetrators.

“MVP in our school has made a huge difference, not just in school but within the wider school community. We are into our third year now and it is deeply embedded into school life”
Deputy Head Teacher – 2018



APPENDIX 4:

Resources for lessons relating to violence prevention

APPENDIX 4

Resources for lessons relating to violence prevention

SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCE	AGE
No Knives, Better Lives	NKBL is a Scottish national programme that aims to deter young people from carrying knives	This is a catalogue of toolkits which includes lesson plans, primary school resources, films and bystander information	A range of toolkits covering all ages
Fearless	Fearless is a site where you can access non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality	A crime-stopper resource for secondary schools. It provides exercises on a range of crime types that teachers can use to challenge their pupils' perceptions, stimulate debate and encourage good citizenship	11–16 years
London Needs You Alive	Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC)	A toolkit which includes exercises for the classroom or in a youth group that will help young people build-up important skills and stay safe	Resources included for primary and secondary schools
#knifefree lesson plans	Home Office	Free-to-download lessons will inform young people of the consequences of carrying a knife and inspire them to pursue positive alternatives. Accompanying teacher guidance will help you plan the lessons into your PSHE curriculum safely and effectively	KS3 and KS4
No Knives, Better Lives lesson plan	National Improvement Hub, Scotland	A 40-minute lesson plan aims to support knife crime prevention and education in secondary schools by helping young people understand the risks and consequences of carrying an offensive weapon	Secondary school
No Knives, Better Lives What would you do? The role of the bystander in knife - carrying prevention	National Improvement Hub, Scotland	This provides a comprehensive lesson, including a film on the role of the bystander	Secondary school
The Ben Kinsella Trust	The Ben Kinsella Trust campaigns for action and justice for those affected by knife crime and educates young people so that they can make positive choices to stay safe.	PSHE lesson plans are based on video testimony from ex-gang members, victims and offenders	KS2, KS3 and KS4

APPENDIX 5:

COVID-19: Supporting the return to school

APPENDIX 5

The current global pandemic presents us with a universal trauma that will have wide and varied effects on everyone in our schools and communities. We have all experienced the loss of our usual routines, relationships and freedoms and, in addition, some of us have experienced personal loss and bereavement in exceptional circumstances. Now schools are reopening their doors to returning children there is a need to rebuild lost connections and to re-establish routines. Many children will not return settled and ready to learn from the outset.

This appendix provides information and resources that will help schools to prepare for the uncertain start of a new school year.

The **West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit** Educational online resources are accessible and cover a range of topics, from introducing Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma-informed practice through to understanding stress and supporting staff. There are specific guidance documents to support those working with children and families, relating to transition, children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), children in care and children at risk of exclusion.

Alongside these locally produced resources, the table overpage contains links to other fantastic tools to enable schools to explore and enhance their plans for a safe return to school. This is not an exhaustive list and there are new resources created and shared regularly that will add to and enrich your toolkits. A trauma-informed and relationship-based approach to this unique set of circumstances will set the tone of compassion and connection in the return to school-based learning environments.

DfE Checklist for School Leaders to support full opening: Behaviour and attendance.

TOPIC	SOURCE	TITLE	AGE	DESCRIPTION	WEB LINK
COVID-19-specific resources supporting children's wellbeing during the pandemic	Public Health England	COVID-19: Guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing	Parents	Advice for parents and carers on looking after the mental health and wellbeing of children or young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak	gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare
	Dr Veronika Tait	The Pandemic Toolkit Parents Need	Parents	Pandemic parenting tips	psychologytoday.com/us/blog/pulling-through/202004/the-pandemic-toolkit-parents-need?eml
	British Psychological Association	Talking to Children about Coronavirus	All ages	5 key tips for talking to children of any age about coronavirus	bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20coronavirus.pdf
	Dr Bruce Perry	COVID-19 Stress, Distress and Trauma Series	Staff	A series of short videos on stress and regulation	relentlesschoolnurse.com/2020/04/12/the-relentless-school-nurse-covid-19-stress-distress-trauma-series-with-dr-bruce-perry/
	Barnardo's	Coronavirus Advice Hub	All ages	Online space covering a range of issues that are arising due to coronavirus – practical advice on how to talk to your children about the pandemic, tips on healthy eating on a budget, helping young people understand their own anxiety and much more.	barnardos.org.uk/coronavirus-advice-hub
	Safe Hands, Thinking Minds	COVID-19 Anxiety, Stress - Resources & Links	All ages	Some resources to support children and adults around anxiety, worry, stress, and fears, including those related to the pandemic/COVID-19	safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/covid-anxiety-stress-resources-links/
	Trauma and recovery	National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Centre for PTSD	Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators	All ages, including staff	A toolkit for educators and information for parents, including: trauma facts, psychological and behavioural impacts, grief and self-care
Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network and the Australian National University		Helping Students Recover After Trauma	All ages	Information sheet and ideas of activities for teachers to help students recover following trauma	earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN_TraumaResources_Classroom_D1.pdf
		Resources for Teachers: Schools Recovery Toolkit	Staff	Resources for teachers, including: self-care, creating a supportive school environment, creating a trauma-sensitive classroom and keeping track of the impact on students	earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN_Roberts_Schools_bushfire_toolkit.pdf

TOPIC	SOURCE	TITLE	AGE	DESCRIPTION	WEB LINK
Mental health and wellbeing	MindEd	A range of e-learning options with dedicated areas for parents and workers	Parents/carers and staff	MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults	minded.org.uk/childcare
	Public Health England	Rise Above	School staff	Lesson plans. Rise Above aims to help teachers deliver PSHE lessons to engage young people on a variety of key health issues, including: smoking, body image in a digital world and exam stress	campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview
		Pupil Mental Wellbeing leaflet	School staff	This leaflet contains information created by the Department for Education to help teachers use face-to-face meetings before the end of term to: • Have a mental wellbeing 'check-in' with their pupils • Provide links to further information and support	campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/40-school-zone/resources/5122
		Every Mind Matters	Adults	National NHS mental health campaign – website includes an online tool, 'Your Mind Plan', which aims to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing	nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
	Department for Education	Teaching about mental wellbeing (Guidance)	School staff	Practical materials for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff about teaching mental wellbeing	gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing
	Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families	Mentally Healthy Schools website	School staff and parents/carers	Quality-assured resources to help primary schools promote children's mental health and wellbeing. Currently producing fortnightly, curated toolkits	mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/
Loss, grief and bereavement	Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	A Whole-school Approach to Supporting Loss and Bereavement	School staff	A resource developed to support staff wishing to increase their understanding of bereavement, loss and change. This document is a reference toolkit which contains information, further reading and signposting to resources (e.g. books, DVDs and videos)	seemescotland.org/media/8151/whole_school_approach_to_lossandbereavement.pdf
	The Dougy Centre	The Dougy Centre School and Community Toolkit	Primary and secondary areas	A whole host of resources (videos and activities) on grief and emotions	tdcschooltoolkit.org/for-children-teens
Supporting staff wellbeing	The National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Centre for PTSD	Ready to Remember: Jeremy's Journey of Hope and Healing	Primary	A picture story-book and accompanying guide which can be used in many ways with children experiencing grief and loss	nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/ready_to_remember_jeremys_journey_of_hope_and_healing.pdf
		Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families	Supporting Staff Wellbeing in Schools	School staff and senior leadership teams	A downloadable booklet developed with mental health experts. Aims to give simple guidance and good-practice examples for implementing wellbeing strategies

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