

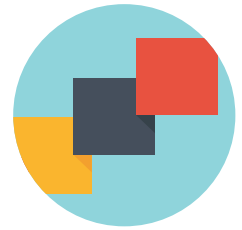
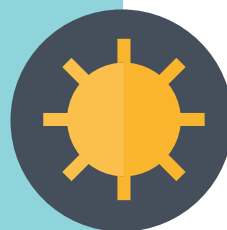


# Help us

Change the way we help children and young people with their mental health and emotional well-being

Draft framework guidance on embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and emotional well-being.

**Young Person's consultation**



# PLACES TO GO TO FOR HELP

The draft framework covers some pretty tough stuff and the issues we are trying to deal with may be issues that you or your friends are struggling with right now.

## Reach out and talk to someone you trust

If that is the case, we ask you to reach out and talk to someone you trust, whether that's a friend, a relative, a teacher or member of staff in school, or someone from a club or society you belong to.

You can also reach out online, where there is plenty of good advice and information on where to get help.

## Don't suffer alone – reach out.

We suggest that you start right here **Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit** where there is a whole host of great online resources to support children and young people with their mental health and well-being.

**Childline:** You can contact Childline about anything. You can call 0800 1111 for free from 9am – midnight.

**Samaritans:** To talk about anything that is upsetting you, you can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call 116 123 for free or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org). You can also call the Welsh Language Line on 0300 123 3011 (7pm–11pm every day).

**Mind:** If you are finding things hard Mind can provide advice and support to help you through. You can call 0300 123 3393 and text 86463 (9am – 6pm, Monday to Friday), or email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk).

**Meic** is the helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. Freephone 080880 23456, or text 84001.

**Don't let others suffer alone  
– reach out to them.**



# Introduction

Growing up should be exciting, fun, and happy. It's a time for exploring, learning and becoming more independent. Sometimes this is a bit scary, but we can cope with the issues we face with the support we already have. Sometimes we need more help as things get particularly tough.

The adults whose job it is to support children and young people want to improve the help that's available. They want all young people to be ambitious and capable, ethical and informed citizens, creative and confident. They also want to help young people to be emotionally resilient, to cope with the challenges that life will throw at you.

## **Emotional resilience:**

*being able to adapt to stressful situations; coping with life's ups and downs.*

## Growing up can be:



Schools need support and advice on how to help you become an emotionally resilient adult, and that's what the purpose of this guidance is. It's meant to help schools understand what needs to be done to improve good mental health and well-being, to come up with a plan, and put that plan into action.

We're not quite there yet, but we have spoken to lots of people and organisations who work with children and young people that have expertise. Our thoughts so far are in draft.

Now we want your views on the proposals so we can include what you tell us in the final version.

The draft runs to 44 pages and over 16,700 words, so we thought we'd also publish something a bit shorter. Here it is:

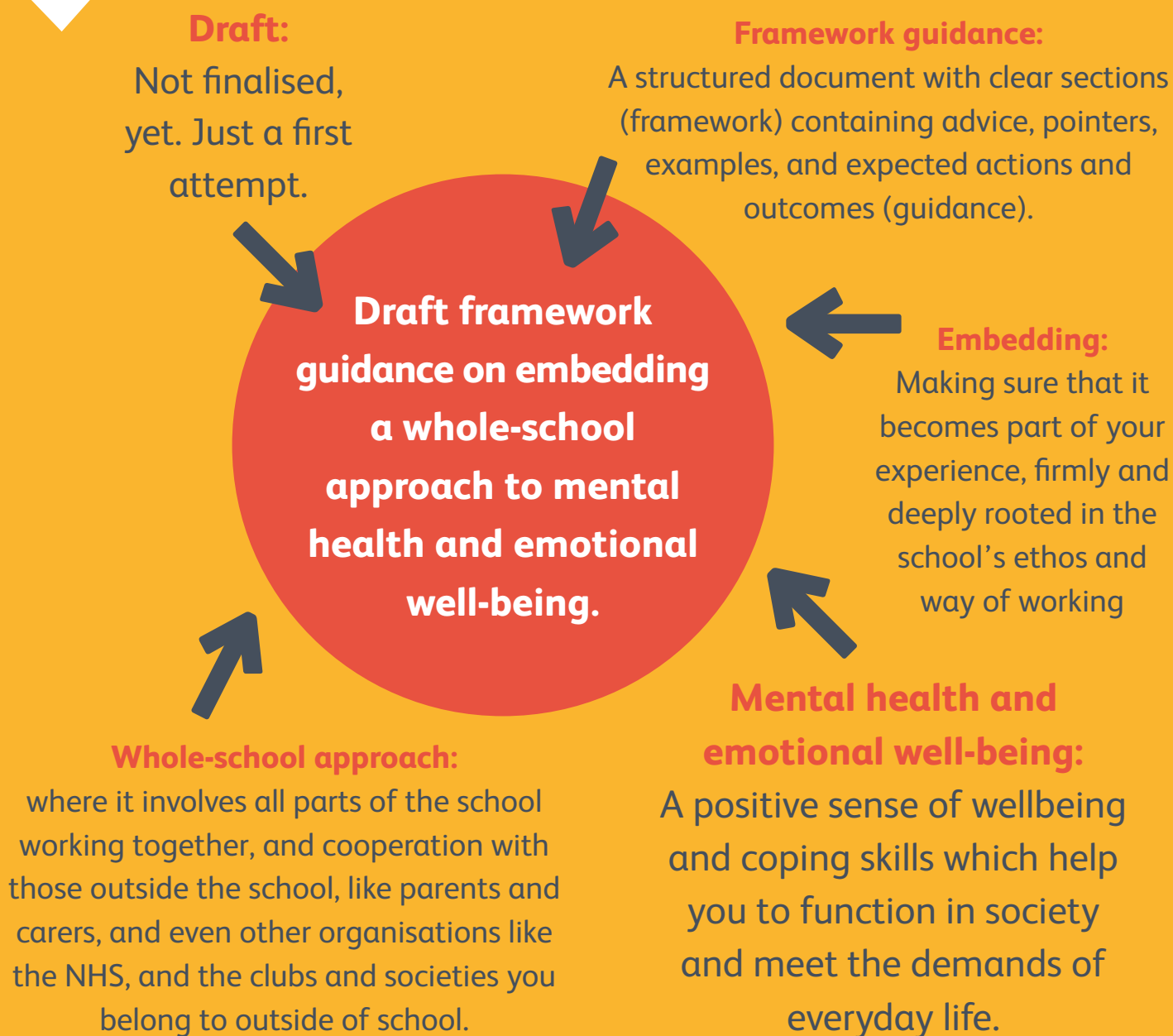
**Draft framework  
guidance on  
embedding a  
whole-school  
approach to mental  
health and emotional  
well-being\***

\* A young person's version.

**We'd love to know  
what you think.**

# A LONG AND COMPLICATED TITLE

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, let's take a closer look at what the title means, because it's less complicated than it sounds.



The objective of all of this, the whole point, is to achieve **emotionally and mentally healthy schools in Wales**.

*(Oh, and one more thing: All of this is part of the changes to your school curriculum, especially the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience).*

Have a read through. Towards the end we've included a handy summary, and some questions to get the discussion going (you're also very welcome to send us other thoughts, too, even if they don't fit neatly into the boxes we've provided).

# WHY JUST BEING A YOUNG PERSON CAN AFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A lot of changes happen to a person in the first few years of life. Just think about the different stages you've been through, from being born, to toddling about, from being a kid in primary school, to becoming a teenager, and soon to be, young adult.

The physical changes are easy to spot, you've grown taller, bigger, stronger. Developmental changes are plentiful, too: you can now read and write and you know lots of things, you can ride a bike, kick a football, you can form relationships and discuss things, you can cook, wash, and beat your friends in games online.

It's tiring just to think about all these changes, let alone experience them.

Equipping children and young people with emotional resilience means they can cope with exam stress, adapt to changing relationships, brush off the fact that they didn't get picked for the hockey team or given the main part in the school play (again).

But there are some children and young people dealing with other big and difficult challenges in their lives, having to manage complex situations, from serious parental ill-health and caring responsibilities, to substance misuse and violence in the home. That young person might even be you.

Most children and young people are lucky that they have adults they trust who they can turn to when times are tough. But that's not the case for everyone.

For all these reasons, it's important that all children and young people know that their school values them, is there to support them, and that there are trusted adults in the school to turn to.

***Relationships are at the heart of the whole-school approach.***

That's what this draft framework guidance is all about. It's to make sure that schools have the knowledge, understanding, and tools to support the mental and emotional well-being of learners.



# CONTEXT

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has brought about changes to all our lives and the communities we are a part of. We've not had to deal with something like this, on this scale, in our lifetimes, and it's normal to have found this time difficult.

For children and young people, one of the major changes has been the shutting of schools. We now know we will have to live with the effects of Covid-19 for some time to come, and we want to make sure young people who need it are given extra support now especially.

As you read this, teachers, politicians, and other experts are working out how to organise schools and your attendance and learning in the future.

**Covid-19 is our biggest challenge for the foreseeable future.**



As the Welsh Government starts to reopen schools and plan for the next phase, the Minister for Education has made it clear that her top priority will always be:

**The safety, mental, emotional, and physical well-being of learners and staff.**

*Minister for Education – the person in the Welsh Government charge of education, responsible for running schools and delivering the curriculum.*

You may already know that you have human rights. But did you know every young person has special human rights assigned to you because you are a child or young person?

These rights are protected in Wales.

The Education Act requires that your welfare is safeguarded, which includes supporting your mental health and emotional well-being. The new curriculum gives mental health equal footing to physical health, and your emotional well-being is considered as important as the grades you attain in your studies.

Wales has also signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes your right to an education, rights supporting your development, your care, health and wellbeing.

Your rights are championed (looked after) by a special independent person in Wales, called the Children's Commissioner.

# THE WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

The whole-school approach is about supporting good emotional and mental well-being by making relationships stronger – between you and the teacher; between your teachers; between all the staff at school, not just teachers; with parents, families, and carers, professionals working with the school, bodies like the local authority or county council, the NHS, and the wider community, such as the clubs and societies you belong to.

In our mind, we think that looks something like this:



# VALUES

Promoting good mental health and emotional well-being is important to support young people and ensure they are happy, healthy and safe. As it happens, good mental health and emotional well-being can also boost educational outcomes and attainment.

The whole-school approach is based on the core values of **belonging**, being able to achieve the desired result (known as **efficacy**), and having your **voice** heard.

For learners, it might look like this:

## Belonging

I feel safe

I feel valued, I am treated with respect

I feel like I connect

I feel supported

## Efficacy

I have self-esteem

I have aspirations, I am self-confident

I have empathy

I can form and maintain trusting relationships with peers

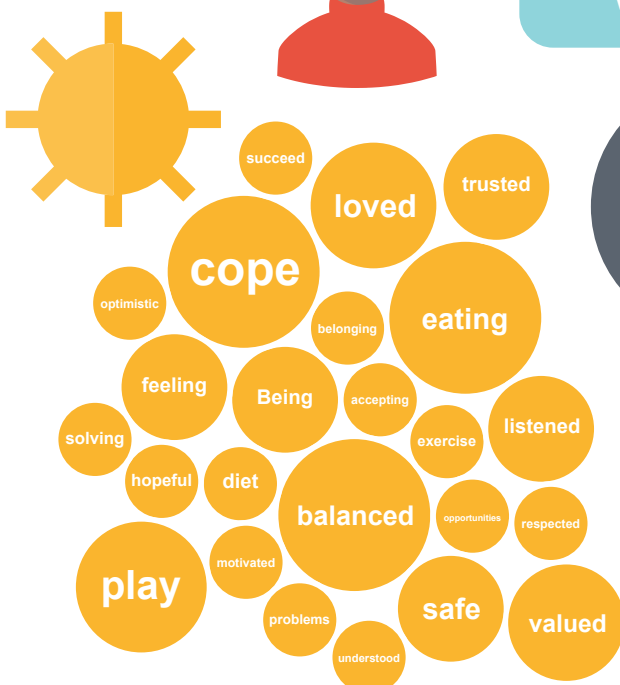
I know there are adults I can trust and talk to when I need to

## Voice

I feel supported to speak my mind. When I speak up I know that I will be listened to

I know that my views are acted on.

*There is a strong relationship between physical and mental health. Poor physical health increases the risk of poor mental well-being, and vice versa.*





# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND HOW?

No one pretends it's going to be easy. Like every big challenge, it's good to break it down into chunks and have lots of help at hand. That's why we think everyone should be involved, including you.

The first thing schools need to do is take a look at the here and now.

How successful is your school currently at promoting good mental health and supporting emotional well-being? Chances are your school will be good at some things and not so great at others. It's important to have a clear view of **strengths** and **weaknesses** and the **needs** of the school. To get to that point, schools will want to ask questions and seek people's views and observations and they'll want to look at all the information available (the data).

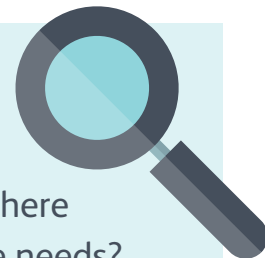


We're calling this first step the Scoping Stage, and it comes before an action plan can be devised and implemented (step 2).

## Step 1

### Scoping stage

What are the strengths? Where are the gaps? What are the needs? Ask lots of questions, seek views and observations, look at the data.



## Step 2

### Action plan

A plan that will address the gaps and build on the strengths.

### Implementation

Put the plan into action, working in partnership with all organisations

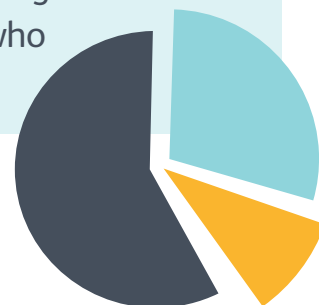


## Step 3

### Evaluation

Consider whether the plan is being effective, what can be learnt? What we learn in the process helps us to do better in the future.

As a learner, you are part of each stage in the process, informing what happens now, and helping make things better for those who follow in your footsteps.



# WELL DONE!

You're halfway through this document. It's a lot to take in so now seems like a good time for a quick recap: **We're trying to ensure that we have mentally healthy schools where the positive mental health and emotional well-being of learners, teachers and staff are a priority.**

## ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Your school, and all schools, already have development plans. These set out the actions the school needs to take to improve outcomes (such as attainment and scores, attendance and so on). In future, these school development plans will also include emotional and mental health well-being, **as a matter of course.**

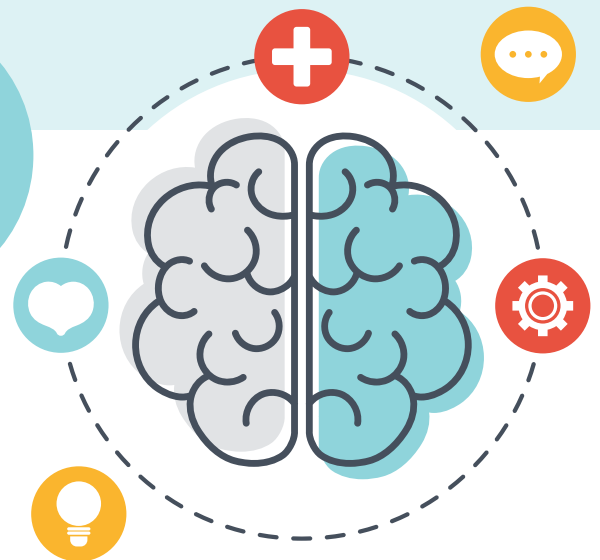
### The ethos of the school is important.

*ethos: the character, culture, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, community, or institution*



**Learners' rights should be promoted and upheld**

**Schools should be safe and secure**



Where do you come in? Just another reminder that this is **draft guidance**, and we are seeking **your views** on the ideas we've come up with so far, and what else you'd like us to consider.

We believe that working with everyone in the school's community who can help and support young people is central to the school ethos.

The whole-school approach means that good mental health and emotional well-being is EVERYBODY'S business.

We also recognise that your teachers may also need mental health and emotional support. After all, unless they are emotionally resilient and have positive mental health, they'll be less able to support their learners. That's why this guidance is for teachers and other school staff, too.

**Learners should be valued equally and respected**

# SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



It's not just about targets, intervention and provision. The **school environment** is an important tool to support positive mental health and emotional well-being.

Schools should be a secure and safe place, and the design of the buildings and outdoor spaces all contribute to that sense of **security** and **safety**.

When schools are working out how they can better support good mental health, and putting together their action plans, looking at how to improve the fabric of the school is key.

**Fabric of the school** = classrooms, canteen, toilets, corridors, play areas, outdoor spaces, cycle racks, windows, how the walls are used for displaying messages and work.

## INFORMATION, AWARENESS RAISING, AND ADVOCACY

We hope that your school, like many other schools, has made good progress in recent years to **raise awareness** of poor mental health and tackle stigma and discrimination.

Information is very powerful, because it helps us to understand why things are the way they are, and how to change things for the better. We call this **mental health literacy**, which means being aware, speaking out, sharing information, and understanding.

Sometimes we need someone else to stand up for us, to be our **voice** if we aren't being listened to in the way we want to. That's why the guidance also looks at advocacy support.

### **advocacy support:**

*when someone else argues on your behalf*

We know that many of you and your friends are at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness. Please share with us the good things that you and your schools have done to tackle stigma and discrimination.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROVISION

Being emotionally and mentally healthy isn't clear cut. There is a wide spectrum of well-being for everyone, and we all move across the spectrum at different points as life throws different challenges at us.

We might have one big thing go wrong for us, several small things go wrong for us, or several big things go wrong for us all at once. And we all react differently when things do go wrong.

One thing we are clear about, is that all learners will be supported to develop a positive approach to maintaining good mental health and emotional well-being. The importance of self-care and coping strategies is important for everyone, not just those experiencing poor mental health.

This **universal provision** (i.e. provided to everyone) will help learners to understand their own well-being, build emotional resilience and develop coping mechanisms to manage everyday stresses.



Provision for those with **specific needs**, such as children and young people with an eating disorder, those who are self-harming or taking risks, will need more intensive support. The guidance helps teachers to recognise and respond to these situations.



**Targeted provision** will be available for those children and young people identified as needing something over and above the universal provision, and this may be time limited intervention from a trusted professional, such as a teacher or member of the school team, to support from specialist services.



Finally, there is also specific guidance on provision for **vulnerable children and young people**, for example children who are care experienced, those with special educational needs, or chronic illness.



Even if you don't fall into these categories now, there might be stressful times when you edge a bit further along the well-being spectrum and need someone to talk to, perhaps during exams, or if there's something difficult happening at home. That is why it's important that everyone talks about, understands, and knows how to access mental health support (the universal provision bit).

## STAFF TRAINING

In order to support teachers and other staff that are likely to be closely involved in supporting children and young people, **staff training** will be a priority. The guidance provides for training for all teachers and relevant staff, but also makes room for those who want to develop their knowledge and specialism.



## TRANSITION

Remember your first day in school? Or the time you went from primary to secondary school? Maybe you're coming to the end of your time at school and are planning to start an apprenticeship, work, or move on to university?

These key moments in a child or young person's life are known as **transition times**.

It can be exciting, and for many, it's a time of great happiness, new-found and longed for independence, and a welcome step into a keenly awaited future.

For others, it can be frightening and daunting. **Transition** from one learning environment to a new one at any age, or moving into work for the first time, is recognised as being a particularly destabilising period for some children and young people, which is why the guidance refers specifically to this vulnerable time.

## YOUTH WORK

The guidance also recognises that adults outside of the school are important, too, such as those providing youth services. **Youth work** provides welcoming, safe spaces, and can be ideal places for children and young people to talk about issues affecting them and build emotional resilience.



# AND FINALLY .....

Quite early on in your time at school, you will have realised that your attainment and attendance is monitored, and your outcomes evaluated. This is true, too, of schools, teachers and other staff.

**Evaluation** is an important part of the process – it shows us that we are on the right track, moving forwards, not backwards, and allows us to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

This guidance is but one step in a whole series of steps designed to make sure that positive mental health and emotional well-being is central to your school experience. **Evaluating** our efforts to achieve this and keeping track of the outcomes are just as important. We want you to know that we hold schools and others accountable for supporting you.

That's why we'll be asking quite frequently:

How are we doing?

How did that go?

Where can we do better?

What's been good?

But for this to be successful, we are absolutely clear that it can't be something that is 'done to' schools or 'done to' learners.

**We are in  
this together!**

## SUMMARY

# Thanks for sticking with us!

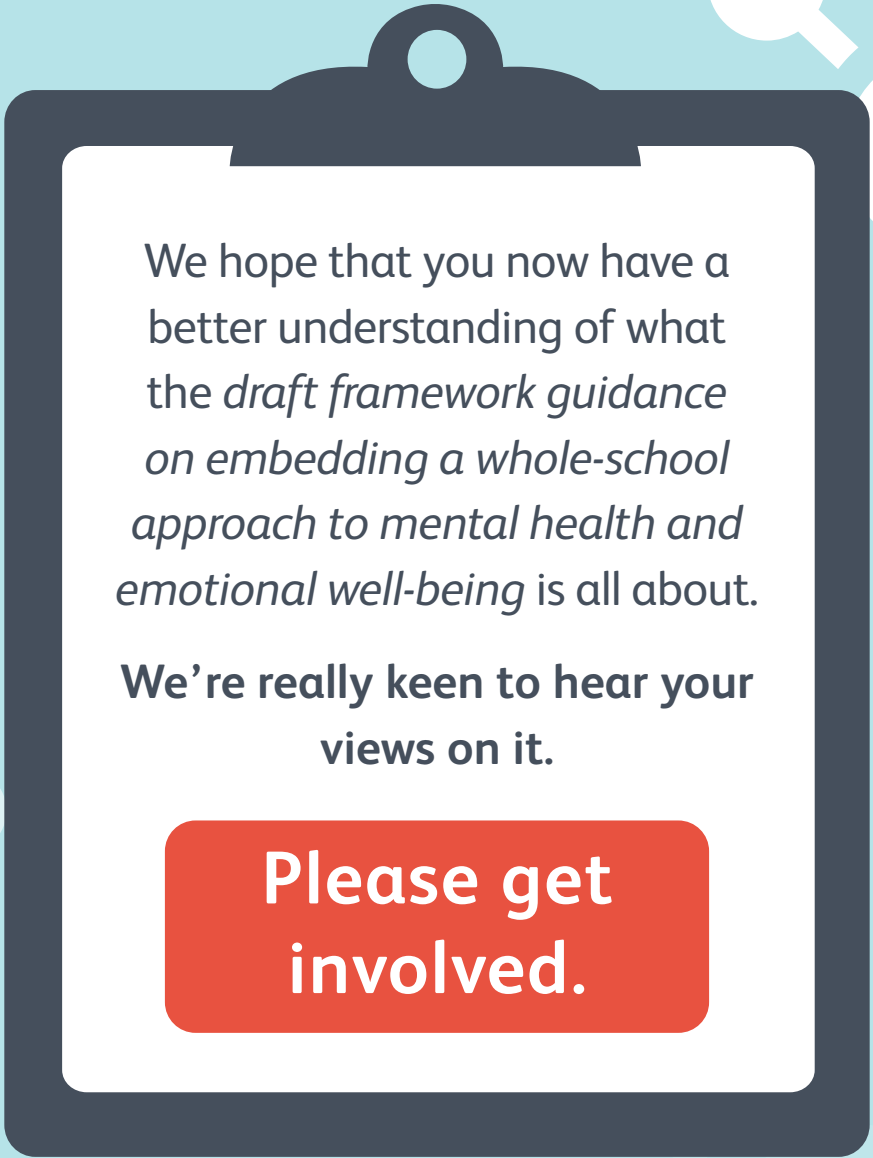
It's a lot to take in, so here's a summary:

- We want children and young people to experience positive mental health and to be emotionally resilient, so they can cope with the challenges life presents.
- The draft framework guidance gives schools the tools to support the mental and emotional well-being of learners.
- The 'whole-school approach' makes emotional well-being EVERYBODY'S business! Schools will work in partnership with families, organisations, agencies, and individuals to achieve this.
- To begin with, schools need a clear view of existing strengths, weaknesses, and needs. This will involve asking for people's views and observations (including yours) and looking at all the data.
- Being emotionally and mentally healthy isn't black and white. There is a wide spectrum of well-being, and we all move across it through life as different challenges are thrown at us.
- Everyone will get universal provision - helping learners understand their own well-being, build emotional resilience, and develop coping mechanisms. Those with greater needs will get more targeted provision.
- The school environment is an important tool to support positive mental health and emotional well-being.
- The positive mental health of teachers and staff is also important, and this guidance applies to them, too. They'll also get specialist training to carry out their roles.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought about changes to all our lives. The Minister for Education is clear that her top priority will always be:



**The safety, mental, emotional,  
and physical well-being of learners and staff.**



We hope that you now have a better understanding of what the *draft framework guidance on embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and emotional well-being* is all about.

**We're really keen to hear your views on it.**

**Please get involved.**

Send us your individual thoughts or get together in a group with classmates and friends to have a discussion. We'd like the benefit of your knowledge and experience.

And please do tell us about some of the good work that you and your school are already doing.

You may be reaching the end of your time in school, and these changes may not benefit you, but by sharing your views with us, you'll be shaping the future of those following in your footsteps, in a positive way.

We hope we've given you enough information here but if you need more detail, you can read the full draft

framework guidance at: [gov.wales/embedding-whole-school-approach-mental-health-and-well-being](https://gov.wales/embedding-whole-school-approach-mental-health-and-well-being)

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by 30 September 2020 at the latest.

**E-mail:** [mentalhealth.schools@gov.wales](mailto:mentalhealth.schools@gov.wales)

**Post:** Health and Well-being in Schools  
Support for Learners Division  
The Education Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ





## Question 1



We use the phrase ‘whole-school approach’ quite a lot in the guidance, meaning that supporting positive mental health and emotional well-being is everyone’s business. We want to work with you, your family, organisations, and agencies to achieve this. Do you agree that what we say in the guidance will make this happen?

Strongly agree

Slightly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly disagree

Strongly disagree

If you don’t agree, then we’d love to know what more we can do to get this bit right. Please tell us in the box below:

## Question 2

We think that every learner should be helped to understand and nurture their own emotional well-being – we call that kind of help ‘universal provision’. Then, there’s those that need extra help some or a lot of the time – we call that kind of help ‘targeted provision’. Do you think this document has the balance of these right?

Yes, definitely

Yes, mostly

I’m not sure

No, not quite

No, not at all

If you selected ‘not quite’ or ‘not at all’ then we clearly need your help!

What do you suggest we do to get the balance right? Please tell us in the box below.



### Question 3



Your school and learning experience has been very different because of COVID-19. What more can we include in the guidance that will support young people and children's mental health and emotional well-being in the months to follow, both in school and when they are learning away from school (remote learning)? Please tell us in the box below.

### Question 4

The guidance is only going to do any good if we can get the messages about how it supports mental health and well-being out there. We need to shout about it and get the things we promise to do done. Do you have ideas on how we can do this? For example, how would we tell other children and young people about it? Please tell us in the box below.

### Question 5

We'd love to hear about some of the great things your school, football team, dance group or drama club (or any organisation that you are a part of, for that matter!) is doing to support the mental health and well-being of you and your friends. Please tell us in the box below.



## Question 6



Wales is a bilingual nation, where the English and Welsh languages have equal status. Do you have any thoughts on what else we could do through this guidance to help people use Welsh? Please tell us in the box below.

## Question 7

We have asked lots of questions. If you have anything else to add, please do that here:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:



# General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

## Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection. For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:

Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

**e-mail:** [Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales)

**The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:**

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

**Tel:** 01625 545 745  
or 0303 123 1113

**Website:** <https://ico.org.uk/>



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