



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Annex 1: Links between Community Focused Schools and other policies

Information supporting the development of Community Focused Schools in Wales.

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Adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed approaches

Introduction

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events, or experiences, which happen before the age of 18 but can continue to have an impact across the whole life course. ACEs can have a negative impact on a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and can lead to the adoption of health harming and anti-social behaviours. These experiences range from suffering verbal, mental, sexual and physical abuse, to being raised in a household where domestic violence, alcohol abuse, parental separation or drug abuse is present. In 2016, Public Health Wales published the first Welsh adverse childhood experiences study which revealed 47% of adults in Wales had suffered at least 1 ACE, and 14% suffered 4 or more.

Helping those who have suffered ACEs

By working with other agencies providing early intervention and support the life chances of people who have suffered trauma can be improved, through helping build resilience. There are a range of sources of resilience building. One of the most important of these is having a stable and trusted relationship with a responsible adult during childhood. This could be a parent; but it could also be another adult like a teacher, sports coach or religious leader.

An ACEs training programme has been developed for schools. This training and other resources can be found on [Hwb](#).

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Trauma-informed approaches

One of the ways in which we can support those who have experienced adversity and trauma is through the adoption of trauma-informed approaches. The ACE Support Hub and Traumatic Stress Wales have jointly developed a **trauma-informed practice framework for Wales** to support the adoption of a common and consistent approach to trauma-informed practices. The framework establishes 5 practice principles, which should underpin all trauma-informed practice, and 4 practice levels which reflect the different roles people could have in supporting those impacted by trauma.

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

We, Welsh Government are committed to creating an anti-racist nation by 2030. Our Anti-racist Action Plan, which was launched on Tuesday 7th June 2022, is built on the values of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality. We have identified a vision for an anti-racist nation where everyone is valued for who they are and the contribution they make.

In addition to a number of goals and actions specific to education, Wales is leading the way, through the Curriculum for Wales, by becoming the first part of the UK to make it mandatory to teach Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories and experiences.

Our new teaching award, The Betty Campbell MBE award, for promoting the contributions and perspectives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, was launched in 2021. This will be awarded annually.

We will deliver a strategy to recruit more teachers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities into the school workforce. As an initial step, we published on

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22 October 2021 the Initial Teacher Education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Recruitment Plan. We will take this forward through work such as a new mentorship scheme to help support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to reach their goals, as well as developing other actions.

We will also require reporting of racist incidents and harassment in schools and colleges through strengthened data collection, how they were dealt with, action taken in response and whether the incident was resolved successfully for the victim.

Childcare

The Childcare sector in Wales encompasses a wide range of different types of provision, which are subject to a set of **national minimum standards**. The key distinction between the different types of provision is between child minding and day care.

Child minding

Child minding is childcare provided by 1 or more people for children from birth up to the age of 12 years within domestic premises that are not the child's own home, for more than 2 hours per day for reward.

Day care

Day care is provided on non-domestic premises and includes day nurseries, out-of-school childcare, play groups, crèches and open access play.

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Childcare for school-age children

Many school-age children continue to attend childcare around the school day and during the holidays, well beyond their early years. This may be at settings on school grounds, or childcare providers may offer a wrap-around service, dropping children off or picking them up and providing care before and after the school day. Working with these providers to ensure the full needs of the child are met is important in both addressing the attainment gap and providing every child with the opportunity to meet their full potential.

Information about childcare providers operating in your area can be provided by your local [Family Information Service](#), or from the [Cwlwm](#) Consortium.

Children and young people's plan

The '[Children and young people's plan](#)' sets out the part that Welsh Government can play in making Wales a wonderful place for children and young people to grow up, live and work, where everyone feels valued.

Community Focused Schools are an integral part of this vision.

Curriculum for Wales

Working with our transformative [Curriculum for Wales](#) schools are supported to enable all learners to progress on their own individual pathways, supported by assessment, to achieve their aspirations. Ultimately, the aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

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- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

The Curriculum for Wales provides an opportunity for schools and school clusters to develop their own programmes of learning which are better suited to the needs of the community they serve. It also has equality and diversity at its heart. These aims support the ways in which Community Focused Schools can operate.

Welsh Government is also clear that successful curriculum realisation is supported by schools being at the heart of their communities. Through this community focus, better relationships can be built between schools and families or carers, communities and employers, to support and promote educational achievement and next steps into excellent employment, education and training.

Cymraeg 2050

Our ambition is to have **1 million Welsh speakers by 2050** and we want to ensure that our Community Focused Schools policy aligns with this aim. We will ensure that the support available through our Community Focused Schools policy is available to the Welsh-medium sector and that our policy supports promotion of the Welsh language.

Early childhood education and care

High quality early childhood education and care has been shown to be the most

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effective and cost beneficial single early intervention strategy to enhance child developmental outcomes, in particular language and cognitive development. The link between high quality childcare and positive child outcomes appears to be especially strong for children from socio-economically disadvantaged families. Our long-term vision is to ensure equity and quality for our youngest learners wherever they access education or care which supports their learning and development. It will be important for Community Focused Schools to work with the early years providers in their area enabling a smooth transition for every child from childcare to early education and on into full-time education, ensuring their individual needs are met.

In many communities childcare settings are based on school sites. This could include dedicated early years settings, such as Cylch Meithrin or sessional day care providers such as after school clubs. The Welsh Government funded Childcare Offer for Wales provides up to 30 hours of government funded early education and childcare to children aged 3 to 4s of working parents and parents in education and training for 48 weeks per year. Working with settings offering the **Childcare Offer** particularly supports the transition of children aged 3 to 4 into full-time education.

Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Electively Home Educated (EHE)

Whilst Community Focused Schools is a school-based policy we recognise many children are educated elsewhere, either at home or in other settings which are appropriate to the needs of the child. Sometimes children and young people will transition between school and other settings and a family engagement officer has a role in keeping in touch with families or carers and smoothing transitions.

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Enriching the school day

Community Focused Schools can offer a variety of social, cultural, sporting and academic activities which broaden opportunities for learners, especially for those who are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to support their wider development, well-being and engagement with school. Family engagement officers can have a positive and important role to play in supporting the provision of enrichment activities by brokering or identifying wider community resources to help provide provision, for example local sporting clubs, universities.

Families First

The Families First programme offers a range of support to the whole family or individual family members using a multi-agency approach which focuses on early intervention and prevention, depending on the needs of the family. There are a range of ways Families First services can be accessed, including:

- referrals via health visitors, GPs and school officials
- self-referrals

Further information and details of how to access services can be found on each local authority's website.

Food and Fun (also known as School Holiday Enrichment Programme)

The Food and Fun programme is an important part of providing good nutrition,

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educational activities and fun during the school summer holidays. The scheme is run by the Welsh Local Government Association and is offered to all local authorities in Wales. There are strong links between the Community Focused School policy and Food and Fun. Family engagement officers can help support Food and Fun activities during the holidays.

Flying Start

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship early years programme which aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children aged under 4 in the areas which it runs. It includes 4 core elements:

- fully funded quality childcare
- parenting support
- intensive health visitor support
- support for speech, language and communication

Free school breakfasts

We are committed to 'maintaining our commitment to provide free breakfasts for all primary school learners.' The primary breakfast offer is a core element of our food in school policy and assists ensuring the ambition no child in Wales goes hungry during the school day.

Further education

There are significant links between Community Focused Schools and further

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education (FE) policies. We recognise the risk of young people disengaging from education at key transition points along their learning pathway. Making positive links between Community Focused Schools and FE institutions will help address these issues.

Family engagement officers in secondary schools should be developing partnerships with FE institutions in their areas. Community Focused Schools can also help signpost families or carers to adult education services and even provide adult education on their premises to support family learning.

Healthy Start scheme

The Healthy Start scheme applies to those who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child aged under 4. It can help those eligible for the scheme to buy healthy products and foods like milk or fruit or get free vitamins. Applicants over 18 need to be claiming certain benefits to qualify. If a person is pregnant and under 18, then they can claim even if they do not receive any benefits.

For more information, including details on who is eligible, please visit the [Healthy Start](#) scheme website.

Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales

Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales is our ten-year plan to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales. Accompanying the Strategy are 5 two-yearly delivery plans, the second of which was published on 1 March 2022 and has a focus on the early years, children and adolescents, as well as tackling health inequalities for all. Over 1 in 4 children start school overweight or obese and this increases into

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adolescents and increases to over 60% by adulthood. We have a range of measures which focus on how to develop systems-based approaches to consider issues related to obesity, including:

- a pilot of children and families programmes across 3 areas in Wales
- the establishment of specialist posts in each local health board to coordinate efforts

Parenting support

The core purpose of parenting support is about working with parents to:

- reduce risks
- strengthen parenting capacity
- develop and build resilience
- sustain positive change in the best interests of children

A Community Focused School also supports these objectives.

Many local authorities in Wales have support services for parenting advice and Community Focused Schools can access and signpost to these services.

More information on parenting support can be found on the [Welsh Government website Parenting. Give it time.](#)

Play

Playing is an essential activity for children, and fundamental to their well-being, resilience and development. Outside play is particularly important as it encourages a high level of activity and is identified by Public Health Wales as a

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step towards a healthy weight for children.

Providing a broad and balanced teaching and learning environment, while also embracing the health and well-being of the child, can potentially provide a better and more positive learning experience.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (article 31), notes that schools have a major role in the promotion of the right to play across the following areas:

- curriculum demands
- educational pedagogy
- physical environment of settings
- structure of the day

School grounds often represent the largest single outdoor asset in many communities. Opening school grounds for play has a significant role to play in addressing the urgent need to ensure that more children can access outdoor play.

More information on play can be found in the Play Wales documents below:

- [‘Use of school grounds for playing out of teaching hours’](#)
- [‘A play friendly school: Guidance for a whole school approach’](#)
- [‘Right to play workshop’](#)

Pupil Development Grant

The purpose of the **Pupil Development Grant** (PDG) is to improve outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and Looked After Children (LAC) aged 3 to 15. It is intended to tackle the impact of poverty on attainment,

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ensuring that learners from low-income families achieve their full potential.

The policy aims of Community Focused Schools and the PDG work in tandem to provide support on the ground. Although the use of the PDG is based on local need we signpost to the following as best practice. These points are integral to the success of a Community Focused School:

- Ensuring focus upon high-quality learning and teaching.
- Engaging with families or carers to help them support their children's learning.
- Including additional focuses on early childhood education and care, health and well-being, raising aspirations, leadership and curriculum and qualifications.
- Up-skilling staff so they use pedagogical approaches known to be most effective for learners from low-income households.
- Using research and evidence to make informed decisions, including using the Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit which provides analysis of current interventions and approaches in an accessible way for practitioners based on cost and impact.
- Developing strategic partnerships with third sector or other agencies to work together to raise the attainment of socio-economically disadvantaged learners.

Speech, language and communication

The '**Talk with Me**' speech, language and communication (SLC) delivery plan outlines Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring that children across Wales are provided with evidence-based support for their SLC development by the right person, in the right place and at the right time.

The evidence clearly shows that with the right knowledge and skills, parents,

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carers and practitioners can make the difference in supporting children's SLC. The Talk with Me [campaign page](#) and [practitioner page](#) contain a wide range of resources to help with children's SLC development.

Sustainable communities for learning

Through investing in the premises of schools we hope to create better facilities that can be used by learners and the wider community. This includes access to adult learning and sports and leisure activities.

Tackling child poverty

We have a statutory duty to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts, including the educational inequalities that children experience as a result of living in poverty.

Tackling the impact of poverty on attainment is at the heart of [our national mission in education](#). It is vital that we support all children and young people to progress and reach their potential, no matter what their economic or social background.

There can be significant barriers to progression for children impacted by poverty but, by taking a community focused school approach, we hope to:

- address these barriers
- encourage equality of opportunity
- overcome the impact of socio-economic disadvantage
- improve the life chances of children and young people

Community Focused Schools have an important role to play in building

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community resilience and well-being, particularly in areas without alternative infrastructure in place.

The Additional Learning Needs Code

The '**Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales 2021**' adopts a person-centred approach which places children and their families at the heart of the decision-making process. It also requires all services to work together for a child or young person with ALN.

It is important that families and carers are able to access the right support and understand the options available to them and their child. Adopting a community focused school approach will mean schools are able to utilise their family engagement officers (FEOs) to work alongside the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and early years ALNCo to co-ordinate and deliver school-based support.

FEOs are also able to make links to other agencies and services to ensure the appropriate support is accessed and take the time to listen to and support parents and families as needed.

Universal Primary Free School Meals

Universal Primary Free School Meals will help to:

- tackle poverty
- secure the well-being of future generations
- reduce the inequalities of outcomes linked to socio-economic disadvantage across education, health, and prosperity

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Wider communities policy

The Welsh Government is committed to working with and supporting our communities, both local places and communities of interest, in every aspect of social, environmental and economic life as well as through educational provision.

This is reflected in our **Programme for Government** across a wide variety of programmes and policies which support our overall aim to build communities that are thriving, empowered and connected.

Community Focused Schools are a crucial part of this approach.

Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes

The **Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes** sets out that a 'healthy school' is one which takes responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health of all who 'learn, work, play and live' within it not only by formally teaching learners about how to lead healthy lives but by enabling learners and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health.

A 'healthy school' actively promotes, protects and embeds the physical, mental and social health and well-being of its community through positive action.

Whole-school approach to mental health and well-being

Community Focused Schools support the need to ensure a cultural shift in the

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way in which emotional and mental well-being of children and young people is supported as detailed in the '[Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being](#)'.

The whole-school approach seeks to support good emotional and mental well-being by promoting a positive cultural environment in schools, where children and young people form positive relationships with staff and other learners, and relationships are strengthened:

- between children and young people
- between teaching staff
- with the school senior leadership team and wider school staff
- with parents and carers
- with other professionals working with the school
- with the wider community that surrounds the school

A whole-school approach is about embedding good well-being through teaching as well as all the other aspects of school life. It is an ethos that values inclusion, where everybody works together, contributing their individual skills and resources to the collective good; and creates a supportive environment where young people are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn and emotionally develop, supported by trusted adults who operate in a culture that equally values their own well-being.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework](#) is vital in identifying the young people at risk of disengagement or at risk of homelessness, and helping them back on to a learning pathway that is right for them.

Family engagement officers should form close partnerships with youth work

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services in their area, including local authority Engagement and Progression Coordinators (EPCs) and Youth Homelessness Coordinators to help provide support to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (linked to our work on the Young Person's Guarantee) and those at risk of homelessness.

Youth work

Youth work promotes and actively encourages accessible opportunities for young people aged 11 to 25, whatever their race, gender, sexual identity, language, religion, disability, age, background or personal circumstances, so that they may fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and as members of groups and communities. In doing so, youth work can improve the life chances of young people and cohesion within communities.

Youth work supports young people through significant changes in their lives and encourages them to:

- gain and develop knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values
- make constructive use of their skills, resources and time

It is important for Community Focused Schools to:

- be aligned to and work with local youth work services
- signpost young people to local youth work services
- identify how youth workers could be utilised in the school

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