

10 October 2023

Dear Principals

EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

As you will be aware the joint Department of Education and Department of Health [Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework](#) was published in February 2021. At the time of publication, there was an associated implementation plan published which initiated several projects to further support children and young people in education, in collaboration with wider health services.

We thought it would be helpful to outline some of the existing services for schools to help support the emotional health and wellbeing of staff, children and young people; and provide details on two projects that have commenced this new academic year. Where appropriate further information on a project can be found through the links provided.

[Text-a-Nurse - Pupils](#)

A secure and confidential text messaging service for young people aged 11-19 providing access to a school nurse. This service (with separate dedicated text numbers) is also available to parents/carers and school staff with concerns about a young person ([Text-A-Nurse - parents, carers and school staff](#)). It would be helpful if schools could share this information with pupils, parents and staff.

School Nursing Pilot

This is a PHA led school nursing pilot currently operating in 5 post-primary schools across NI (one in each health trust), with a school nurse located in the school.

[REACH](#) (Resilience in Education, Assisting Change to Happen)

EA youth service programme for 6-19 year olds to develop positive emotional health, increase their readiness for learning and build their resilience.

RISE NI (Regional Integrated Support for Education)

Expansion of the existing RISE service (from up to primary 4 to up to primary 7) - health led multi-professional early intervention team. Support provided from this team includes support for children and young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs including those related to speech, language and communication needs; and/or sensory, motor or perceptual difficulties. Schools can contact the RISE Coordinator for their Trust area (see attached **Annex A**) for further information. Schools may also wish to share [RISE NI information for parents](#).

CCEA Wellbeing Hub

This hub provides curriculum linked resources and support for teachers and parents.

The Attach Project

This is delivered as part of the [Primary Children Looked After Advisory Service](#) and focuses on trauma-informed practice and the importance of relationships for children looked after, providing training and support to staff who in turn support the child.

Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools (EWTS)

Commencing in the 2023/24 academic year; this is a health led multi-disciplinary team working with mainstream post-primary settings (including EOTAS) to promote emotional health and wellbeing and ensure schools are aware of appropriate pathways for support, including those within their local area, and when referrals for CAMHS based interventions are appropriate. This initiative is being rolled out on a phased basis with schools participating during 2023/24 having already been identified. EWTS will also liaise with a pilot study led by the PHA in seven special schools in 2023/24 to identify emerging needs and plan interventions to meet these needs as part of the EWTS offer to special schools. Schools can contact the EWTS Regional Coordinator, Theresa McShane (Theresa.McShane@hscni.net) for further information.

Being Well Doing Well (BWDW)

Commencing in the 2023/24 academic year; this is an EA led programme which aims to assist all schools (including EOTAS) to develop a Whole School Approach (WSA) to emotional health and wellbeing (EHW). This approach will provide participating schools with a framework to assess current EHW policy and practice and implement actions to develop EHW in their school. In addition, schools will receive training to provide staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand and promote EHW in their school. There are still a few places left this year and schools can register now for the 2024/25 academic year by email: beingwelldoingwell@eani.org.uk.

Other Supports

Other existing programmes and services which are available to schools include the [Independent Counselling Service for Schools](#) (post-primary) and the [EA Nurture in Education programme](#).

EA Health Well Hub

The EA Health Well Hub provides the latest health and wellbeing news, events and campaigns for staff. The hub includes regular Newsletters and details on open access sessions across all EA's Health and Wellbeing Strategy themes. In addition staff can access 24/7 counselling support through [Inspire Wellbeing](#) as well as contact the [EA Health and Wellbeing team](#) for any specific advice and guidance.

Future Developments

In order to inform the future shape and direction of the activities to support the Framework and how best to direct future funding, the Department of Education is in the process of completing a mapping exercise to determine what emotional health and wellbeing projects/programmes/services are available and are being used across the

education sector. A survey will be issued to your school in the coming weeks and your participation in this short survey would be welcomed.

We also intend to host a series of workshops for school leaders to take your views on the current Framework and projects in place, the challenges facing schools and the next steps. If you would be interested in attending a workshop please register your interest at the following link: [Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework Workshops](#).

A 'Best Practice Guide', to share good practices identified within settings in relation to emotional health and wellbeing, is also currently being developed and the Department of Education has been working with the Education Training Inspectorate to obtain case studies to support this. There are existing examples of a whole school approach on the CCEA website ([Examples of School Wellbeing Practice | CCEA](#)) including short podcasts around each area of the development of wellbeing practice at primary and post primary level.

I trust this correspondence is helpful in raising awareness of the range of resources and programmes available to schools, to assist with promoting the positive emotional health and wellbeing of our young people.

Yours faithfully



Gavin Quinn
Director of Mental Health
(Interim)
(Department of Health)



Claire McClelland
Director of Raising Aspirations,
Supporting Learning and
Empowering Improvement
(Department of Education)

RISE Coordinator Contact Details

The RISE Team in each Trust will contact schools in their area with information on their offer within the KS2 project for the coming school year and their RISE link person. Schools can also contact via the RISE Coordinator for their HSC Trust area as below:

Belfast HSC Trust:

Dickson, Felicity Felicity.Dickson@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Tel: 02895042725 / 07825146117

Northern HSC Trust:

Montgomery, Lisa Lisa.Montgomery@northerntrust.hscni.net

Tel: 028 94427670

South Eastern HSC Trust:

Sowden, Jane Jane.Sowden@setrust.hscni.net

Phone: 028 97 520941

Southern HSC Trust:

McGivern, Jill Jill.McGivern@southerntrust.hscni.net

Tel: 028 375 64309

Western HSC Trust:

Dillon Sarah Sarah.Dillon@westerntrust.hscni.net

RISE NI Southern Sector: 028 8283 5844