

# SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN WITH SEN IN SCHOOLS

A guide for schools on embedding positive mental  
health and wellbeing strategies



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# Introduction

At NextGen Teachers, we know that a child's emotional wellbeing is the foundation for their learning, growth and future success. For pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), this is even more important.

The right support can make the difference between a child feeling excluded and struggling, or thriving and achieving their potential.

This resource has been created to help schools strengthen their approach to supporting SEN pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

By sharing practical strategies, we hope to empower teachers, support staff and leaders to create environments where every child feels safe, valued, and able to flourish.



# Why Wellbeing Matters for SEN Pupils

Children with SEN often face unique challenges that can affect their mental health and learning. They may experience higher levels of anxiety, difficulties with social interactions, or barriers to engaging fully in lessons. Without targeted support, these challenges can impact attendance, confidence and overall achievement.

Prioritising wellbeing for SEN children is not an “extra”, it is essential to ensuring equal access to education, positive development and long-term success. Schools that embed wellbeing practices see stronger engagement, reduced behavioural challenges, and more inclusive classroom communities.





# Creating a Supportive Environment



A strong foundation for wellbeing begins with the right environment. For children with SEN, structure, predictability and understanding are key.

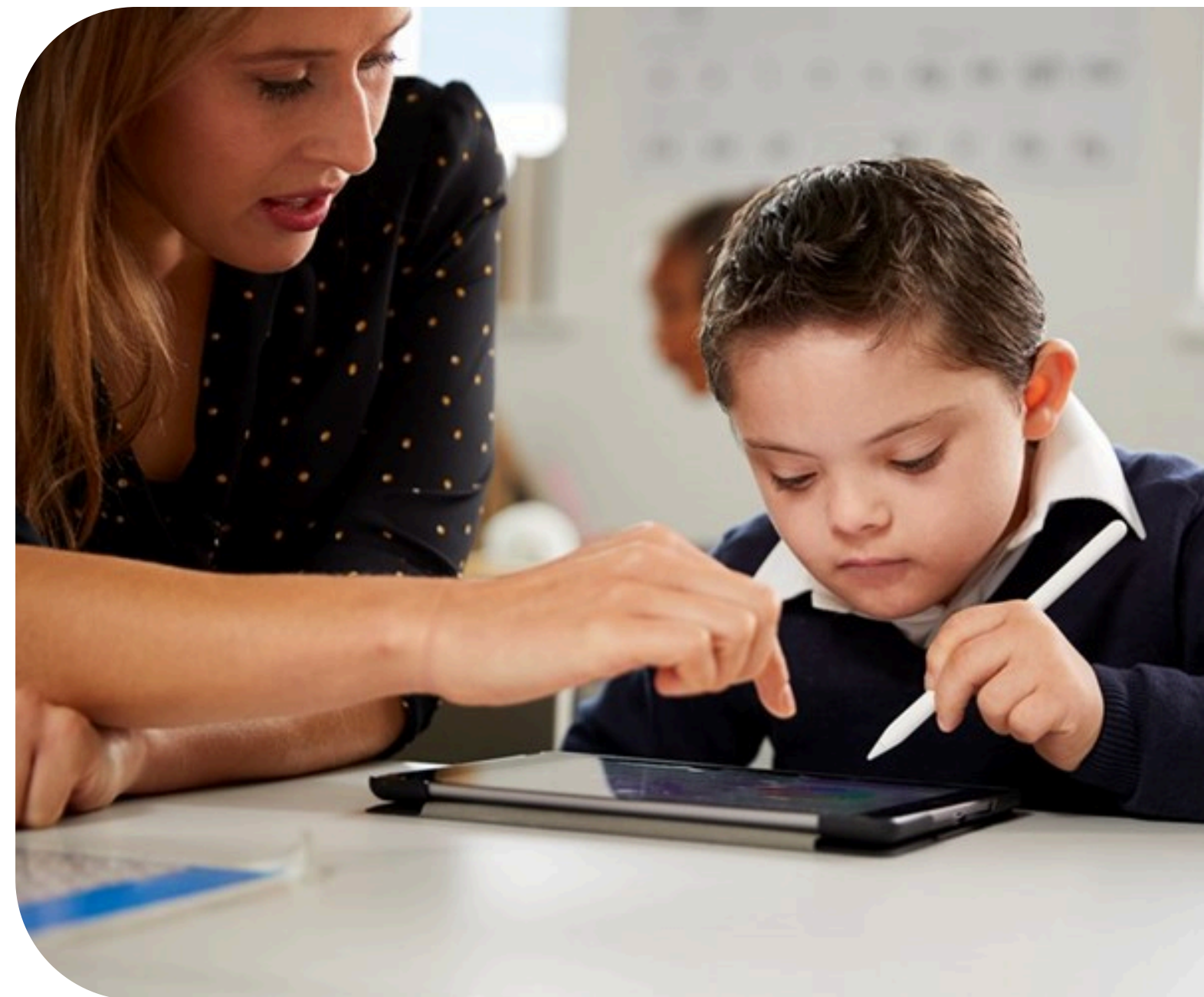
- **Clear Routines and Predictability:** Many SEN pupils thrive when they know what to expect. Using visual timetables, step-by-step instructions and consistent routines can reduce anxiety.
- **Calm and Sensory-Friendly Spaces:** Quiet corners, sensory rooms, or access to tools such as fidget items or noise-cancelling headphones can help children self-regulate and refocus.
- **Positive Classroom Culture:** Celebrating differences, modelling empathy and encouraging peer support creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation.
- **Accessible Resources:** Learning materials should be adapted to meet individual needs, whether through assistive technology, large print, or multi-sensory resources.



# Promoting Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Emotional literacy and social skills are vital for SEN pupils to build confidence and resilience.

- ▶ Emotional Literacy: Use visual tools like emotion charts, storytelling and mindfulness exercises to help children recognise and express their feelings.
- ▶ Social Skills Development: Role play, social stories and peer buddy systems can give pupils the chance to practise interactions in a safe way.
- ▶ Building Resilience: Focus on strengths, teach coping strategies and encourage positive self-talk to help children manage stress and setbacks.





# Personalised Learning Approaches

No two children with SEN are the same, which means teaching approaches must be tailored.

- ▶▶ Adapted Teaching Methods: Breaking tasks into smaller steps, using multi-sensory approaches and offering alternative ways of recording learning can make lessons accessible.
- ▶▶ Strengths and Interests: Linking lessons to pupils' passions: whether art, music, or technology (increases engagement and motivation).
- ▶▶ Promoting Autonomy: Offering choices in activities gives pupils ownership of their learning and builds independence.





# Collaborative Approaches

Supporting SEN pupils' wellbeing requires a joined-up approach between schools, families, and specialists.

- ▶ Parents and Carers: Working closely with families ensures consistency between home and school support.
- ▶ Specialist Input: SENCOs, educational psychologists and therapists can provide guidance and tailored strategies for individual needs.
- ▶ Teacher Training: Staff should have access to ongoing professional development on supporting SEN pupils' mental health, ensuring they feel equipped and confident.







# Teacher Wellbeing

Teachers play a vital role in supporting SEN pupils, but they can only do this effectively when they are supported themselves. High workloads, emotional demands and lack of resources can take their toll on staff wellbeing.

Creating a culture where teachers' mental health is prioritised is essential. Schools should provide:

- » Access to wellbeing resources and support
- » Time for reflection, planning, and collaboration
- » Recognition of the emotional impact of teaching SEN pupils

When teachers feel supported, they are better able to create positive, nurturing environments for their pupils.





# Final thoughts

At NextGen Teachers, we believe every child deserves the right support to thrive, especially those with Special Educational Needs.

By creating inclusive, nurturing environments that prioritise wellbeing, schools can unlock potential, build confidence, and give children the foundations they need for lifelong success.

Supporting SEN pupils starts with empowering the educators around them. We're here to help schools and teachers access the right resources, training, and guidance to make a real difference.





# Wellbeing for Every Child with SEN

At NextGen Teachers, we are committed to helping SEN schools create environments where every child and every teacher, can thrive.

Get in touch with us to explore how we can support your school in building positive, resilient learning communities.

[www.nextgenteachers.co.uk](http://www.nextgenteachers.co.uk)

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