

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

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



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# Introduction

At NextGen Teachers, we believe that wellbeing must be at the heart of education. Supporting children's mental and physical health is not only vital for their growth and resilience, but also for their ability to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

This resource has been designed to provide schools and educators with clear, evidence-based strategies that can be embedded into daily practice. From small, habit-forming activities to whole-school approaches, our aim is to give teachers and leaders practical tools to support children's wellbeing in meaningful ways.

We also recognise the importance of teacher wellbeing. Staff cannot effectively support their pupils if they are overwhelmed, exhausted, or struggling themselves. Creating a culture of care means prioritising both pupils and the adults who teach them. When teachers feel supported, they are better able to nurture resilient, confident, and happy learners.





# Why wellbeing matters

Physical and mental wellbeing are equally important for children's development. Just as schools encourage exercise, nutrition and physical health, mental wellbeing should be treated as a vital part of daily life.

When children feel supported emotionally, they are better able to learn effectively, cope with challenges and thrive socially and academically.

Good mental health and wellbeing helps pupils to:

- Attend school regularly
- Develop social and emotional life skills
- Engage positively in learning
- Achieve academically
- Build long-term resilience and future success





# Understanding mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is often misunderstood. It does not mean never feeling sad, worried, or stressed. These feelings are a normal and healthy part of life. Positive wellbeing is about recognising a full range of emotions, expressing them safely, and developing coping tools to manage challenges.

Research shows that when children have opportunities to practise wellbeing strategies regularly, they are better able to regulate their emotions and recover when difficulties arise.





# The ways to wellbeing

Research suggests that small, everyday practices can make a significant difference. The recognised “ways to wellbeing” are:

- Connect with others
- Be active
- Keep learning
- Take notice of the world around you
- Show kindness
- Play and be creative

Schools can embed these opportunities throughout the school day, for example by incorporating short wellbeing activities into lessons, building mindfulness into classroom routines, or creating opportunities for connection and play during break times.





# Habit-forming techniques

Wellbeing strategies are most effective when practised regularly. Encouraging children to build habits such as mindful breathing, movement breaks, creative expression, or reflective exercises allows these practices to become part of daily life.

Teachers can embed habit-forming techniques into classroom routines to ensure pupils have frequent opportunities to regulate their emotions and practise self-care. Simple actions, repeated consistently, can provide long-term benefits to children's wellbeing.





# Creating a positive school climate

The school environment plays a powerful role in shaping wellbeing. Positive relationships with peers, caring and respectful adults, and a supportive leadership culture are all integral.

A 2023 longitudinal study of over 8,000 students in UK secondary schools found that a positive school climate was linked to lower risks of depression, fewer behavioural challenges, and higher overall wellbeing.

“Schools can enhance mental health by creating climates that pupils view as positive – including supportive peer relationships, caring adults, and effective leadership.”





# The role of schools

Schools are well placed to spot early signs of poor mental health. Ofsted's inspection framework requires pupils to be taught about emotional wellbeing and to be able to make informed choices about their mental health.

This makes it essential that schools embed a whole-school approach. Practical steps schools can take include:

- Teaching wellbeing strategies explicitly
- Normalising conversations about emotions
- Providing safe and supportive environments
- Promoting resilience through positive thinking and coping strategies
- Appointing a Senior Mental Health Lead to develop a strategic approach by 2025







# Improving mental health & wellbeing in schools

Evidence-based approaches such as Positive Education demonstrate the benefits of embedding wellbeing strategies across whole schools. These include teaching self-awareness, resilience, coping skills, and social-emotional learning.

By developing these skills, schools can help children to:

- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Build emotional awareness and literacy
- Improve focus and decision-making
- Develop positive relationships
- Cope more effectively during times of stress





# Final thoughts

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**NextGen**  
teachers

# Let's Support Wellbeing Together

At NextGen Teachers, we are committed to helping 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 resilient learning communities.

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

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