



# Wellbeing and mental health at school

*Guidelines for school leaders, teachers and educators*



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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# **Wellbeing and mental health at school**

***Guidelines for school leaders, teachers and  
educators***

edited by PPMI

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<sup>1</sup> NB: one of the 19 experts initially selected withdraw from the group.

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The **“Guidelines for school leaders, teachers and educators to address wellbeing and mental health at school”** were developed by the Commission Expert Group on supportive learning environments for groups at risk of underachievement and for supporting wellbeing at school. They are based on the evidence-informed framework “A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools”<sup>2</sup> and align with the logic and approach of the Council Recommendation on **Pathways to School Success**<sup>3</sup>, the **EU Strategy on the rights of the child**<sup>4</sup> and other frameworks proposed by international organisations, such as the **World Health Organization (WHO) “Health-promoting schools and systems”**<sup>5</sup> implemented in association with United Nations Children's Fund, and UNESCO, the **OECD’s “Education for inclusive societies”** project<sup>6</sup> and **UNESCO’s “Happy Schools Framework”**<sup>7</sup>. The guidelines are also aligned with the principles within **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**<sup>8</sup>, **the Council of Europe’s approach to well-being**<sup>9</sup> and **the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**<sup>10</sup>.

Rather than being prescriptive, these guidelines aim to offer concrete, hands-on guidance for school leaders, teachers and educators. We acknowledge that although EU Member States share many challenges and recommendations for supporting wellbeing, education systems vary greatly. Therefore, the suggested recommendations should be adapted to the specific characteristics of each country and each school.

This document **addresses school leaders, teachers and educators** and offers a **concise overview** of the 11 recommendations. Its sister version addresses education policymakers. Both documents are complemented by a more in-depth version, addressing **education policymakers, school leaders, teachers and educators**, having the same structure and containing more detailed recommendations, supported by research evidence, good practice examples and practical tips.

Implementation of the approach is supported at European level via peer learning and exchange of experience in the framework of European Education Area Working Groups on “Schools - Pathways to School Success” and “Equality and Values in Education and Training”. Funds are available for investment in wellbeing in education, in particular Erasmus+, including Erasmus+ Teacher Academies.

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<sup>2</sup> See Cefai, C. Simoes, C., & Caravita, S. (2022) A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools in the EU. NESET report, Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>3</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/school-education/pathways-to-school-success>

<sup>4</sup> The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee - European Commission (europa.eu) The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee - European Commission (europa.eu)

<sup>5</sup> For more information see: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-promoting-schools#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-promoting-schools#tab=tab_1)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/education/strength-through-diversity/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/education-policies/happy-schools>

<sup>8</sup> In particular: Art.29: “The aims of education with reference also to the quality of education”; Art.12 “Respect of the views of the child”, Art.13 “Freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information”, Art.31: “Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities”

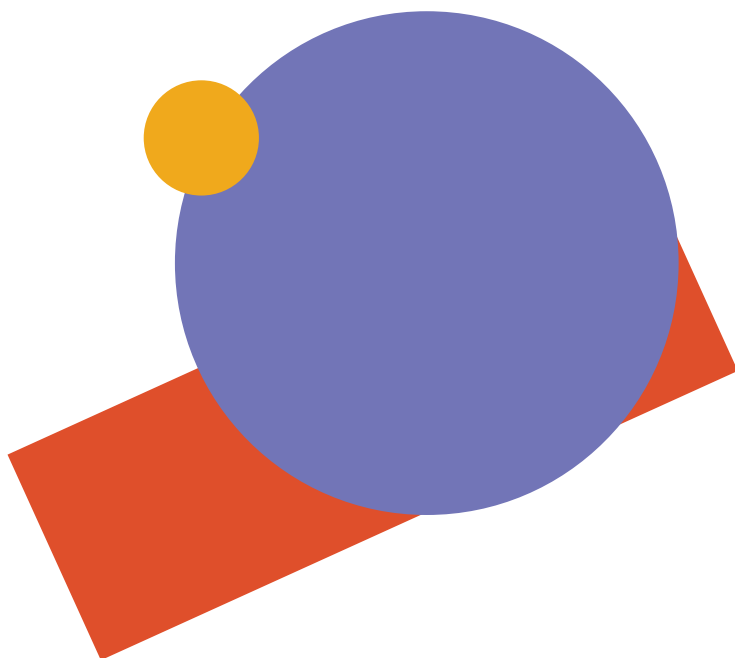
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/improving-well-being-at-school>

<sup>10</sup> It contributes to actions supporting in particular SDG 3: “Good health and wellbeing” and SDG 4: ‘Quality education’; <https://sdgs.un.org/>

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## FOREWORD



Reports of the declining state of wellbeing and mental health of children and adolescents, coupled with a deterioration in school performance in recent years, has raised significant concern. Evidence from the World Health Organization reveals that adolescents today experience poorer mental health than previous generations. Moreover, the latest PISA results from December 2023 show a worrying decline in basic skills.

When the school environment becomes an overbearing source of mental unrest, hindering young people's ability to benefit fully from their education, it impacts not only their personal wellbeing and life satisfaction, but also their future employability, health, social situation (through a risk of marginalisation) and their surroundings, including family.

There is also a noticeable decline in teacher wellbeing, with an increase in burnout and stress due to new challenges faced without adequate resources, training and support. These factors diminish the attractiveness of the teaching profession, contributing to shortages that have serious consequences well beyond the classroom.

Research consistently demonstrates the links between school climate, student and teacher wellbeing, social and emotional competencies and academic performance. The latest PISA results also show that the most resilient education systems are those that simultaneously promote learning, equity and wellbeing.

The European Commission, recognising these issues, intensified its efforts through the 2022 **Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success**. As a flagship initiative of the European Education Area, *Pathways to School Success* aims to improve educational outcomes for all learners, regardless of their personal situations and backgrounds, while acknowledging the integral relationship of wellbeing and success at school.

These **guidelines** for education policymakers, educators and school leaders, aimed at **addressing wellbeing and mental health at school**, mean a significant step forward. They have at their core the invaluable input of dedicated expert group set up by the Commission, bringing together a wide range of specialists from the world of education and psychology, as well as education and training



practitioners. Benefitting from their vast knowledge and first-hand experience, the guidelines can be summarised in three key action points.

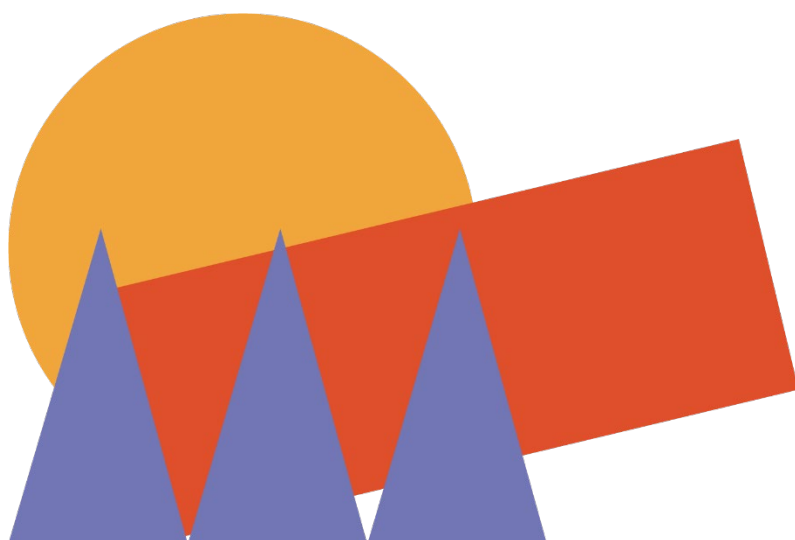
First, strategies to enhance wellbeing at school should be **comprehensive and integrated**, with a strong emphasis on **prevention**. They should focus on building the competencies of learners and educators as well as of parents to ensure that schools are a safe space. The key enablers of wellbeing such as physical and cultural activities, play, sleep and proper nutrition must also be safeguarded. Specific measures at universal, targeted and individual level to ensure equity and build on the existing diversity in school settings will enable schools to address the increasing and fast-evolving challenges, as detailed in the eleven following recommendations.

Second, schools and educators need to **strengthen their capacity** to manage changing the approach to wellbeing in a sustainable way. Schools require additional resources to provide training opportunities for teachers throughout their careers. This includes creating time and space for professional development that empowers teachers to maintain their wellbeing and adopt innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, it is crucial that young people actively participate in co-creating and taking ownership of their learning experience.

And third, wellbeing is affected by factors beyond the classroom, which is why schools cannot act in isolation. To effectively tackle challenges that lie ahead and support our educators and our young generation, we need to **build strong networks** integrating families, youth organisations, higher education institutions, healthcare and welfare sectors and other local stakeholders.

I trust that these comprehensive guidelines will make a significant difference in schools across Europe. I am grateful to all colleagues who have generously shared their knowledge and passion for equity and wellbeing. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a healthier and more inclusive educational landscape.

*Iliana Ivanova – European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth*

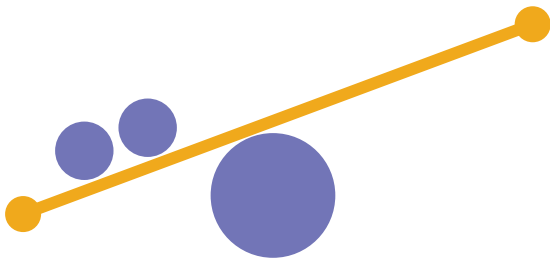


## INTRODUCTION

### IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING IN SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

Traditionally, education focussed predominantly on academic performance. However, we're now moving towards a more holistic view of education, acknowledging that children and adolescents need a **balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional competences** to achieve positive outcomes both in school and more generally in life. Learning is a relational and emotional process, and research has long shown that **wellbeing at school, from the perspective of both learners and teachers, is key to improving academic performance**. However, wellbeing at school is about **more than individual teaching and learning**. It is about **education systems** that pay attention to addressing equity, diversity, and multicultural understanding while maintaining a high quality of education and high expectations from all children. This emphasis on the importance of values and opportunities for all is the foundation of wellbeing.

Wellbeing is also about the **quality of school life**, learning environments, a respectful school climate and the relationships between learners and their peers, between learners and their teachers, and among teachers themselves. These are all structures through which empathy, compassion, integrity, resilience, problem solving, respect for others, and the sense of belonging and feeling safe are addressed and continuously promoted. Wellbeing is about the wellbeing of teachers and educators, about empowering learners and their teachers to let their voices be heard, to actively engage in the decision-making process on matters affecting them, and to contribute to their community. School is a steppingstone to young people's entry into society, and wellbeing and care should not be addressed at the expense of quality and excellence in education, and vice-versa.



Wellbeing does not simply mean the absence of illness, but rather encompasses the “realisation of a person's unique potential through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual relation to the self, others and the environment”<sup>11</sup>. Recent figures show that the wellbeing of children and adolescents has steadily decreased to alarming levels. Pupils today report poorer mental health outcomes – influenced by factors such as school pressure, body image, inadequate social media use, and bullying – compared to previous generations, alongside a downward trend in school achievement.

Policy responses have thus far only addressed these challenges in a fragmented manner, once problems occur. There is compelling evidence that wellbeing and mental health at schools can only be achieved sustainably through a **whole-system, whole-school approach (WSA) to wellbeing and**

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.learningforwellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/L4WB-A5-The-Essentials-2018-05.pdf>

**mental health**<sup>12</sup>, an approach which is embedded at European level in the Pathways to School Success Council Recommendation. The principles of this approach are anchored in a whole-of-society approach to child protection<sup>13</sup>.

## WHOLE-SYSTEM, WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

The proposed whole-system, whole-school approach to wellbeing and mental health, as illustrated by the pyramid hereafter, is built upon a **universal approach** where all pupils are supported to develop and maintain their wellbeing, both in terms of mental and physical health, through curricular and extra-curricular teaching and learning, relational and contextual processes, both at school and classroom level. It aims to reduce risks, build social and emotional competence, resilience, increase the sense of self-worth, and establish supportive environments for wellbeing.

In addition to this universal approach, it is important to identify the individual, social and structural risk factors, so that students at risk of experiencing mental health conditions can be provided with additional **targeted support, in small groups or at individual level**, and in collaboration with health professionals and agencies. The wheel<sup>14</sup> complements this approach by showing **the main pillars**, namely: curriculum, school ethos and environment; family and community partnerships; learners' voices; and education and wellbeing of school staff, including their own social and emotional competence and wellbeing. It is important to note that these are **highly interconnected and overlapping**.



Figure 1 : The whole-system, whole-school approach (WSA) to wellbeing and mental health

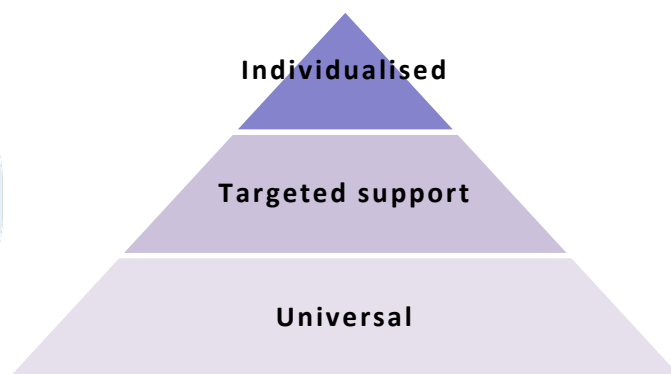


Figure 2 : Levels of support in the whole-school approach

<sup>12</sup> Cefai et al (2021) "A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU"

<sup>13</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_24\\_2243](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_2243)

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from Cefai et al (2021) "A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU", NESET report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi: 10.2766/50546.

## KEY DATA ON WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS



Adolescent girls have poorer mental health and wellbeing compared to boys (11, 13, 15 years old). These gaps increase with age, with 15-year-old girls showing the worst outcomes. (WHO, 2023)



1 in 5 adolescents (11-17) reports feeling unhappy and anxious about the future (Eurochild & UNICEF, 2019)



Young people in the EU rank climate change among their top three worries (Coffey et al., 2021)



Across Europe 25% of pupils report having been bullied in the past month, 50% report having experienced cyberbullying in the past (Lobe et al., 2021)



Key sources of teachers' stress: admin work, excessive marking, classroom management, heavy teaching load, and addressing parental concerns (Eurydice, 2021)



In Europe, almost 50 % of lower secondary school teachers experience stress at work, with variations ranging from 20% to 90% (Eurydice, 2021)

9 million adolescents (10-19) in Europe are dealing with mental health challenges (OECD, 2022)



Life satisfaction and self-rated health among adolescents, particularly girls, has been in decline, while there has been a rise in multiple health complaints – such as difficulty sleeping, backaches or headaches, or feeling low (WHO, 2023)



In Western Europe, the estimated annual cost of mental health disorders in youth (0-19) amounted to 57.6 billion US dollars (UNICEF, 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing mental health challenges in teachers with high levels of anxiety, depression and stress (Silva et al., 2021)



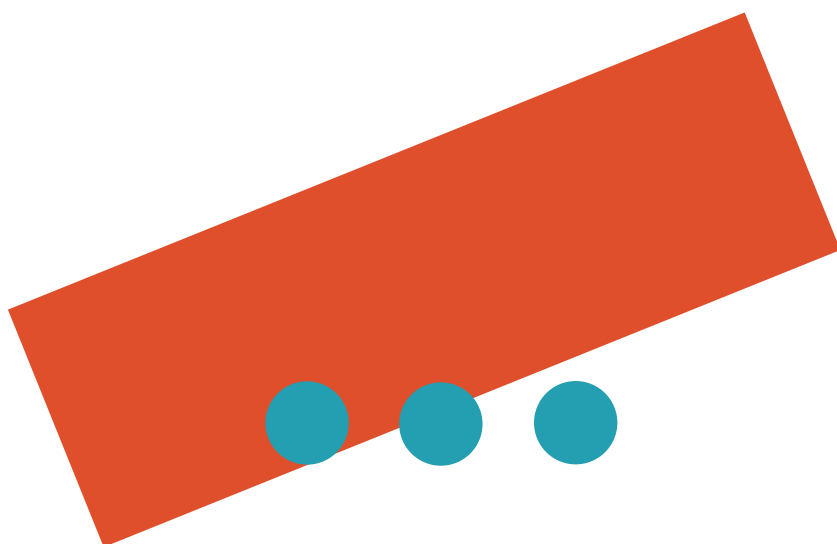
13% of adolescents in 23 EU countries feel lonely while at school (Baarck et al., 2022)

In Europe, suicide is the second most common cause of death among adolescents aged 15-19. (UNICEF, 2021)



Considering the alarming trends above, the important role of wellbeing in promoting the healthy development and learning of children and young people, it is clear that, next to academic achievement **wellbeing should become one of the core objectives in education**. However, achieving this aim requires several fundamental changes in most contexts.

**The 11 recommendations hereafter aim to guide policymakers in this process.** In order to be sustainable, a crucial and cross-cutting aspect in the development of all policies and measures suggested below is **monitoring and evaluation**. When launching new policies, we need to be sure that structures and resources are put in place to collect relevant data on their implementation and impact. Based on the collected data, there should be periodic evaluations to understand how the new policies are affecting the different target groups and whether they are achieving the proposed objectives.

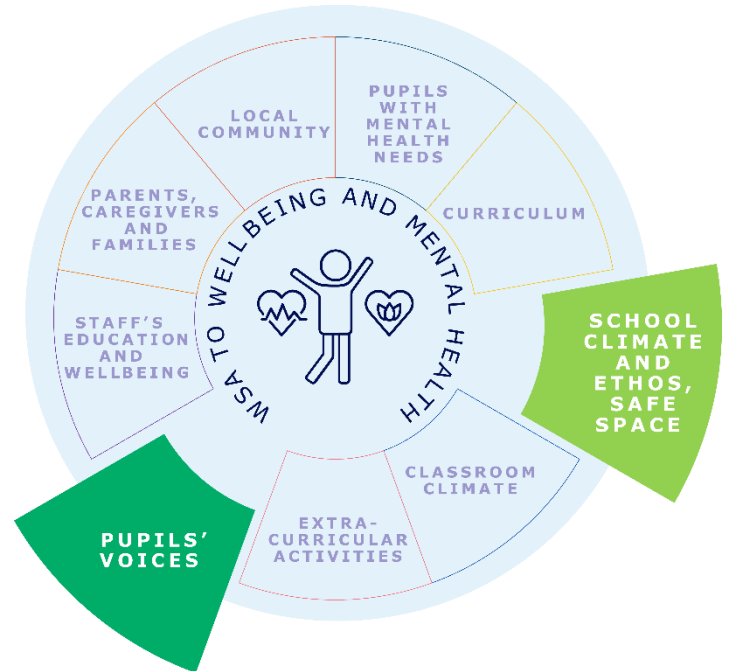


# 1. Establish a positive school climate rooted in the active participation and empowerment of learners



School climate is a multi-dimensional construct representing perceptions of the educational environment, connected to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape the interactions between learners, teachers, and administrators within a school.

Research shows that a **positive, safe, healthy, proactively inclusive, and relationship-oriented learning environment** leads to more effective learning and teaching and better academic achievement. It improves engagement, personal growth and promotes the wellbeing of learners and teachers. A positive school climate is also linked to **fewer behavioural issues and improved mental health**, and it helps **weaken the impact of low socio-economic status on academic achievement**. Building a positive school climate is in line with the **rights of children and young people** to physical and mental health, quality education, protection and participation.



## ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Include the promotion of wellbeing for learners and staff in the school's vision, mission, action plan, and educational goals across all grade levels. Make it visible in all communication with learners and parents and throughout the school premises, together with the core school values, such as safety, respect, responsibility, and collaboration.
- Ensure a positive school climate for teachers and all school staff, so everyone feels valued, respected, engaged, and supported.
- Trust learners and help them build their self-esteem and self-efficacy by encouraging them to consider mistakes as opportunities to learn.
- Involve learners and all school staff in decision-making processes regarding wellbeing and a positive school climate.
- Invest time into activities that make learners connect, be authentic, and create positive relationships between each other and with adults.
- Be vigilant and ensure that academic pressure and curricular demands do not negatively impact the wellbeing of children and teachers. This could include for example promoting a balanced approach to homework and tests, catering for both academic success and students' mental health.
- Always keep in mind that the wellbeing and mental health of students and educators goes hand in hand with academic achievement and that both goals are mutually reinforcing.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Positive school climate is reflected in schools' vision, mission, plans.
- ▶ School administration actively promotes it.
- ▶ Allocation of sufficient time and a dedicated team.
- ▶ Children's participation mechanisms are in place.
- ▶ School climate is tracked through regular feedback from community.
- ▶ School climate assessments are part of annual reports and evaluations.



## TIPS

### WHAT DO CHILDREN WANT FROM ADULTS?

Among others:

- ★ Adults should respect children, listen to them and take them seriously.
- ★ Adults should try harder to understand children's needs.
- ★ Adults should involve children in decisions at home and school, in their communities and with governments.
- ★ Adults should include children in developing solutions to their problems.

Source: [EU Children Participation Platform](#)

## INSPIRING PRACTICES

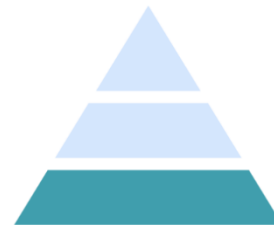
"**We Are Here**" developed by Eurochild (**Belgium**) and the Learning for Wellbeing Foundation (**Netherlands**), the child participation [toolbox](#) is designed to support children and adults who advocate for the rights and wellbeing of children. The toolbox provides concrete examples on how to increase levels of participation in your school.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

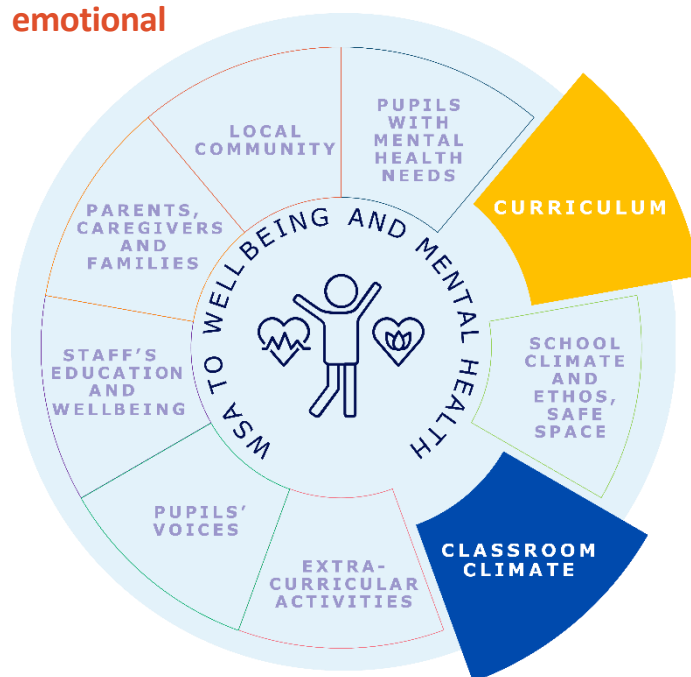
- **Italy**, promoting wellbeing at Istituto Comprensivo Chignolo Po, [video](#)
- **Ireland**, [Kinsale Community School](#) aims to cater for the curricular, personal, and physical needs of each student, in a safe and caring environment.
- "The school climate has not been affected by global warming" on the [European School Education Platform](#).

## 2. Integrate social and emotional education into the curriculum starting from early childhood education



The inclusion in 2018 of “Personal, social and learning to learn” in the eight key competences for lifelong learning underlined social and emotional education as a key priority area in education

Research clearly indicates that **wellbeing, academic, and social and emotional learning are inextricably linked** and support each other: learners with better social and emotional skills at school perform better academically. Next to teaching and learning, formal assessment mechanisms, particularly formative assessment, need to be expanded to include such skills. Despite this evidence, approaches across countries today are diverse and fragmented, with social and emotional learning in general not emphasised as a learning goal.



## ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) in every school’s strategy and development plan, in a whole-school approach.
- Create the conditions for time and space for discussions and practice of social and emotional learning, under guidance from a person responsible for wellbeing.
- Ensure that the **required competencies are integrated not only by classroom teachers, but also in other subject areas and in the daily life of the classroom**, aiming for every educator to become also a “social and emotional development” educator.
- Support teachers and school staff to practice and develop their readiness and capacity to implement social and emotional learning.
- Train and provide continuing support to teachers and school staff both in delivering social and emotional learning and in creating a positive and caring school climate, with an emphasis on relationship-building, conflict management, positive behaviour management, and constructive experiential, culturally responsive and collaborative pedagogies.
- Use **formative and ipsative assessment practices**, as they are particularly suited to social and emotional learning.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Well-being and SEL development are in the school's mission and development plan.
- ▶ SEL competences are incorporated in lesson plans and activities.
- ▶ Formative assessment tools are used to assess SEL competences.



## TIPS

- ★ Start with the existing knowledge and expertise in schools.
- ★ Take into consideration existing school constraints and re-adapt the different processes not to negatively impact the well-being of teachers, which in turn will negatively impact the learners.
- ★ Ensure continuity of the programme throughout the years, as it can take 3 to 5 years to properly implement a SEL programme.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

**Assessing Social and Emotional Skills:** the [toolkit](#) was developed as part of the Erasmus+ KA3 project “Learning to Be” with participation of **Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland**. It provides a comprehensive overview of social and emotional learning, indicating how to develop it in practice, as well as how to assess social and emotional skills, in particular self-efficacy, resilience and social competencies. It also shows how these skills can contribute substantially to school activities, and looks at its connections with students' environment (including parents, peers and teachers).

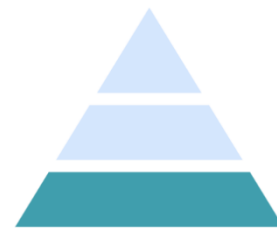
The [Boost approach](#) was developed in the framework of a HORIZON 2020 project, with partners from **Norway, Spain, Poland and Belgium**. The approach provides a roadmap on how to start implementing and developing social and emotional learning on a continuous basis in primary schools.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **France**, [toolkit](#) for empathy at school.
- **Portugal**, [MindSerena](#) – Mindfulness training for teachers and pupils from primary schools.
- **NESET**, [A formative, whole-school approach to the assessment of social and emotional education](#).

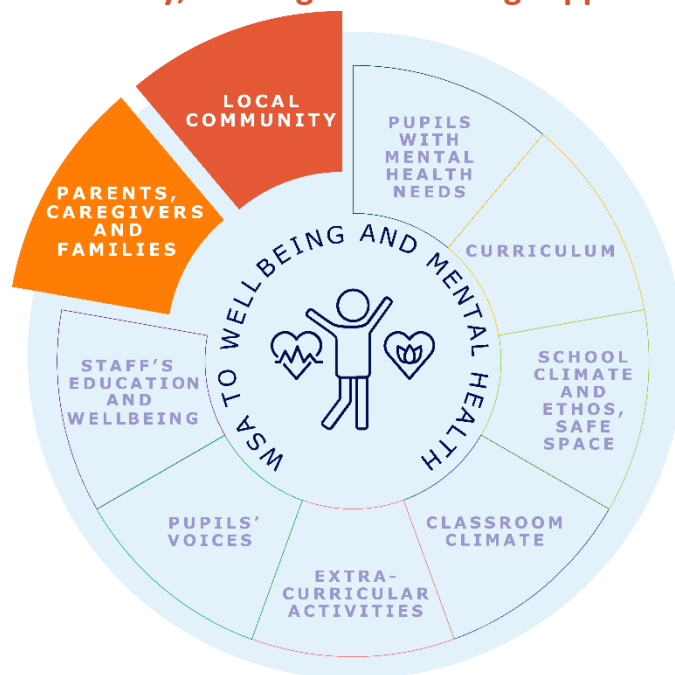


### 3. Foster collaborative partnerships among schools, communities, and stakeholders to enhance wellbeing



As part of the whole-school approach, collaborative partnerships recognise schools as dynamic, multidimensional, and interconnected systems that not only transmit knowledge and competences, but actively engage with their community, offering and receiving support.

Schools do not have the capacity to address wellbeing and mental health issues alone, hence the need for collaborative partnerships. These partnerships involve various institutions, organisations and stakeholders from the local community and other sectors. There is an increasing need for **integrated approaches between the education sector and other areas, in particular health and social sectors.**



## ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Adapt school organisation structures to enable the setting up of interdisciplinary and stable cooperation mechanisms among all stakeholders in and around schools.
- Enable meaningful participation of the entire school community through consultations, surveys, focus groups, social events, or other similar means.
- Reach out to a wider variety of stakeholders, including from non-formal learning contexts as they can provide expertise and feedback on teaching many of the missing elements in the curricula.
- Expand cooperation to the school's strategy on extra-curricular activities and on tracking learners' development outside schools.
- Train and support all school staff on how to engage in interdisciplinary teams and with different stakeholders and partners.
- Engage parents, pupils, the local community, relevant NGOs, teacher associations, and education trade unions in the wellbeing policymaking process.
- Develop outreach programmes to engage families as 'learning communities' and track family support and involvement in the progress of children.
- Encourage active participation of families in the school decision-making processes.
- Guarantee the resources needed to strengthen school capacity to work collaboratively with the external community (e.g. sufficient budget and number of adequately trained professionals)
- Build strong partnerships between schools and research institutions.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Fostering collaborative partnerships is a strategic objective of the school.
- ▶ Training, knowledge, and time is provided to school staff to engage in collaborations with external stakeholders
- ▶ Tracking and feedback mechanisms on the involvement of community stakeholders are in place.



## TIPS

To avoid potential resistance of stakeholders in getting involved in new initiatives, it is important to clearly communicate the rationale behind the initiatives to all stakeholders, emphasising their positive impact on student and teacher well-being and overall academic performance. Establish continuous communication channels to keep all stakeholders informed about progress and updates. Maintain transparency in decision-making processes and school policy adjustments.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

**Promoting students' social competences**  
A school in Thiva, Greece created a collection of informal learning practices to promote students' social competences and teacher collaboration. The school designed various learning approaches connected to outdoor learning and the broader school community, and cooperated with external stakeholders including scientists, artists, craftworkers, and museums.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **Germany:** [Mind Matters](#) is an evidence-based initiative dedicated to promoting the mental wellbeing of students, teachers, staff, and parents within primary and secondary schools, fully funded by the Ministry of Health.
- **Portugal:** [Seal of Good Practice](#) in psychological health, wellbeing, educational success and inclusion recognises and distinguishes Portuguese schools.

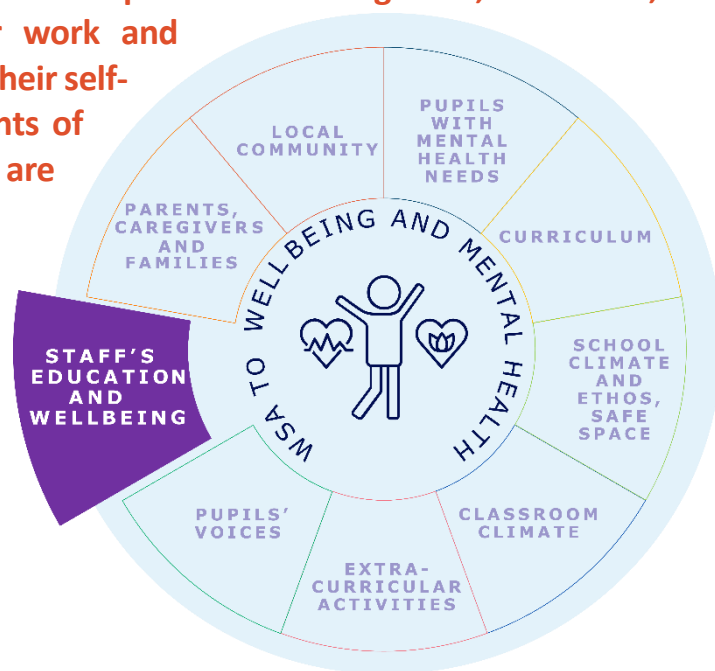


## 4. Fully integrate wellbeing principles into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes



Teacher wellbeing is broadly understood as teachers' responses to the cognitive, emotional, health and social conditions relating to their work and profession. The wellbeing of teachers influences their self-efficacy, teaching practices, and the achievements of their learners. Teachers with poor wellbeing are more likely to leave the profession.

The optimal starting point to address the wellbeing of educators is initial teacher education and training (ITE). During this stage, teachers should be able to understand the concept of wellbeing, learn to recognise and reflect on their personal wellbeing, and acquire the competences needed to support the wellbeing of their (future) pupils, their own wellbeing and that of their colleagues. Consequently, a stronger cooperation between education policymakers and initial teacher education providers is crucial.



### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Provide quality practical field experience for student teachers by allowing them to observe experienced teachers, engage in supervised teaching, and, under close supervision, be exposed to diverse learning environments which broaden their understanding of different student needs and teaching approaches.
- Establish mentorship programmes where experienced teachers support student and novice teachers at the beginning of their careers.
- Invite student teachers to participate in school-based professional development activities.
- Provide access to school resources, such as teaching materials, technology, and facilities so that student teachers get familiar with the tools and resources they will be using in their future classrooms.
- Involve student teachers in school events, extracurricular activities, and parent-teacher meetings for an understanding of the broader roles and responsibilities of a teacher beyond the classroom setting.
- Facilitate networking opportunities for student teachers to connect with other educators, administrators, and professionals in the field. Building a professional network can provide ongoing support and collaboration opportunities throughout their careers.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Existence of partnerships between schools and ITE providers.
- ▶ School participation in mentoring programmes in collaboration with ITE providers.



## TIPS

[eTwinning supports student teachers](#) to work with in-service teachers, resulting in them feeling more confident by applying in practice what they learned during their studies. Through eTwinning, student teachers gain a better understanding of teaching, which in turn increases their motivation and the attractiveness of the teaching profession.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

### “University schools”

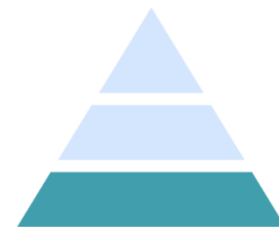
The University of Eastern Finland is one of eight universities in Finland which have affiliated ‘university schools’ where student teachers can practise their skills by teaching children from the nearby area. Student teachers are trained in teaching in usual settings, hence the ‘university schools’ represent a combination of teacher training and actual teaching.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **Europe:** the [impact of eTwinning](#) on Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

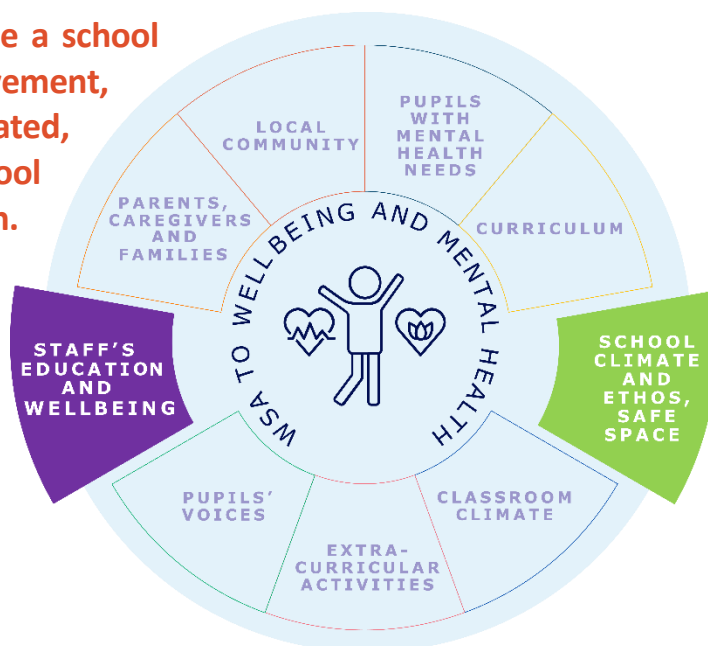


## 5. Strengthen the capacity of school leaders to address wellbeing at school to create inclusive and supportive environments



Effective school leadership is essential to create a school climate with positive impact on student achievement, quality of teaching and staff motivation. Dedicated, value-led, competent and highly motivated school leaders establish a clear and shared school vision.

Successful school leaders can sustain a **sense of commitment and personal accountability** towards their work, maintain an intense moral purpose, create trusting relationships with others, focus on learning and self-development, and create learning opportunities for all school actors. School leaders should be responsible for improving school staff and learners' wellbeing. This should not be an add-on, but **should be embedded in the everyday interactions between leaders and educators in schools.**



### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Build a **positive school culture and climate** by promoting positive relationships between school leaders, teachers, students and parents. Monitor and evaluate this regularly.
- Personally **engage in promoting and sustaining practices of a positive school climate** year-by-year through leadership, planning, positive reinforcement, role-modelling, and monitoring.
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers cannot justify teacher deskilling. **School leaders need to commit to the promotion of the highest standards of teacher selection and training.**
- Actively invest in the **continuous promotion of teacher and staff wellbeing**, promoting teacher valorisation, meaningful professional development, agency in decision-making, relationship building, and social and emotional competence.
- Implement a **'distributed leadership' model** to create opportunities for more flexible working relationships, multi-disciplinary projects and collaborations.
- Envisage the creation of a **support team** involving teachers to provide internal collegial support for the development of wellbeing practices.
- Starting from the **assumption that schools should not and cannot promote wellbeing alone**, develop opportunities for school staff to closely collaborate with and rely on external experts.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Wellbeing objectives are part of the school leader's programme.
- ▶ Develop a well-being school strategy together with the teaching staff.
- ▶ Promote distributed school leadership within the school.



## TIPS

In a 'distributed leadership' model, leadership, staff, learners, and parents/caregivers are encouraged to assume responsibility, and to take initiative, either individually or as part of a group. This may require creating new procedures and working arrangements, such as formal and informal committees, teams, working groups, organising time, and allocation of resources to enable collaborative working and testing of innovative ideas.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

### Centre for School Leadership

In **Ireland**, support for school leaders has been largely provided by the [Centre for School Leadership](#) (CSL) through individual mentoring and coaching. A postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership jointly awarded by a consortium of higher education institutions was established in September 2018 at the request of the then Department of Education and Skills and CSL. The programme is a part-time (18 months) blended learning professional diploma, and is open to approximately 300 participants per year. The programme covers aspects such as developing leadership and management capacity, leading school development, and professional growth and development.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

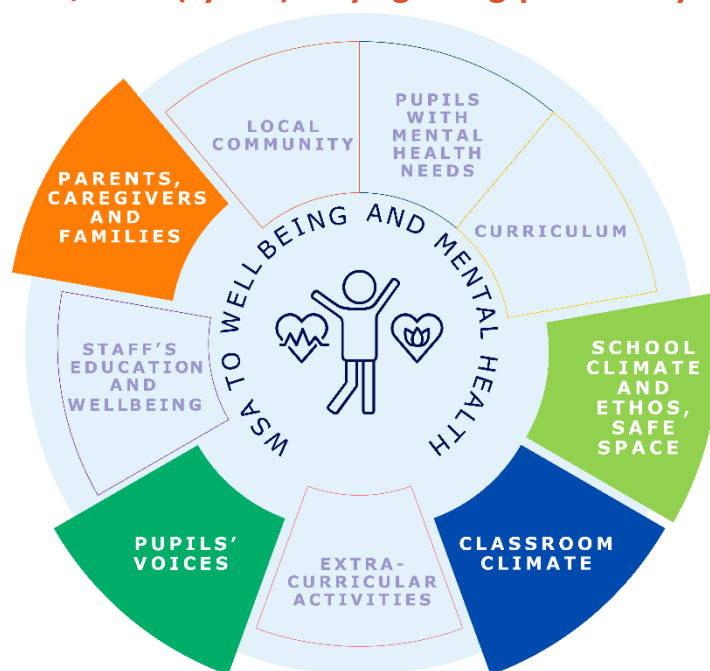
- [School leadership: navigating the future](#) on **European School Education Platform**.
- "[School leadership, a collective responsibility?](#)" on **European School Education Platform**.
- [European Leadership Network \(ELNET\)](#)

## 6. Ensure the creation of safe schools to prevent and address various forms of violence at school, including gender-based violence, and (cyber-)bullying



**Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that ‘Children have the right to be protected from being mistreated, physically and mentally’. Despite this, many children in Europe experience violence, including at school, with (cyber-)bullying being particularly prevalent.**

Violence at school often reflects power imbalances within wider society. It can disproportionately affect certain groups, such as children from disadvantaged socio-economic contexts, from migrant and minority backgrounds, with disabilities, on the basis of gender, or belonging to the LGBTIQ community. Protecting teachers and school staff from violence is another crucial aspect. **Addressing violence at school requires a joint effort, one which emphasises prevention, support, oversight and community, and must be reflected in everyday attitudes, thoughts, words and actions.**



## ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Develop **whole-school anti-bullying and anti-violence strategies and interventions** as part of the school planning, to be monitored and evaluated
- Set **clear guidelines, procedures and sanctions** for unacceptable behaviour and for reporting incidents of violence, in cooperation with teachers, other staff, pupils, and parents.
- Ensure **multiple reporting channels** are available, including anonymous reporting options.
- **Promote and proactively implement inclusive school plans and measures.**
- Promote **mutual respect, empathy, non-violent communication** at all levels and non-judgmental listening across the curriculum.
- **Address gender inequalities, gender-based violence, (cyber-)bullying and discrimination.**
- Introduce **restorative practices** such as **conflict resolution and peer mediation.**
- Promote and support staff participation in continuing professional development courses during their work hours on understanding and **addressing bullying and violence.**
- Work in close cooperation with parents and regularly update them with information on **bullying and violence.**
- Introduce **peer mentoring programmes**, where children and young people are trained to support one another.
- Considering that violence and (cyber-)bullying often **go beyond the school gates**, involve actors from the local community in the design and implementation of anti-violence measures.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ School policy is focused on bullying and violence prevention.
- ▶ Participation of the school population in related training.
- ▶ Multiple reporting channels are available.
- ▶ Staff are responsible for following up on reported cases of violence.
- ▶ Partnerships with specialised local community organisations
- ▶ Feedback on related measures is collected, at least yearly.



## TIPS

**Educational mediation** is a conflict resolution approach involving a neutral third party as a mediator. It aims to educate children and young adults to prevent recurrence of the issues causing conflict. Students act as mediators themselves: under the guidance of teachers, students undergo mediation training and engage in mediation processes. By involving students, educational mediation becomes a preventive procedure, aiming to reduce tension in classrooms.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

### “Understanding bullying and cyberbullying: a guide on how to support your child”

Dublin City University (DCU) has developed an [evidence-based guide](#) to assist parents and/or caregivers in supporting children affected by bullying and cyberbullying.

### Interventions

Initiate interventions such as NoTrap! anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying and European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments ([ENABLE](#)).

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **UNESCO's** guidelines on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and the [online toolkit](#) to facilitate the design and implementation of CSE programmes at national, local and school levels.
- "[What can schools do about bullying?](#)" (European Commission factsheet)
- "[What motivates children who bully and can the change?](#)" (European Commission factsheet)

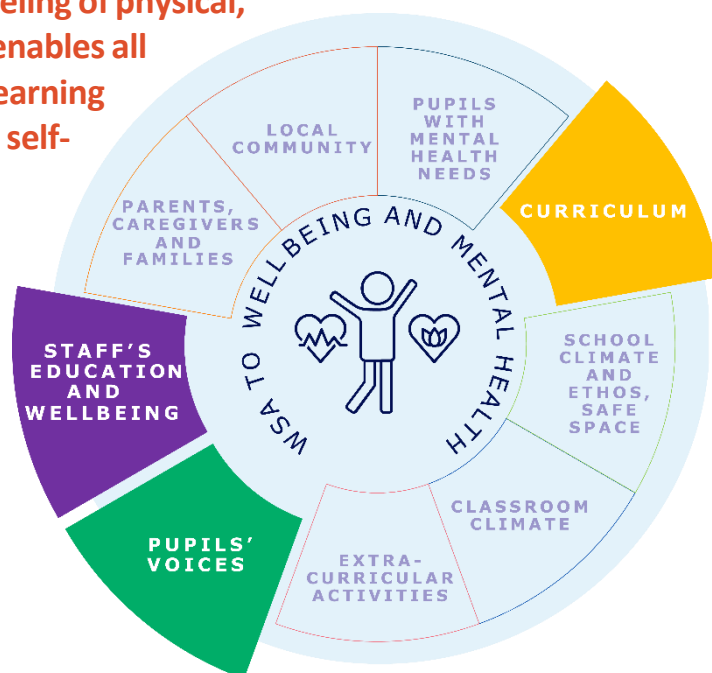


## 7. Promote wellbeing in the digital age



Wellbeing in digital education is understood as a feeling of physical, cognitive, social and emotional contentment that enables all individuals to engage positively in all digital learning environments and maximise their potential and self-realisation while acting safely online.

Digital and media tools play an integral part in the lives of children and teenagers. Owning a smartphone has become common, and most teenagers **have daily access to digital devices** (computers, tablets, smartphones). While digital technology has great potential to improve teaching and learning processes, we should consider **the effects its widespread use in education has on the wellbeing of the school community.**



### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Consult and implement **existing guidelines**, such as: [Guidelines on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy](#) and [Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#).
- **Integrate comprehensive digital literacy education** into teaching and learning, including on potential harms of the digital space.
- Create **accessible learning environments** to help students develop their digital competences.
- Emphasise the **use of technology as complementary tool to learning**.
- Set **clear guidelines on the use and limitation of digital devices** inside the schools to enhance learning and wellbeing, especially in lower grades.
- Build teachers capacity and confidence, through development and implementation of **comprehensive teacher training programmes** focused on digital tools and their positive and negative impact on children and young people.
- Promote **digital literacy and online safety education** using the information and training resources on the [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\)](#) portal.
- Establish regular collaboration with the national [Safer Internet Centres](#), for students, parents and teachers training, awareness raising activities and support.
- **Improve communication channels with parents on the digital wellbeing of learners.** Actively encourage parents to show an interest in their children's online activities and internet use and create a safe space to discuss and seek help.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place **to mitigate the negative impact of digital tools** on teacher and staff wellbeing.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Pedagogies and assessment practices adapted to the digital realm.
- ▶ School policies on the use of digital devices are in place.
- ▶ Regular awareness activities and training for students and teachers on online safety.
- ▶ Measurement of screen time and digital tools usage and its impact.
- ▶ A school coordinator is in charge of digital inclusion, accessibility and safety.



## TIPS

The Digital Services Act (DSA) aims to create a fairer and safer online world. This public-friendly [booklet](#) available in all EU languages, explains in simple terms what the DSA has put in place to protect children and young people under the age of 18: tools to report cyber bullying or illegal content, clearer terms and conditions, forbidden targeted ads for minors based on profiling, etc.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

**Czechia:** the [“Digi-děti” \(“Digi-children”\)](#) project explores the topic of balance between online and offline world through workshops for children, school-leaders and teachers. Participants are asked to think about the following questions: How to understand the ongoing digitalisation of many spheres of society? How to live with technologies and not lose yourself in the process? How to find a balance between the digital and the inner world?

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Safer Internet Centres \(SIC\)](#) are an EU co-funded network providing awareness raising activities and training in schools and beyond. The SIC also run free helplines to support people dealing with forms of online violence and threats, as well as “train the trainers” activities to help develop digital citizenship skills at all ages.



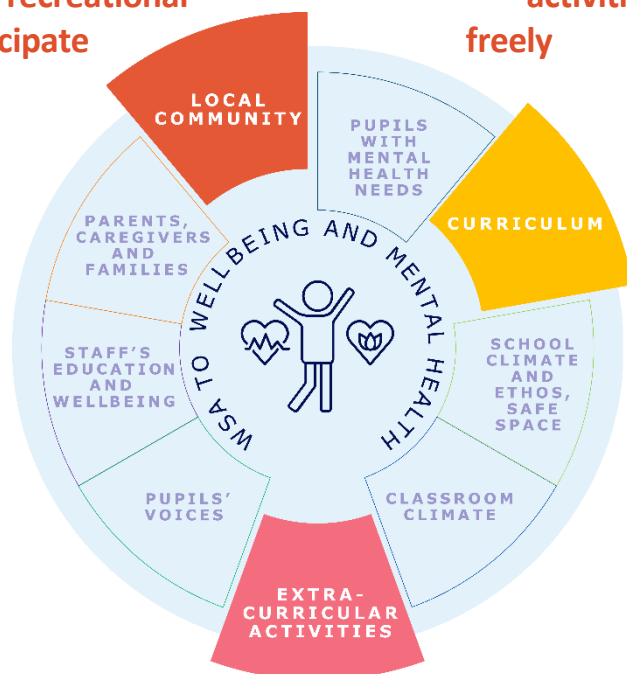
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## 8. Uphold fundamental rights by safeguarding core enablers of wellbeing: nutrition, play and rest, physical activity, and arts



**Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that ‘every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate in cultural life and the arts’.**

The intersection of arts, sports, wellbeing, and education creates a **harmonious environment that nurtures both intellectual and emotional growth**. Physical activity and mental health are inextricably linked, whilst proper nutrition and adequate sleep are essential not only for a healthy body but also for a healthy mind. Furthermore, spending time outdoors (in nature) boosts nature-connectedness, enhances students' physical and mental wellbeing, supports behavioural and cognitive development, and fosters a stronger sense of belonging.



### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Promote daily reading for pleasure and reading clubs, and make sure that each school has a library.
- Support engaging in artistic expression through visual arts, music, drama, and other creative outlets from an early age.
- Incorporate physical activities and sports into school activities and ensure they are available through extracurricular activities, with the goal of achieving at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day.
- Empower and train all teachers to incorporate more movement in their lesson plans and aim to use any chance for physical activity at school.
- Provide nature-based activities, where possible provide nature spaces within school grounds such as school gardening or facilitate the use of nearby nature areas and parks.
- Give students the choice among several sports, in line with their physical capabilities and the mental skills they aim to strengthen.
- Educate on designing a healthy diet, the social-ecological impacts of food choices and the importance of sleep.
- Promote a balanced workload and approach to homework, ensuring that pupils have sufficient time for academic tasks, extracurricular activities, and play/rest, in accordance with their age.
- Make sure teacher wellbeing is monitored and improved, through a balanced workload, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and a pleasant working environment.
- Collaborate with local authorities, parent-teacher associations, and community organisations to develop and implement these initiatives effectively.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Key enablers of well-being are part of the school's official documents.
- ▶ Allocation of hours in the school schedule dedicated to key enablers of well-being.
- ▶ Infrastructure for a healthy environment (nutrition in canteen, place for sports, etc.) is provided.



## TIPS

The WHO [Pocketbook of primary health care](#) for Children and Adolescents: counselling includes various physical activities for at least 60 minutes a day, a limited amount spent sedentary, particularly less than 2 hours of recreational screen time, and 9-12 hours of good quality sleep.



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

**Estonia**, the [Schools in motion programme](#) aims to revolutionise school culture by weaving physical activity into the fabric of the school day. Its holistic approach extends beyond traditional physical education classes, encompassing active transportation to and from school, integrating movement into lessons, and transforming school spaces into hubs of physical engagement.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **Latvia's** "[School bag](#)" programme, an interdisciplinary cultural education programme.
- [Foodshift pathways](#), an Erasmus+ project in **Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden**.
- [NOW!](#) From anxiety to young people's environmental political agency, **Finland**.

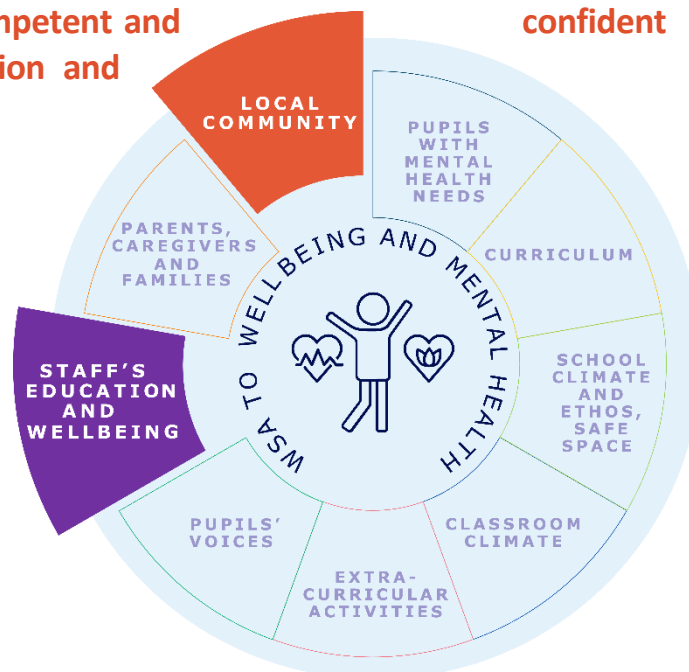


## 9. Provide continuous professional development (CPD) and support to educators on wellbeing



Research shows that teachers' wellbeing is closely related to their students' wellbeing and achievement. Staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, increase educational outcomes and promote engagement. For staff to be effective in promoting wellbeing at their school, they need to feel competent and confident in doing so, and this requires regular education and training in a lifelong learning perspective.

Continuous professional development (CPD) refers to the education and support teachers and other members of the school staff receive in their school practice. In this respect, continuous professional development refers both to the supportive and collegial school environment teachers work in, as well as the organised education and training sessions in specific themes and topics they engage regularly during the school year. Continuous professional development should therefore be approached as an investment rather than a cost.



### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Develop a **whole-school approach strategy** for the wellbeing of the school staff and their continuous professional development (CPD), with training modules adapted to the needs of the school and articulated with relevant (internal and external) actors.
- Annually allocate a sufficient **percentage of the school budget for teacher training**.
- Build CPD strategies or plans **on evidence-based research, clear needs analysis, with data collected through surveys, focus groups, and with teachers' and school staff's active participation**. Draw on a variety of learning and development resources including courses and workshops, peer exchange, conferences, personal readings, etc. Include coaching, mentoring and support from more experienced colleagues, as well as opportunities for collaboration.
- Promote **team teaching, critical friends and peer feedback**, which are key aspects of collaborative continuing professional development.
- **Consistently collect data and measure the level of teacher wellbeing in schools** and, based on the results, adjust, and develop measures to increase teacher wellbeing.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Teacher well-being is central in the school's mission and action plans.
- ▶ Certain number of days for CPD are allocated every year.
- ▶ School offers incentives for staff participation in CPD.



## TIPS

Some of the most effective ways to implement CPD that also enhance collaborative cultures in schools are:

- ★ Building professional communities and teacher networks
- ★ Peer-to-peer learning and peer observation
- ★ In-service (internal) training
- ★ Mentoring and coaching among staff and other professionals
- ★ Setting aside time and space for collective reflection
- ★ Online or face-to-face (external) courses
- ★ Co-operative action research to test innovative teaching practices
- ★ Teaching practices database to share knowledge on effective practices
- ★ Regular teacher appraisals

Source: European School Education Platform

## INSPIRING PRACTICES

**Austria**, the "[Healthy Workplaces for Teachers](#)" strategy aims to support teachers and to address their mental health and wellbeing. There are comprehensive projects on "schools as healthy workplaces", provided by BVAEB, the main insurance company for teachers. Schools that are interested in improving teachers' health get support from health promotion experts to combine school development and health promotion. Schools can receive a seal of approval if they are committed to (teacher) health promotion at a high level of quality and for a long time.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- The [Cultivate Awareness and Resilience in Education \(CARE\)](#) programme.
- The Erasmus+ KA3 project [Teaching to Be: supporting teachers](#) professional growth and wellbeing in the field of social and emotional learning.

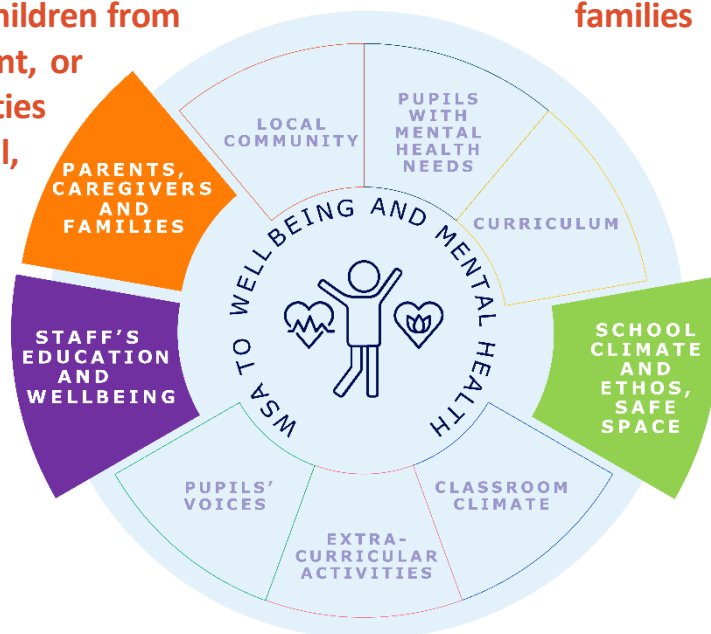


## 10. Prioritise equity, inclusion and diversity as essential conditions for wellbeing, ensuring that no one is marginalised or excluded



Whilst mental health can affect every learner, there is an increased risk of mental health issues, underachievement and early school leaving for children from families with a low socio-economic status, with a migrant, or ethnic minority background, with learning difficulties or disabilities or with talented and high-potential, for children in alternative care, LGBTIQ pupils or pupils who have been exposed to abuse and violence.

Pupils' learning trajectories and their wellbeing might be additionally challenged because of repeated forms of social exclusion or lack of a sense of belonging in their school. An **equitable education system** which removes the barriers hindering these children's meaningful participation in education **helps to reduce these risks**. It is therefore a **precondition for promoting academic success and wellbeing at school**.



## ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Implement an **evidence-based framework** such as the **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**.
- Select **accessible learning materials** that represent the **(changing) diversity of the school population**.
- Support the **reduction of intergroup prejudice** by encouraging positive interaction between pupils with different backgrounds and abilities and facilitate cross-cultural exchange and engagement.
- **Celebrate school cultural diversity and incorporate culturally relevant content** into the curriculum.
- Develop **mechanisms to support students during critical transition periods** in their educational journey.
- Address **language barriers** and enhance **school belonging for children** with different mother tongue(s).
- Develop **positive school-home collaboration** through differentiated parental involvement strategies (e.g. interpreters and cultural mediators, language courses for parents).
- **Provide support to children with special educational needs** by trained educators, alongside the removal of physical obstacles in the school environment.
- Address **possible stereotypes and misconceptions** regarding LGBTIQ individuals or other minority groups in different subject areas.



## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Continuously monitor and evaluate school staff access to training on equity, diversity, inclusion and well-being and the impact of such training.
- ▶ Continuous in-depth analysis of student assessment data to focus on proactive inclusion and equity.
- ▶ Analyse the number of students requiring special attention and their access to necessary resources.
- ▶ Assess the satisfaction level of students, and if applicable, of families, who require personalised attention due to their specific characteristics.



## TIPS

The **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach** is an evidence-based framework for designing and delivering inclusive and accessible learning environments. UDL has three main principles: provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. These principles help teachers to address the diversity and variability of learners, and to optimise their motivation, comprehension, and performance (M.Molbæk, L.Hedegaard-Sørensen, 2023).



## INSPIRING PRACTICES

### BEYOND project

The [BEYOND project](#) (2021-2023), coordinated by the Italian Labour Union in partnership with **Lithuania, Bulgaria and Belgium**, aimed to build equality from early years through training opportunities for educators, new competences to deconstruct gender biases in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, and a renewed alliance with parents and families.

### ICAM resource pack

The [ICAM resource pack](#) provides support in five essential areas: understanding the experiences of refugee children and their possible effects; effective whole school support for the induction of displaced children; restoring social and emotional wellbeing; ensuring safety and responsible behaviour in school and when using the internet; and forming a partnership with parents/carers for ongoing social and emotional wellbeing at home.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

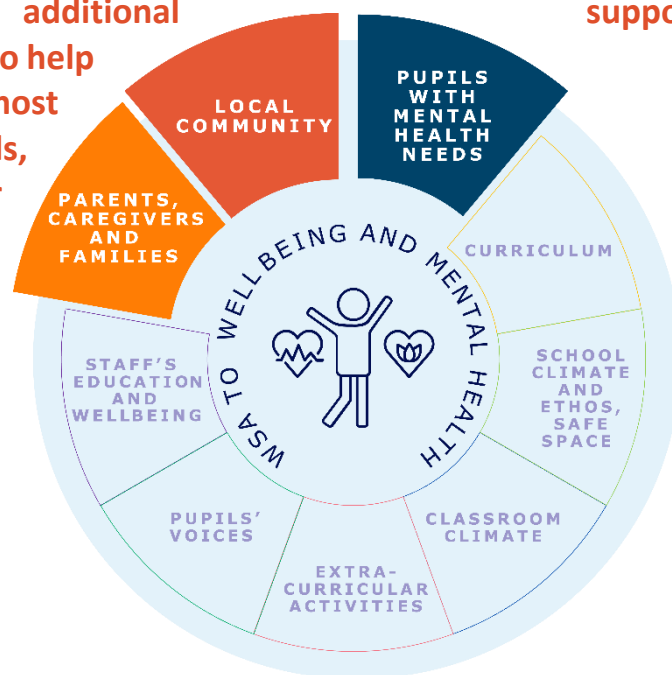
- [EDINA – Education of International Newly Arrived migrant pupils.](#)
- [EU CONVINCe – EU Common Values Inclusive Education](#)
- [Family Literacy Works!](#)
- [Refugees Well School, Psychosocial Support for Migrants](#)



## 11. Guarantee access to support services for learners with mental health needs



Provided adequate training and support is in place, schools and teachers can play a key role in early warning, early identification of mental health conditions. In cooperation with mental health professionals, schools can provide additional support either in small groups or in individual settings, to help learners in need. These interventions are most effective when school staff, other professionals, parents/caregivers and learners, work together as a team.



Bearing in mind the close and regular connection between teachers and their learners, the role of teachers, through pedagogical observation, is to recognise when distress occurs or when mental health problems are severe enough to require additional help from family members and mental health specialists (such as psychological services, social work services, school nurses and counsellors). Together, they can focus on learners' individual needs, both in school and home environments.

### ACTION POINTS FOR SCHOOLS

- Introduce activities destigmatising mental health disorders, such as awareness raising campaigns.
- Put in place targeted and individualised interventions for those in need, in close collaboration with qualified mental health professionals, such as psychological services, social work services, school nurses and counsellors.
- Involve learners to obtain their perception of needs related to mental health and services and provide opportunities for their involvement in the planning process.
- Consider parents as active partners and consult them first if a child is in need of support.
- Offer adequate training opportunities and support for teachers working with learners with mental health needs in their classroom.
- Exchange parameters of privacy and confidentiality between the family and the school (multi)pedagogical team in charge of the learner. The learner's interest must always be respected.
- Set up student participation spaces, such as clubs, extracurricular activities, and peer support groups, as they can serve as valuable opportunities to identify potential mental health issues in school.

## INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ All school staff participate in training on mental health first aid.
- ▶ Student-led activities on mental health are facilitated by school leaders and educators.
- ▶ (Mental) health services delivered by professionals are available directly in/through school.
- ▶ Regular and ethical collaboration with parents of learners in need of support.



## TIPS

### HOW TO OVERCOME RESISTANCE?

**Stigma** is a very prominent obstacle in discussing mental health and reaching for help, both among children, young people and adults. To break the stigmatisation many actions can be taken. Ensuring mental health literacy and mental health first aid training of every member of the school community are good first steps. In addition, creating a culture of openly speaking about mental health struggles, can help learners feel accepted and supported. Actively involving children and young people in supporting others in the form of peer support and ambassador programs can help to foster ownership in the student body.

## INSPIRING PRACTICES

### Guidelines for teachers on “Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties”

In **Ireland**, the [Guidelines for teachers on “Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties”](#) recognise that behavioural, emotional and social difficulties occur on a continuum. They can range from developmentally appropriate behaviours or mild and transient difficulties to difficulties which are significant and persistent. The guidelines are designed to assist teachers in intervening whenever is most appropriate. Targeted and individualised support is addressed, for example, via “**School Support Plus**”, a more detailed assessment of needs by a psychologist, building on the work already done in school. This will take place through a joint problem-solving process with parents and staff and may also involve contact with other professionals.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- **Portugal’s** “Psychology and Guidance Service” (SPO) and Networking with community mental health teams for children and adolescents (ECSM-IA)
- **Mental Health First Aid International®** is a non-profit organisation that offers courses empowering anyone to recognise mental health distress and help affected people find professional support.



## GLOSSARY AND KEY CONCEPTS

● **Bullying** traditionally consists of three key elements: a power imbalance, intention, and repetition. It is an aggressive act designed to harm someone physically, mentally, or emotionally and encompasses behaviours across digital, physical, verbal, and relational realms. These actions, which can be carried out by an individual or a group, aim to offend, intimidate, humiliate, or harm an individual or group repeatedly, within a context where the victim cannot easily defend themselves. It often seeks to isolate the victim, leaving lasting psychological or physical effects. Typically, bullying involves not just the victim and the perpetrator, but also bystanders.

● **Children with migrant background** can be either first-generation migrants who were born in another country from where they currently reside in, or second-generation, whose parent(s) were born in another country than the one they currently reside in.

● **Children from ethnic minorities:** a key question that concerns the attempt to define the term relates to the choice between self-definition and the external definition / definition by others. We (the expert group) tentatively support the former, although we recognise that the latter might be more appropriate to how these children are approached in school contexts. With regards to **ethnicity**, we should recognise that these groups share a common and distinctive culture, religion, and/or language. Ethnicity is broadly defined, based on a shared understanding of history and territorial origins (regional and national) of an ethnic group or community, as well as on particular cultural characteristics such as language and/or religion. The largest ethnic minority in Europe are the Roma. Romani people originated in India and migrated to Europe in waves hundreds of years ago. “Roma” is used to describe a number of sub-groups, such as Sinti, Kalé, Gitano, travellers, etc. who live in several European Member States.

● **Competence-based curriculum** emphasises the complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) rather than mainly focusing on what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally-defined subject content. It is learner-centred and adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and society. Learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life.

● **Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)** gives young people accurate, age-appropriate information about sexuality and their sexual and reproductive health, which is critical for their health and survival. While CSE programmes will be different everywhere, the United Nations’ technical guidance developed together by UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNAIDS and WHO recommends that these programmes should be based on an established curriculum; scientifically accurate; tailored for different ages; and comprehensive, meaning they cover a range of topics on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, throughout childhood and adolescence. Topics covered by CSE, which can also be called life skills, family life education and a variety of other names, include, but are not limited to, families and relationships; respect, consent and bodily autonomy; anatomy, puberty and menstruation; contraception and pregnancy; and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

● **Cyberbullying** involves the use of technology to bully (harass, threaten, embarrass, or target) another person. It usually takes 4 main forms: (1) written/verbal through phone-calls, text messages, emails, chats, blogs, posts on social media; (2) visual, through posting compromising or

humiliating photos or videos; (3) exclusion by intentionally excluding a person from a group; (4) impersonation by using another person's account details to cause harm. Although the three core elements of bullying—power imbalance, intent to harm, and repetition—are recognised in cyberbullying, there is continuing debate over how these are expressed online, mainly because cyberbullying operates 24/7, resulting in potential multiplication of the effect on victims, with a consequent heightened risk to their mental health.

- **Disability:** persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

- **Equity in education** recognises that students have different needs and starting points, sometimes relating to (socio-) psychological, historical, and structural barriers. Equitable systems ensure that the outcomes of education and training are independent of these barriers, which lead to educational disadvantage and that treatment reflects individuals' specific learning needs.

- **Formative assessment** aims to collect detailed information that can be used to improve teaching and learning while it is happening. What makes an assessment 'formative' is not the design of a test, technique or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used — i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications.

- **Gender** refers to socially constructed characteristics of women and men as well as girls and boys. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other.

- **Gender-based violence** is defined as harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender.

- **Inclusion** in school is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of all learners. It is about changing the system to fit the student, not changing the student to fit the system. While an inclusive institution may have inclusion as a general objective, in **proactively inclusive institutions** concrete, solid and continuous measures are taken to fight discrimination, racism and exclusion of migrant, minority, ethnic and other vulnerable groups.

- **Ipsative assessment** is an example of formative assessment that measures learners' progress against their own prior performance, and not in comparison to the rest of the cohort or performance standards. Ipsative assessment is preferred for measuring learners' social and emotional development and cross-cutting competences such as creativity.

- **Poor mental health** refers to mental health disorders as they are classified in the international diagnostic manuals ICD-11 and DSM-V. Two of the most common disorders among children and young people are depression and anxiety.

- **Sex** refers to biologically determined characteristics of women and men as well as of girls and boys.

- **Sexual orientation** refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

- **Social and emotional learning (SEL)** refers to the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain positive relationships, build resilience, and make responsible decisions. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools.
- **Special needs education:** Education designed to facilitate learning by individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an education programme. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities.
- **Teacher wellbeing** is broadly understood as teachers' responses to the cognitive, emotional, health and social conditions pertaining to their work and their profession. Teacher wellbeing influences their health, likelihood to leave the profession, self-efficacy, teaching practices as well as experiences and achievements of students. In turn, teacher wellbeing may be influenced to different aspects of the teaching profession: workload; work environments; working conditions; sense of safety; peer and institutional support; relational aspects with learners, parents, colleagues and other stakeholders; and appreciation from the wider community.
- **Violence against children** includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect by parents and other adults, as well as peer violence and intimate partner violence, targeting any person younger than 18 years old. This includes, among other forms, (cyber-)bullying, peer violence and teacher-related violence, occurring in both face-to-face and online settings.
- **Violence against women and girls** is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women and girls. This kind of violence is always a violation of human rights as well as a form of discrimination against women.
- **Wellbeing** is a dynamic state in which the individual realises his or her own potential, cultivates innate capacities, nourishes own abilities, and copes with the normal stresses of life. It enables productive and fruitfully work and contribution to his or her community. More specifically in relation to children and adolescents, this implies having a positive sense of identity and sense making, ability to manage thoughts, emotions, build healthy social relationships, and harmonised interactions with the environment around, all fundamental aspects to learn effectively. **(Positive) Mental health** is a term often used interchangeably with "wellbeing".
- **Whole-school approach** is an ecological way of viewing a school which acknowledges that schools, families and communities are interconnected entities of a system that impacts the learner. In a whole-school approach, these dependencies are taken into account and intervention is executed on multiple system levels at the same time. The whole-school approach also implies a cross-sectoral approach and stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders and the community at large, to deal with complex issues that schools do not (and cannot) have the relevant expertise for.



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