Wellbeing and mental health at school

Guidelines for education policymakers

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edited by PPMI

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The **"Guidelines for policymakers 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"[2] and align with the logic and approach of the Council Recommendation on **Pathways to School Success**[3]**, the EU Strategy on the rights of the child**[4] and other frameworks proposed by international organisations, such as the **World Health Organization (WHO) "Health-promoting schools and systems"**[5] implemented in association with United Nations Children's Fund, and UNESCO, the **OECD's** "Education for inclusive societies" project[6] and **UNESCO's** "Happy Schools Framework"[7]. The guidelines are also aligned with the principles within **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**[8]**, the Council of Europe's approach to wellbeing**[9] and **the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**[10]**.**

Rather than being prescriptive, these guidelines aim to offer concrete, hands-on guidance for policymakers. 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 education policymakers** and offers **a concise overview** of the 11 recommendations**.** Its sister version **addresses school leaders, teachers and educators**. Both documents are complemented by a more in-depth version, addressing **education policymakers**, **school leaders, teachers and educators**, which contains more detailed recommendations, with supporting research evidence, good practice examples and practical tips on how to approach each recommendation.

Implementaton 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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[2] See Cefai,C. Simoes, C., & Caravita, S. (2022)   A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU. NESET report, Publications Office of the European Union
[3] https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/school-education/pathways-to-school-success
[4] EUR-Lex - 52021DC0142 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[5] For more information see: https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-promoting-schools#tab=tab_1
[6] https://www.oecd.org/education/strength-through-diversity/
[7] https://www.unesco.org/en/education-policies/happy-schools
[8] 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"
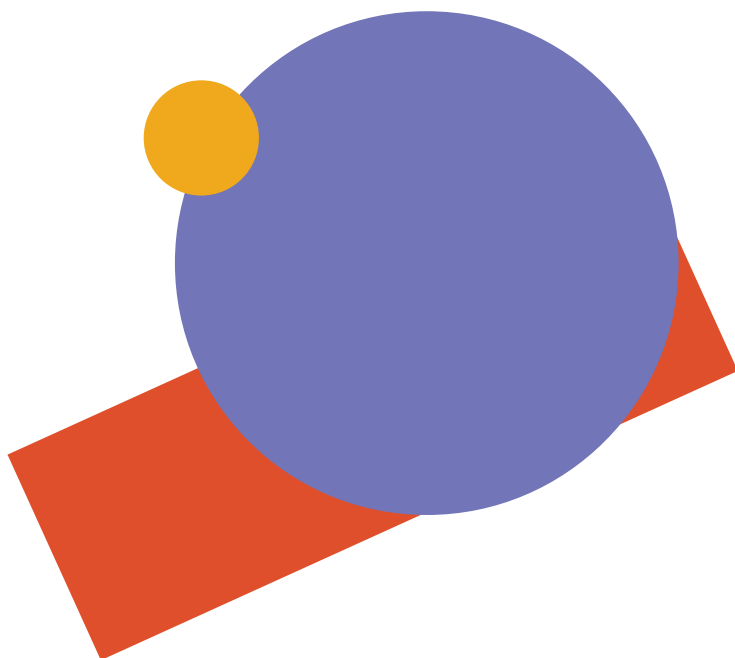[9] https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/improving-well-being-at-school
[10] It contributes to actions supporting in particular SDG 3: "Good health and wellbeing" and SDG 4: 'Quality education'; https://sdgs.un.org/

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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 sourroundings, 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
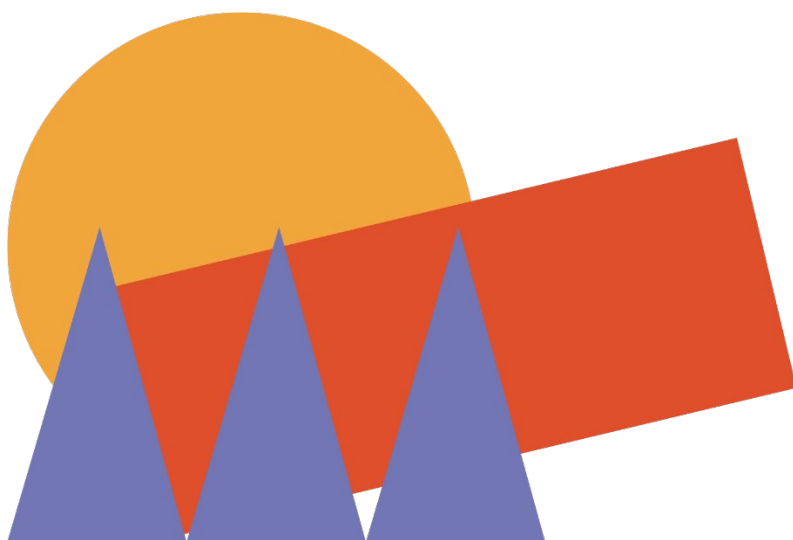
INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING IN SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

Traditionally, education focussed predominantly on academic performance. However, we are 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.
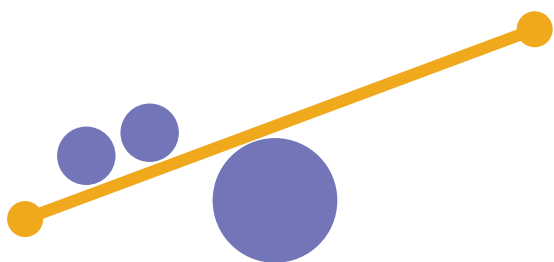
Wellbeing does not simply mean the absence of illness, but rather encompasses the "realisation of a person's unique potential through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual relation to the self, others and the environment"[11]. Recent figures show that the wellbeing of children and adolescents has 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**

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

mental health[12], 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[13].

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[14] 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
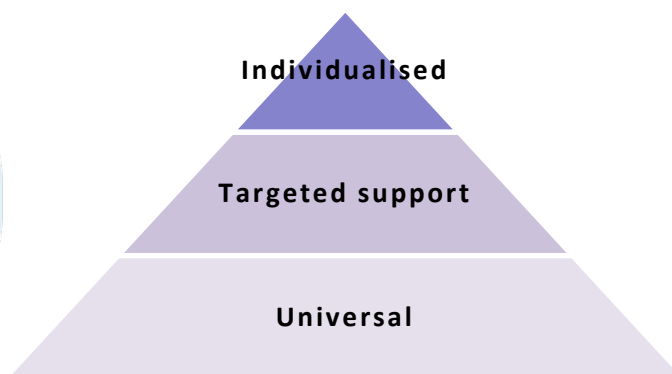
Figure 2 : Levels of support in the whole-school approach

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[12] Cefai et al (2021) "A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU"
[13] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_2243
[14] 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.
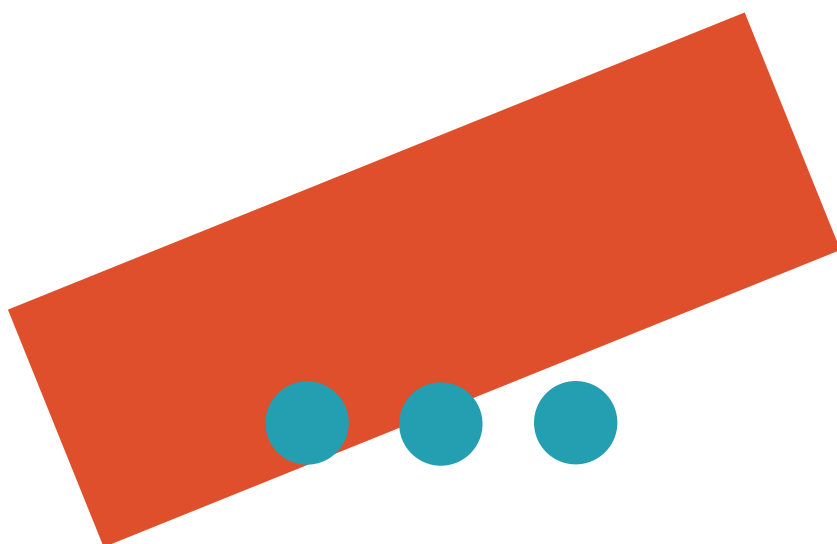
1. Establish a positive school climate rooted in the active participation and empowerment of learners

School climate is a multi-dimensional construct representing perceptions of the educational environment, connected to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape 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 higher academic achievement. It improves engagement and 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.
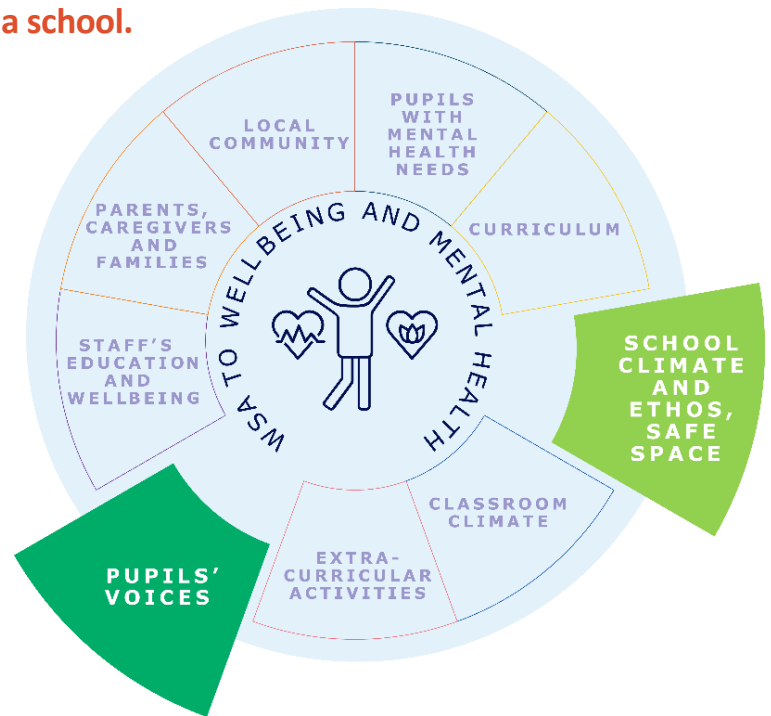
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Embed children's **wellbeing in European and national legislation**, and ensure that legal frameworks, curricula, standards, and other strategic documents **reaffirm that wellbeing is a major goal of education**.
- Ensure that this **goal is reflected in education, health, and welfare budgets,** with **adequate investment** in infrastructure, initial education and continuous professional development for teachers and staff in child wellbeing, and that schools and other stakeholders, including families, **have the capacity** to implement this goal.
- Consider establishing a **specific role (coordinator) in charge of wellbeing** in each educational institution, with dedicated time and related budget to perform this task.

- Design, implement, and monitor education policies through a **fully participatory approach.** Devote specific policy, practices, and funds to put in place stable and integrated mechanisms to consult learners and involve them into the decision-making process.
- Set up an **EU agency for wellbeing in education** to coordinate, monitor, collect, and share evidence-based practices on how whole-system, whole-school approaches to wellbeing and mental health are implemented in formal, non–formal, and informal education.
- Ensure regular **data collection, monitoring, and evaluation** of wellbeing and school climate, including **analyses of challenges** faced by schools to implement a positive school climate.

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?

"The Europe Kids Want" survey for children in the European Union shows that education is a top priority and demand:

⭐ more practical learning such as life skills, financial and digital literacy;

⭐ more freedom to choose their subjects according to their strengths, talents, and interests;

⭐ new teaching methods, including interactive lessons and group work;

⭐ better physical learning environment and safety in school;

⭐ better balance between schoolwork and leisure time.

Source: https://childfriendlygovernance.org/europe-kids-want

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Ireland: Wellbeing policy statement and framework

Ireland has established a Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework, an explicit commitment to wellbeing as a major goal of education. The framework highlights the role of schools and the government in the promotion of wellbeing, while also providing guidance and a diverse set of resources for schools, teachers, and parents, together with an overview of continuing professional development support.

Finland: Pupil and student welfare

Wellbeing is addressed in the Finnish National Core Curricula (NCC) for all levels of education. The latest legislative renewal, the 2022 Pupils and Student Welfare Act, addresses student welfare from a prevention perspective and supports the school community as a whole. It implies consideration for the opinions of students when adopting any measures involving them, bearing in mind the student's age, level of development, and other personal capabilities.

FURTHER RESOURCES

● Observatory of School Climate in **Belgium**
● 2030 Strategy for the Education Policy of **Czechia**
● "Getting It Right For Every Child" in **Scotland**
● Prosperity Act in **Iceland**

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

The inclusion of "Personal, social and learning to learn" in the eight key competences for lifelong learning in 2018 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 (SEL) in general not emphasised as a learning goal.
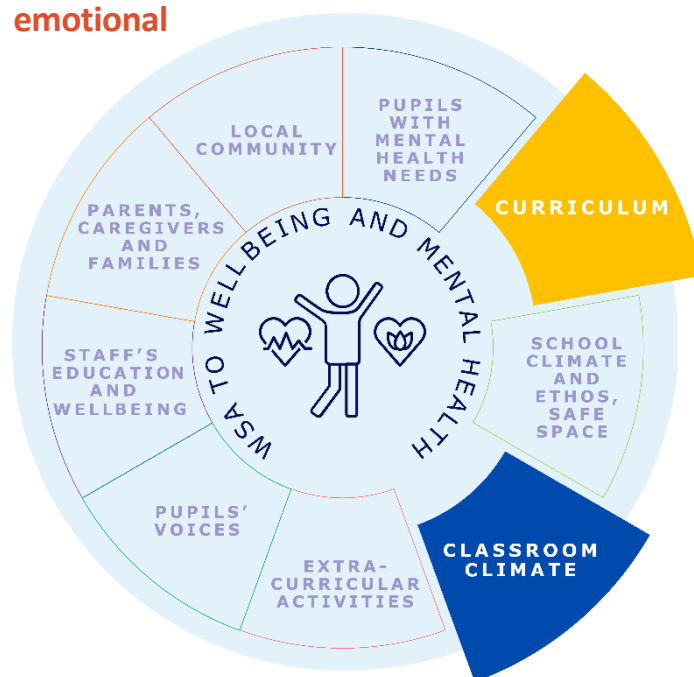
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Develop a **clear understanding of the key components of social and emotional learning** programmes in terms of teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

- Take inspiration from existing evidence-based frameworks, such as **LifeComp** (see below).

- Collect data on the current state of social and emotional education promotion in educational institutions, including the **views and needs of relevant stakeholders.**

- **Develop or update existing policies to mainstream social and emotional learning** across compulsory subjects from early childhood education and care to secondary education.

- Re-evaluate and/or readjust existing policies to **allocate the resources, space and time** needed within and beyond the curricula.

- Start by piloting **evidence-informed social and emotional interventions** in some selected voluntary schools to mitigate potential risks and resistance from stakeholders.

- Invest in **building the understanding and knowledge of teachers and educators** about the importance of social and emotional learning and their capacity to actively engage with it in terms of teaching and assessment.

- Follow up on the **implementation of new policies and monitor their progress**. Readjust resources and deal with elements that prevent social and emotional learning from becoming a core learning goal.

- Ensure **balance by promoting social and emotional education** alongside programmes aiming to develop physical wellbeing (more information in Rec. 8)

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ School inspection and evaluation procedures consider wellbeing and social and emotional learning.
- ▶ Social and emotional learning competences are mainstreamed across all subjects.
- ▶ Core strategic documents in education mention wellbeing and social and emotional learning.

TIPS

- ★ Organise training courses not only on how to implement social and emotional practices but also on why they are important, focusing on their positive impact on wellbeing of both learners and teachers.
- ★ Complement training with mentoring and continuous support to teachers in order to overcome their resistance and ensure sustainability of SEL.
- ★ To overcome potential resistance, launch awareness campaigns targeting parents on the importance of wellbeing and social and emotional education and their relationship with academic achievement.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

LifeComp is a conceptual, non-prescriptive framework establishing a shared understanding of the "**personal, social and learning to learn**" key competence. It can be used as a basis for the development of curricula and learning activities.

Denmark's wellbeing policy covers all levels of education. The Danish concept identifies three main aspects: (1) psychological and physical wellbeing; (2) students' self-assessment of their competencies, in particular self-efficacy, resilience and social competencies, as well as their ability to participate in and contribute substantially to school activities; and finally (3) whether the students' environment (including parents, peers and teachers) supports and inspires them.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● **PROMEHS**, Erasmus+ project that developed the first comprehensive mental health curriculum in **Italy, Latvia, Malta, Croatia, Romania, Greece** and **Portugal**
- ● Emotional Wellbeing Programme in education in **Spain**
- ● Educational kit for empathy at school in **France**
- ● "ABC of empathy" in **Poland**
- ● Social and emotional education in **Cyprus**
- ● **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

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 and other areas, in particular health and social sectors.**
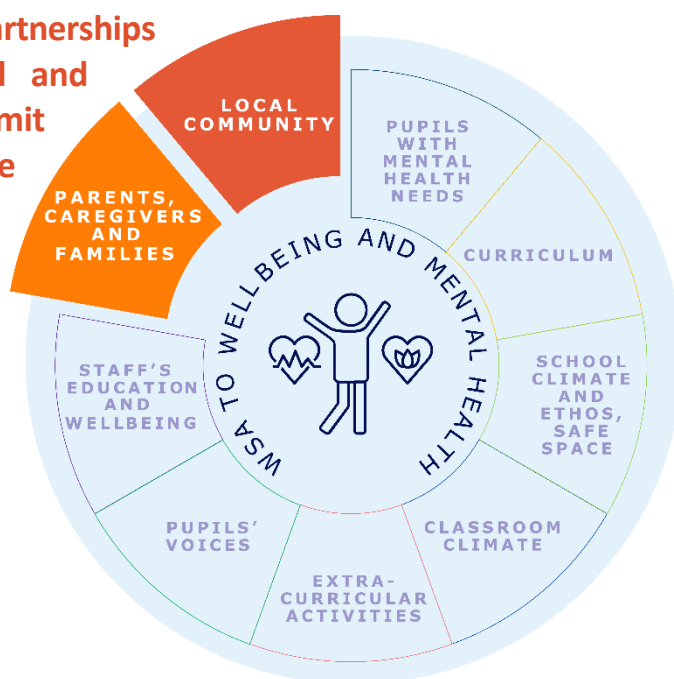
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Enhance **collaboration between all relevant structures**, in particular ministries of education and health, but also ministries in charge of welfare, integration, migration, culture, etc, to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to school wellbeing.

- Develop **comprehensive policies explicitly aiming to build collaborative partnerships** to support schools in addressing wellbeing, in particular healthcare providers, community organisations and local authorities.

- Develop or amend legislation mandating the **provision of mental and physical health services** through schools. Establish clear regulations defining the roles of different stakeholders in supporting the wellbeing of learners and teachers.

- Through legislation, **create the conditions for data sharing** among different actors involved in education.

- Clearly define **professional profiles** needed to work with schools, such as health promoting school coordinator, psychological counselling and guidance, psychosocial teams, and school nurses.

- Engage parents, pupils, the local community, relevant NGOs, teacher associations, and education trade unions in the wellbeing policymaking process.

- Support schools with **guidance** on how to implement meaningful participation of the entire school community.

- Develop specific competencies for teachers and school staff on how to **engage with other stakeholders and partners.**

- 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

- ▶ School inspection and evaluations contain indicators on the quality of community stakeholder collaborations.
- ▶ Stakeholder participation in school decision-making processes is tracked.
- ▶ The impact of collaborative projects is systematically measured.

TIPS

⭐ At local level, municipalities have a key role to play in building more systematic collaborations by leveraging resources, setting up spaces and structures, monitoring implementation and advocating for wellbeing policies. Examples: Eurocities

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Austria, Schools as spaces for wellbeing ("Wohlfühlzone Schule") is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education and "Fonds Gesundes Österreich" to strengthen wellbeing, resilience, and mental health. Within this framework, educators are trained in the field of mental health promotion and in supporting schools. Another joint initiative between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health in **Austria** is the "Service Point for Health Promotion in Schools", GIVE that provides materials, tools and workshops for schools related to health promotion.

Poland: "Mental Health Week" (21-28 February 2024) concluded with the interministerial conference "Children's mental health – common work – best solutions" and launched the project "Supporting the accessibility of education for children and youth", co-financed by the ESF+.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ⬤ World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO **"Health Promoting Schools"** framework.
- ⬤ **Schools4Health** project aiming to strengthen whole-of-school approach to health and wellbeing.
- ⬤ **Sweden,** School Act in 2023 aiming to strengthen student health.
- ⬤ Home liaison office in **Ireland.**
- ⬤ Building capacities to integrate non-formal and formal learning, EU funded TSI project in **Estonia.**
- ⬤ **Slovakia**, systemic support of mental health through counselling and prevention.

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.
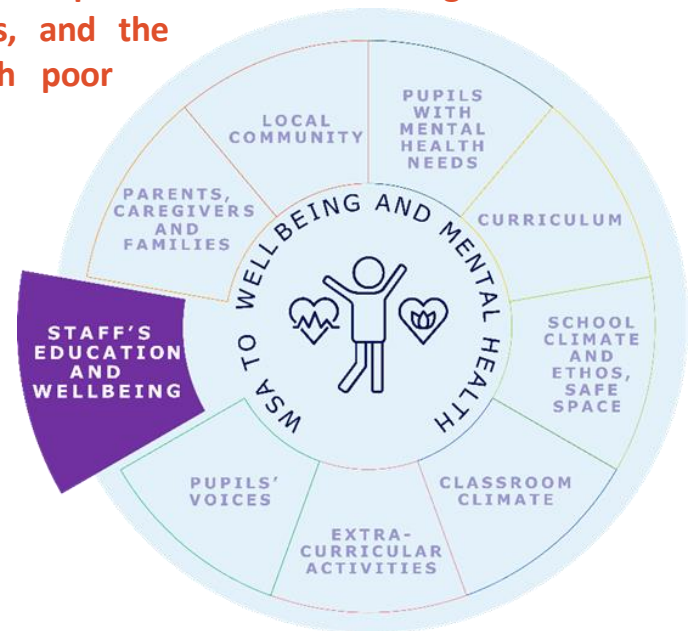
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Strive for a **comprehensive approach to wellbeing in ITE** which includes support, mentoring, training and collaboration.
- Design ITE to **empower future teachers** to take ownership of their wellbeing, for example, through self-help intervention strategies, fostering proactive behaviours, and social and emotional learning.
- **In cooperation with relevant actors, develop or adapt the ITE framework of competences necessary in the delivery of wellbeing and mental health interventions.**
- Develop **mentoring policies**, introduce mentorship programmes for student teachers during their practical field experiences, and ensure the functionality of the mentor-student teacher relationship and role model programmes.
- In terms of pedagogy, ITE programmes should **equip future teachers with the tools needed to implement the formal curriculum through a child-friendly, collaborative, inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy** that includes relationship building.
- Build a **collaborative approach between higher education institutions providing ITE and schools** to ensure that the education provided is relevant to the needs of the schools and learners. Policymakers should ensure that ITE institutions are formally required to consult schools and educational authorities in the development of their initial teacher education and training programmes.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

▶ Wellbeing of teachers and pupils is fully part of ITE.

▶ Training on collaborative and whole-school approaches is provided during ITE.

▶ In partnership with schools, ITE providers develop mentoring schemes for student teachers.

▶ Funding is provided for wellbeing and self-awareness training for future teachers.

▶ Wellbeing indicators are part of the ITE framework of competences.

▶ Comprehensive training of trainers regarding wellbeing is provided

TIPS

★ Train the teacher trainers on the importance of wellbeing in education, to overcome the challenge that ITE focuses primarily on academic learning, while wellbeing is seldom covered.

★ More freedom for teachers to choose their subjects according to their strengths, talents, and interests.

★ Education authorities and schools must collaborate in ITE to align it with school and student needs, bridging the gap bewteen practice, curriculum and class.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

An effective induction system for novice teachers in **Belgium**: the European Commission provided technical support to the Flemish Department of Education and Training (Belgium) to set up an effective induction system for novice teachers to tackle early drop-out from the profession and to ensure better careers for teachers in the longer term.

The University of Erfut, **Germany**, implements a mandatory course on positivity in teacher education and field experiences. The online course aims to enhance the overall wellbeing, both general and job-related, of student teachers throughout a 15-week pedagogical field experience.

FURTHER RESOURCES

● A theoretical research-based wellbeing framework for ITE, **Australia**

● Teacher training in emotional education, **Spain**

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

Effective school leadership is essential to create a school climate with a 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's and learners' wellbeing. This should not be an add-on but **should be embedded in the everyday interactions between leaders and educators in schools.**

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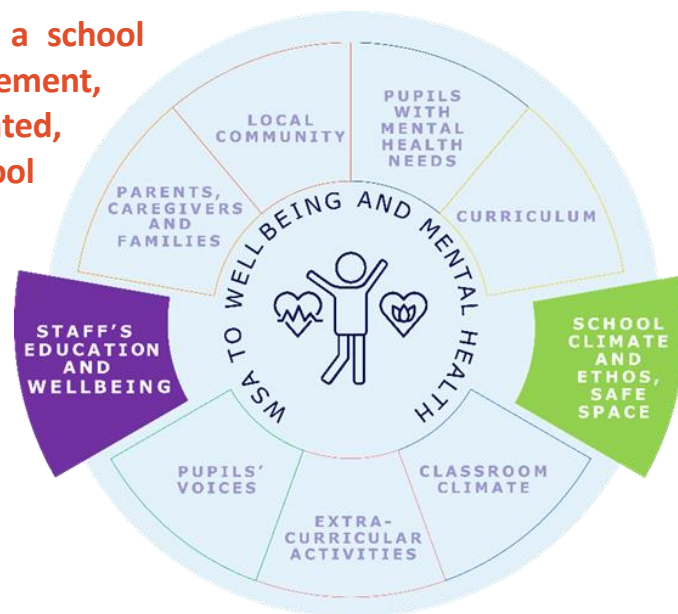
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Put in place **appropriate selection mechanisms, training, qualification and support** for school leaders.
- Make available and encourage participation in comprehensive training programmes for school leaders that cover **various aspects of wellbeing and mental health, equity and proactive inclusion,** and raise awareness of the importance of leadership and collaboration. Training programmes for future school leaders should prepare for distributed leadership within the school.
- As different schools deal with distinct challenges and contexts, **policymakers should promote greater autonomy and accountability for schools and rely on site-based management.** This will enhance strategic leadership action and solutions better connected to the specific contexts of every school.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Ensure school leaders' access to resources needed for wellbeing promotion.
- ▶ Clear selection and training criteria for school leaders are in place.
- ▶ Wellbeing training programmes for school leaders are available.
- ▶ Increased autonomy for schools is actively promoted.

TIPS

Organisational theorists have long reported that paying attention to culture is the most important action that a leader can perform. School principals seeking to improve student performance should focus on improving the school's culture by building positive relationships between themselves, their teachers, students, and parents.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Educational Leadership Network Europe (ELNE) is a new EU-funded network that brings together over 60 partner organisations from 26 countries, including European-level networks, universities, along with national, regional and local institutions. This community is dedicated to enhancing collaborative school leadership in the education and training sector.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● Centre for School Leadership in **Ireland**
- ● Happy Schools programme in **Portugal**, 'Tools to Build a Happy School: Teachers, Leadership and Educational Organisations'
- ● **Swedish** model of principal preparation.

6. Ensure the creation of safe schools to prevent and address various forms of violence at school, including gender-based violence and (cyber-)bullying
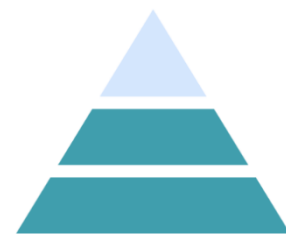
Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'Children have the right to be protected from being mistreated, physically and mentally'. Despite this, many children in Europe experience violence, including at school, with (cyber-)bullying being particularly prevalent.

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 POLICYMAKERS

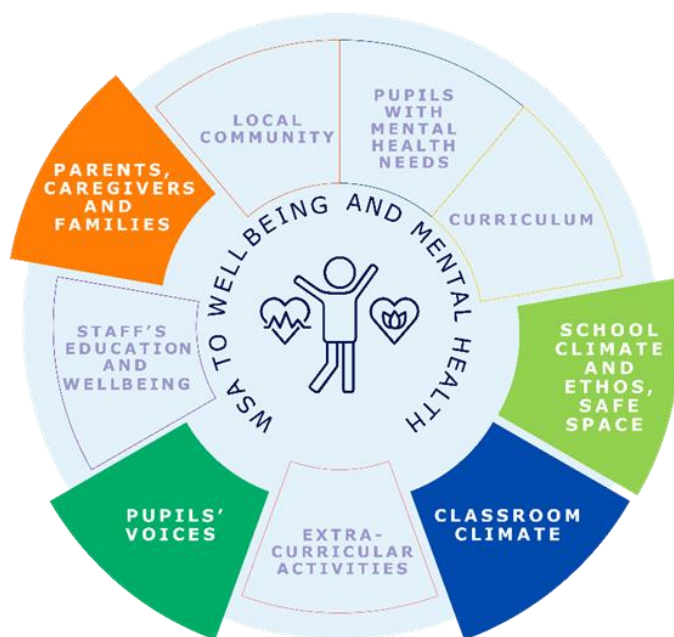- Develop strategic approaches at national level to promote a **zero-violence approach** in all educational settings, starting from early childhood education and care and in cooperation with school communities. These need to be integrated with policies to promote school success.

- Work with authorities at the national level to develop and **strengthen integrated child protection systems** aiming to protect children from violence and put in place reporting mechanisms.

- Create legal and economic frameworks that ensure **equitable education systems**, as a key condition to eradicating violence (see recommendation 10).

- **Address violence at school, discrimination and (cyber-)bullying**, in all ITE and continued professional development programmes.

- Define **clear targets and indicators on issues of violence and (cyber-)bullying** for evaluation, monitoring, and quality assurance.

- Include **social and emotional skills, participation, and sexuality education** into curricula as a way of addressing (cyber-)bullying and any form of violence or discrimination.

- **Provide guidance to schools on how to establish mechanisms to report and address violence and bullying affecting pupils and educators.**

- **Build schools' capacity to provide easy access to social, emotional, and psychological support** (see recommendation 6).

- Promote **scientifically evidenced parenting programmes** encouraging a parenting style that nourishes child development, supports wellbeing, and prevents violence.

▶ Have a national strategy for bullying and violence prevention.

▶ Bullying and violence prevention integrated into the curricula.

▶ Delivery of comprehensive sexuality education programmes.

▶ Bullying and violence prevention embedded in quality assurance mechanisms.

TIPS

Analyses of anti-bullying interventions show that bullying perpetration can be reduced as a result of a whole-school approach to bullying, anti-bullying policies, classroom rules and management, cooperative group work and curriculum material, information for parents, informal peer involvement, working with victims, and mental health interventions.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Action Plan on Bullying
Ireland: Cineáltas (Irish for 'kindness') Action Plan on Bullying 2023-2027 contains a series of measures aiming to enhance the development of inclusive schools where children, young people, and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected, and supported.

Better Internet for Kids Strategy
The network of Safer Internet Centres provides at national level, awareness-rising activities and training to students and adults. They run helplines to report cyberbullying, sextortion, grooming, and other online threats received via digital platforms. On the legislative side, the Digital Services Act (DSA) obliges online platforms to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for children and young people, eg: by providing easy ways of reporting cyberbullying, illegal, or harmful content.

FURTHER RESOURCES

● **Safer Internet Forum**, the youth-led key annual international conference on child online safety in Europe.
● DSA explained: measures to protect children and minors online (in all EU languages).
● UNESCO's guidelines on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).
● **Belgium**, Conflixers – Flemish pupil umbrella organisation.

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 effect its widespread use in education has on the wellbeing of the school community.**
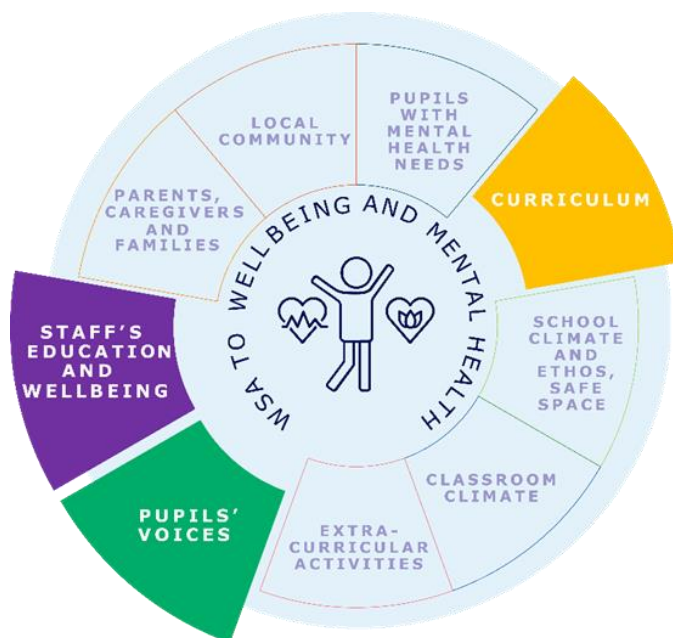
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Adopt and include a **definition of digital wellbeing** in the country's digital education strategy, in line with EU policy suggestions.
- Integrate accessible digital literacy education and **provide teachers with the necessary knowledge**, concrete solutions, tips and ideas.
- Place emphasis on digital skills as a **means of learning and promote a good balance** between digital tools and traditional learning.
- Prepare for and **implement European legislation on artificial intelligence in education.**
- Develop clear **recommendations or guidelines on the use of digital devices and tools in schools.**
- Promote the use of available tools and information centres such as **the Safer Internet Centres** (SICs).
- Provide guidance to teachers and parents about **appropriate screen time** at different age levels.

- Ensure that **children and teachers are closely involved and consulted** when adopting digital technologies in schools.
- Ensure that teachers **are sufficiently trained in digital literacy** to understand how to use digital technology for learning and wellbeing.
- Provide **accessible digital educational tools** to children with low socioeconomic status and children with disabilities.
- Promote **digital public goods** in education, developed through **open-source methods**.
- Encourage **research on the impact and effectiveness of digital equipment** policies in classrooms.
- Encourage cooperation and dialogue with the **EdTech sector** in view of optimising wellbeing features of digital equipment.

- ▶ Guidelines/training in online safety and (cyber-)bullying are available.
- ▶ Resources for pupils unable to access digital technology at home are provided.
- ▶ Resources for libraries offering open access to digital technology are provided.
- ▶ Funding for research on mental health impacts of digitalisation on children and educators is provided.
- ▶ Regulatory measures on the use of digital technology in education are in place.

TIPS

The Digital Service Act (DSA) aims to create a fairer and safer online world. Some of these rules address issues such as cyberbullying, illegal content, the simplification of terms and conditions, and many others. This public-friendly booklet, available in all EU languages, explains in simple terms what measures the DSA has put in place to protect children and young people.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Safer Internet Centres (SICs) are an **EU co-funded network** providing at national level awareness raising activities and training in schools and beyond. The Safer Internet Centres also run free helplines and hotlines, as well as "train the trainers" activities to help develop digital citizenship skills at all ages. The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) portal provides online information resources for young people, parents and educators in all languages.

Digital academy for parents
In Portugal, Digital Academy for Parents is a comprehensive programme designed to give parents and guardians of primary school children the essential digital skills and knowledge necessary to effectively support their children's digital learning journeys. The programme addresses various aspects of digital literacy, fostering a safe, responsible, and enriching online experience for both parents and their children.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● Guidelines on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy by **European Commission**
- ● Guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data by **European Commission**
- ● **France**, Pix Certification digital literacy initiative.

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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 freely 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 POLICYMAKERS

- **Incorporate play, arts and recreation in the curriculum,** recognising their crucial role in children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and educational attainment.
- Organise **national and international events and activities connected to physical activity, arts and literature,** such as the "European Week of Sport" and the "Day of European Authors".
- Invest in **awareness-raising campaigns** for pupils, parents and teachers on the importance of balanced nutrition for physical and mental health.
- Promote the **provision of pollution free, safe, outdoor, and child friendly spaces** in schools and around schools for play, recreation and contact with nature.
- Promote **school nutrition programmes** by supporting schools to offer nutritious and well-balanced meals.

- Provide **adequate physical education**: ensure that schools have adequate spaces and resources, and offer sufficient time for physical education classes and activities.
- Pay attention to and support schools in ensuring **key enablers of wellbeing for teachers**, such as a balanced workload, safe and motivating working environments, and professional development opportunities.
- In cooperation with health authorities and other relevant actors, **develop policies to support the school's efforts to ensure health-promoting environments.**
- Ensure that children and **young people are involved** in deciding, creating, and evaluating wellbeing programmes, events and activities.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

▶ Wellbeing key enablers are included in key strategic documents.
▶ School nutrition programmes are in place.
▶ Pupils are involved in the design of wellbeing measures.
▶ Children have access to infrastructure supporting rest, leisure, play and arts, such as green outdoor spaces, play areas and art supplies.

TIPS

The World Health Organisation (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.
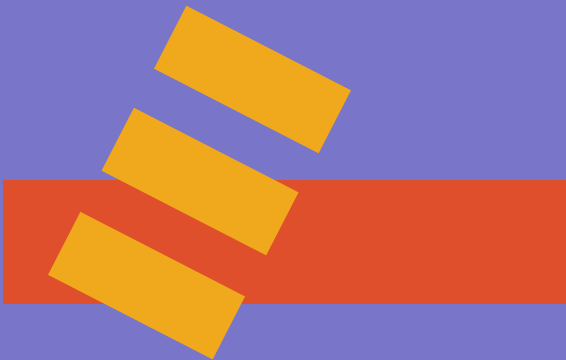
INSPIRING PRACTICES

In a move to promote physical activity and wellbeing among children, **France** is ensuring that every primary school student engages in at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity. Supporting tools include a comprehensive guide for teachers, with practical strategies and tips for incorporating physical activity into their teaching methods. Online resources and activities, along with partnerships with local sports organisations, offer additional support.

Since 1993, MUS-E associations in various countries including **Belgium, Hungary, Spain**, and **Italy** have built up a wealth of experience in implementing the use of creative arts in traditional primary school curriculums, working particularly with children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

FURTHER RESOURCES

● **Finland:** Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education
● **Lithuania:** Physical activity after school provided by the informal education financing system
● **Hungary:** Do60 campaing to promote daily physical activity.


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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 staff engagement. For school staff to be effective in promoting wellbeing at their school, they need to feel competent and confident in doing so. 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.
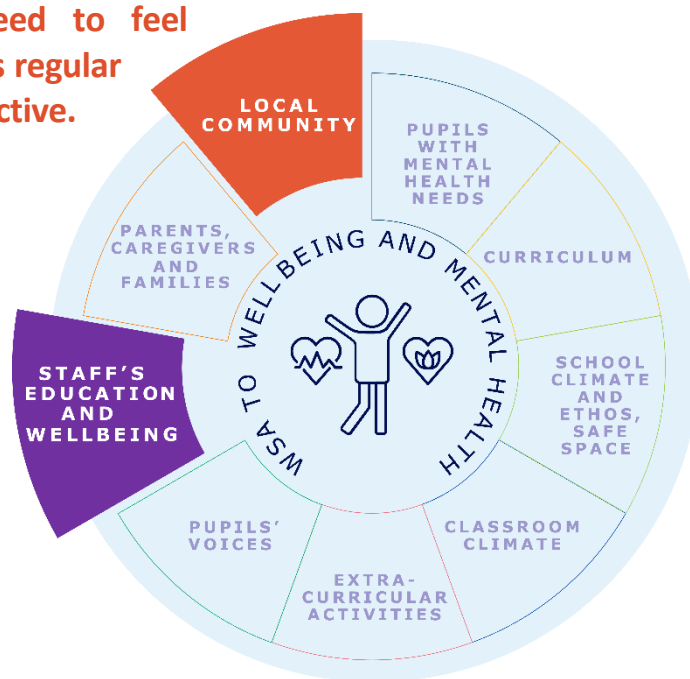
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Provide **high-quality and well-coordinated CPD** opportunities for teachers and other staff on a regular basis.
- Ensure that CPD opportunities **are offered during regular work hours** and not as an extra.
- Address the changes needed in the different levels of governance to **improve** job security, working and financial conditions, sabbaticals, flexible leave, collaboration, responsibility, and autonomy for teachers.
- Empower schools and teachers to **contribute to their own CPD**, as wellbeing training will be sustainable and impactful only if adapted to the school's needs.
- Design legislative frameworks, guidance or standards on CPD for wellbeing and mental health that incorporate the dual perspective of training teachers for their personal wellbeing and providing them with tools to support their learners' wellbeing.
- Enhance **collaborations between CPD providers and schools** to ensure these are reflected in training programmes.
- Ensure systematic investment and dedicated budget and time for CPD to support teachers' wellbeing, resilience, and self-efficacy.
- Tailor CPD strategies to **different settings and levels.** The size of the school, geographical location, and the economic situation all play a role and emphasise the need for bottom-up approaches.
- Support the development **of professional networks, learning communities, communities of practice, and collaboration platforms**, as they provide a collaborative learning environment for teachers to engage with each other.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Wellbeing and mental health are part of accredited continuous professional development (CPD) offers.
- ▶ Funding is available for piloting, modification and scale-up of wellbeing training sessions.
- ▶ Policies include guidelines on wellbeing for CPD providers.
- ▶ School inspections consider the school's engagement in CPD.

TIPS

Schools and teachers need to be empowered to organise their own CPD. Autonomy and leadership is necessary for effective reform and adaptation of new ideas. Wellbeing training will be sustainable if the school has autonomy and is involved in decisions about the frequency of meetings, the grouping of participants, the profile of the training institution or expert, etc. Effective governance must emphasise collaborative dynamics rather than hierarchical relationships between the parts of the system. It should be based on strategic thinking, and trust, as opposed to the usual centralised decision-making.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

Learning environment and pedagogical analysis framework

In **Norway**, the "Learning environment and pedagogical analysis framework" (LP) provides a working method in which teachers collaborate in groups and by themes, to obtain an understanding of the factors that trigger, influence, and maintain students' behaviour at school. Teachers are responsible for identifying what needs to be done to develop a good learning environment. The measures that teachers implement are developed at the respective schools, based on an analysis of the challenges and conditions in each classroom or school, in line with the research results in the area.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (**CARE**) programme
- ● The Erasmus+ KA3 project Teaching to Be, supporting teachers' professional growth and wellbeing (2021-2024)

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

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**.
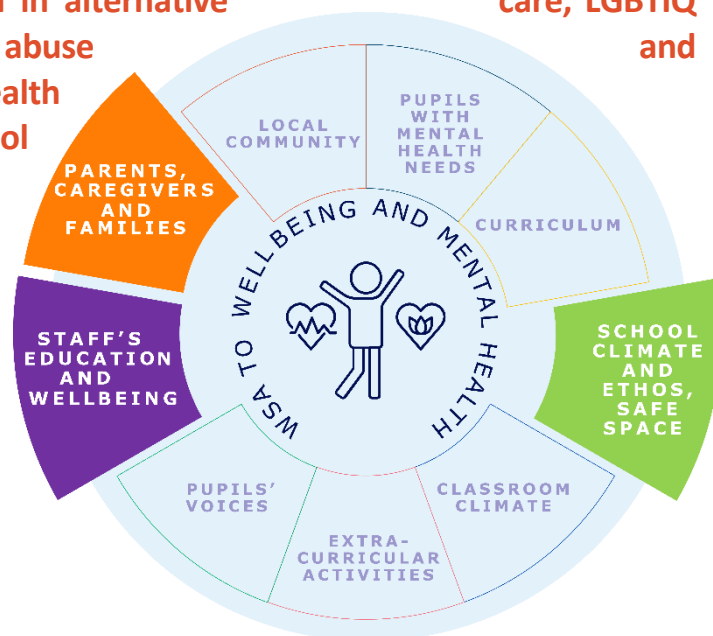
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Develop a legal framework that **guarantees equitable access to (mainstream) education for ALL children** (irrespective of their background and personal characteristics).
- **Make education systems truly adaptable, accessible and inclusive**, supporting schools to adjust their organisation, teaching, and learning to learners' needs and prioritise preventative approaches.
- Recognise **intersectionality and tailor educational approaches** that respond to the complex and varied needs of students.
- Ensure **effective and free access to education** for those in disadvantaged situations, with all education costs covered (materials, meals, transportation, extracurricular activities, etc.), in line with the European Child Guarantee.

- Develop **flexible, accessible and diversified approaches** to curriculum, didactic methods and assessment processes.
- Equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary for **proactively inclusive teaching**, managing diversity and supporting all learners. Promote diversity among teaching staff to reflect the student population.
- Develop a **continuum of support** backed up by flexible allocation of resources.
- Put in place targeted support measures that are **flexible and adaptable**, such as: availability of specialised staff and multidisciplinary teams; flexible financing for schools to react more swiftly to the changing needs within their student population; resource centres for schools specialising in diverse needs and support.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- ▶ School staff is trained on equity, diversity, inclusion.
- ▶ In-depth analysis of student assessment data.
- ▶ Number of students requiring and receiving special attention.

TIPS

★ Current school structures may be focusing on the need to ensure high achievement standards for every child, but this often results in improving the academic achievement of those who are already successful. Possible solutions include revision and redesign of school's objectives, based on the understanding of the long-term economic benefits of early and quality schooling, and clear policy choices that include sufficient specialised support in schools and teacher training.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

European Child Guarantee
The European Child Guarantee aims to secure effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, as well as other services for children in need. Member States are recommended to address financial and non-financial factors hindering the full participation of children in need in educational activities. This includes, among others, measures to reduce early school leaving, adaptation and support for children with learning difficulties and special educational needs, measures to avoid segregated classes, and providing materials and transport, through the development of frameworks for cooperation of educational establishments, local communities and social services. See also: Technical Support

Portugal's Decree Law 54/6 defines inclusion as a process addressing the diverse needs and potential of all students and calls on schools to establish a culture that ensures opportunities for every student to learn, values diversity, and promotes equity and non-discrimination in education. The European Commission provided technical support to monitor its implementation.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● Language awareness in **Finland**
- ● **Refugees Well School** programme
- ● Bilingual inclusive education in Madrid, **Spain**

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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 and 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 progress. 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.
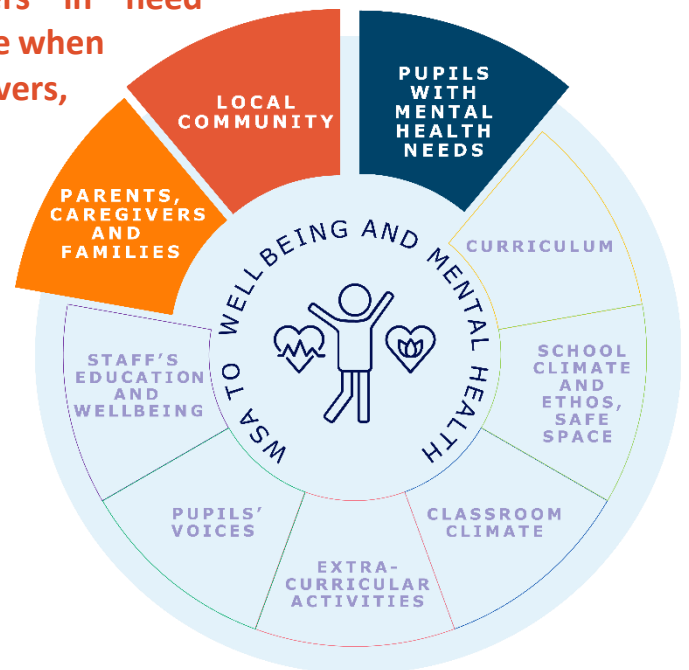
ACTION POINTS FOR POLICYMAKERS

- Pay special attention to **mental health in school policies,** including through increased funding for mental health services.
- Equip schools with the appropriate number of **mental health professionals** and support them in building networks with health providers.
- Invest in **raising awareness and understanding of mental health** to reduce the stigma and discrimination towards those affected by mental health distress.

- Make sure that **teachers and school staff are adequately prepared and equipped** to understand mental health issues and, through structured pedagogical observations, to recognise early signs of distress.
- Provide accessible information on **helplines and/or hotlines** and implement awareness programs to inform students and parents/caregivers about the range of mental and physical health services available in schools.

- ▶ Allocate funding for mental health first aid training for all school staff.
- ▶ A sufficient number of (mental) health professionals are employed to provide services directly in schools.
- ▶ Collaboration of schools with healthcare sectors is actively pursued, with the goal of facilitating fast and adequate service provision for youth.

TIPS

WHAT DO CHILDREN WANT?

Among the top 10 recommendations of 'The Europe Kids Want' survey:

- ★ Implement comprehensive mental health education programmes in schools.
- ★ Work towards destigmatising mental health.
- ★ Incorporate mental health support, including interventions for discrimination-affected students, in all schools.
- ★ Ensure that mental health resources are available in schools and communities.

INSPIRING PRACTICES

"Help YES" programme in Croatia
Implemented by the Croatian Institute of Public Health, HELP YES provides educators with tools for their daily work in school and mental health support to children and youth when needed. The programme provides basic knowledge on mental health, skills for recognising mental health problems, information about seeking professional help through the 3P steps (approach - support - strengthen).

National Institute of Mental Health Initiative "Na Rovinu" ("Straightly") in Czechia
The national destigmatisation initiative "Na rovinu" was launched as part of a reform of mental health care in 2017. Over the last 7 years, it has achieved significant success. It supports prevention and literacy in the field of mental health and strives to ensure that every person has a chance to experience wellbeing in all spheres of life. https://narovinu.net/.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- ● Mental Health First Aid training in **Luxembourg**
- ● **Norway** "Digi-Ung" portal

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 mains 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.