



Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Reviewed by Staff: October 2025

Ratified by the Governors: November 2025

Next review: November 2028

Our Motto

Learn, Integrate, Participate, Succeed.

Mission Statement

Loughries Integrated Primary School fosters a nurturing environment which encourages, supports, develops and challenges each child to reach their full potential. We endeavour to equip our pupils with the skills and qualities needed to work together for a shared future.

Policy Statement

At Loughries Integrated Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school we understand that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support.

When a school promotes positive emotional health and wellbeing, pupils can better understand and express their feelings. This builds their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn.

We take the view that everyone has a role to play to support positive mental health.

Definitions:

‘Children and young people feeling good, feeling that their life is going well and feeling able to get on with their daily lives.’

‘Emotional health and wellbeing is the emotional resilience that enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our own worth and of others. Emotional health and wellbeing is embedded in social relations built upon social skills that are developed from birth.’ (Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer, 2001)

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.
(World Health Organisation)

What is 'good' emotional health and wellbeing in our school?

- The ability to recognise, acknowledge and manage their feelings.
- The ability to develop caring and concerns for others.
- The ability to develop meaningful, positive and long-lasting relationships.
- The ability to take responsibility for themselves and make practical decisions.
- The ability to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We want our children to:

- Be effective and successful learners.
- Make and sustain friendships.
- Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly.
- Solve problems with others for themselves.
- Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety.
- Be able to promote calm, optimistic states that support the achievement of goals.
- Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of the difficulties.
- Work and play cooperatively.
- Compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for other competitors.
- Recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others.
- Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respecting the rights of others to have beliefs and values different from their own.

'Supporting Young Minds through Tough Times'

'Supporting Young Minds through Tough Times' is an approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing. The framework sets out key actions that schools can take to embed the whole school approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing. There are 8 core principles:

- Management and leadership
- The school ethos and environment
- Curriculum, teaching and learning

- Student voice
- Staff development, health and wellbeing
- Identifying need and monitoring impact
- Working with parents/carers
- Coordinated support

If the 8 principles are consistently and comprehensively applied across the whole school setting, they can have a positive impact on:

- The cognitive development of children, their learning, motivation and sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and with school.
- Staff wellbeing, reduced stress, sickness and absence, improved teaching ability and performance.
- Pupil wellbeing including happiness, a sense of purpose, connectedness and meaning.
- Development of social and emotional skills and attitudes that promote learning, success, wellbeing and mental health, in school and throughout life.
- The prevention and reduction of mental ill health such as depression, anxiety and stress.
- Improving school behaviour, including reduction in low-level disruption.
- Reducing risky behaviour, such as impulsiveness and uncontrolled anger.

Curriculum organisation

Our school is proactive in its approach and welcomes opportunities to promote emotional health and well-being through the formal and informal curriculum.

Staff use a variety of methods for ensuring sound emotional health and well-being for children. These complement and reflect the overall aims of the school. Our approach includes:

- Whole School Contract.
- Positive Class rules.
- House Teams - Every child is a member of a House Team, taking part in a range of activities throughout the year designed to foster teamwork collaboration and focus on core values.
- Clearly identified rewards and sanctions, understood by all.
- Rewarding positive behaviour and achievement through our pupil of the week and celebrating achievements both in school and outside school during assembly.
- Positive Growth Mindset
- Supportive learning environment that is challenging and engaging, relevant and enjoyable, active and hands-on, skills integrated and enquiry based.
- Providing a forum for listening and talking, e.g. Circle time and Worry Boxes within KS2.
- Encouraging co-operation and collaboration.

- Developing social competence.
- Encouraging and developing coping strategies and resilience.
- Inviting speakers into school to talk to our children.
- Taking part in Anti-bullying Week, Internet Safety Week, Promoting a Healthy School week and Integration Month.

The school places emphasis on problem-solving, positive self-assessment, time for reflection, quality feedback and encouragement to participate in school and community events.

The delivery of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is fundamental to our promotion of emotional health. Through the planned programs and informal curriculum, opportunities exist to explore issues appropriate to children's ages and stages of development. Staff deal sensitively with these issues and differentiate according to the varying needs of the children in their care.

Through Mindfulness Activities the children have the opportunity to focus on being aware of what they are sensing and feeling and have the time to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

Within the classroom setting the children are grouped in a variety of ways to promote the achievement of their best. There are opportunities for children to work in both friendship and ability groups. Regular review of seating arrangements helps to ensure that children gain maximum benefit.

Inclusion

All curriculum policies make reference to inclusion as key to our school ethos. Curriculum provision is based on an understanding that we may need to cater differently for individuals in order to provide equality of opportunity. Differentiation and awareness of a variety of teaching and learning styles are used to provide appropriate curriculum approaches for different children's needs. (Teaching and Learning Policy)

Working with Parents

We see parental involvement as a vital part of emotional well-health. Regular opportunities exist to promote partnership with parents, including:

- Welcome meeting in August – a chance to meet the class teacher and find out about the routines and curriculum in each class.
- Parents' meeting in the Autumn and Spring Term.
- Involvement in PLP (Pupil Learning Plans) and Annual reviews for the children with special educational needs statements.
- Inviting parents to the Nativity, Special Assemblies and the KS2 Show.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child.
- Share ideas with parents about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Update website each month with the mental health calendar and resources from the Education Authority.
- We kindly ask parents to remember that teachers are human too. We encourage open and respectful communication, and request that any concerns be raised promptly with the appropriate member of staff

Pastoral organisation for pupils

We pride ourselves on the whole school, team approach that is integral to our way of working at Loughries Integrated Primary School. Our methods include:

- Recognising and responding positively to a child's emotional, mental health and/ or behavioural needs.
- Communicating with parents positively and realistically to create a partnership approach to children's emotional, mental health and well-being.
- Liaising with appropriate agencies to enlist advice and/or support.

Clear policies for Positive Behaviour, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Attendance are promoted in school. Together, they provide the foundations for emotional, mental health and well-being. Alongside our policies are a range of practices to promote positive mental health;

- A School Council with elected membership from P3 – P7.
- September Acts of kindness month.
- Achievement assemblies.
- Star of the week.
- Mindfulness Activities
- Circle Time

Where appropriate, our SENCO may become involved to support a child experiencing emotional, mental health and / or behavioural difficulties.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

Each class teacher is best placed to monitor the children's wellbeing and identify a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators.

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Principal.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits.
- Becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood.
- Talking or joking about self-harm.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse.
- Educational psychology services.
- Paediatricians.
- CAMHS.
- Family support workers.
- Outside Agencies e.g. Smoke busters, HIP Psychology, PSNI

Pastoral organisation for staff

Pastoral support for all members of the school community is fundamental to the aims of Loughries Integrated Primary school. We believe that children's emotional well-being is best supported by a staff team that feels valued, well-supported, and united by a clear, shared purpose

Each year, staff have the opportunity to focus on mental health as part of a dedicated School Development Day. In addition, every half term, staff members take part in a one-to-one catch-up meeting with the Principal to support well-being and professional growth. We also have a named Governor Mrs Graham who is responsible for overseeing health and well-being across the school.

All teachers have access to the Education Authority HealthWell Hub.

<https://healthwell.eani.org.uk/news/mental-health-mens-health-womens-health-workplace-health-managing-your-money-family-health>

Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

The Anna Freud website has a wealth of resources which each teacher can access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Provision across the school is monitored by the Principal and Teachers. The Principal together with the teaching staff will provide support and advice to members of our school community about the provision and implementation of pastoral care in school. Regular staff meetings and termly full governor meetings provide regular opportunities for the quality of care to be evaluated and developed.

Appendix 1

The information below is from the NI Curriculum PDMU Document:

Implementing PDMU

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Revised Curriculum for primary schools. From Foundation to Key Stage 2, PDMU is delivered through two interconnected strands and teachers must use these strands to deliver the nine statutory Statements of Minimum Requirement. The Statements of Requirement are divided into themes. The table below outlines the two strands of PDMU.

		Themes
Strand I	Personal Understanding and Health Addresses personal and emotional issues as well as health, well-being and safety matters	• self-awareness • feelings and emotions • learning to learn • health and safety
Strand II	Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community Examines issues relating to personal and social relationships, interdependence and the need for mutual understanding and respect in the community and in the wider world	• relationships • rules, rights and responsibilities • managing conflict • similarities and differences • learning to live as members of the community

Delivering Protective Factors

Research indicates that the school's PDMU programme should integrate the following protective concepts:

Risks and protective factors

Educating children about risks and how to protect themselves from danger has a significant impact on their health and well-being. Young people are less likely to endure substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime and mental health issues when risk factors are reduced and protective factors are enhanced.

Emotional and social health and life skills

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Teaching life skills in the classroom has been shown to substantially reduce tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use. However, to ensure children really understand and can use life skills they must be anchored by connections to the other protective concepts. A programme of PDMU delivered across all Areas of Learning can offer this connectivity.

Self-esteem

Any child's difficulties in learning (or any reluctance to learn) may be caused more by poor self-esteem, a lack of motivation or fear of failure than a lack of ability. Children need to see themselves as worthy and capable if they are to take responsibility for their learning. A child's self-esteem can be the key to their learning success. Children's self-esteem is largely moulded by the significant adults around them: parents, carers, teachers, and (as they grow older) their peers. Your school has an important part to play in promoting healthy behaviours as well as successful learning. Through PDMU, you can create climates and teaching practices that honour and meet these developmental needs.

Resilience

Young people need to develop strength of character and the ability to adjust to pressure, bounce back from adversity and develop the social, academic and vocational competencies necessary to do well in life. These are all forms of resilience, an attribute that can be developed and fostered. The following protective factors build resilience, and these can be developed within your school:

- positive bonding;
- clear and consistent boundaries;
- life skills;
- care and support;
- high expectations; and
- meaningful participation.