

**Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol**

**Directorate of Education and Corporate Services**

# **Inclusion Strategy**

**The Local Authority approach to  
developing wellbeing and relationships  
and creating opportunity for all**

**2020 -2023**



A greener place  
Man gwyrdach



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## 1. Introduction

The Local Authority (LA) is committed to ensuring that all learners have equality of opportunity, and recognise the rights of all children to receive high quality education, no matter where that education may be delivered (as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28)).

Research identifies several factors that are essential when considering positive outcomes for children. Of critical importance is their wellbeing and securing parental engagement. As identified by Estyn (Community Schools: families and communities at the heart of school life (2020)) schools that best support disadvantaged and vulnerable children place the wellbeing of every child at the heart of their work. Schools also recognise parental and community engagement as integral to improving the wellbeing and achievement of children. Estyn have identified that where schools develop in this way there is a strong focus on providing a safe and nurturing environment where children and staff feel secure.

Estyn (report above), Healthy and Happy (2019) and Knowing your children - supporting children with adverse childhood experiences (2020) reinforce that strong partnerships are integral to improving the wellbeing and achievement of all children. The LAs approach to inclusion is building on the existing partnerships with schools, providers, families and other agencies to ensure that partnership work is placed front and centre in supporting the wellbeing of children. As outlined within this strategy and the associated guidance the LA is committed to supporting a whole school approach to wellbeing and ensuring that children and parents / carers have their voices heard.

Education in Wales: Our National Mission (2017-21) also refers to the role of strong and inclusive schools where the commitment to excellence and wellbeing is an enabler to curriculum reform.

The LA recognises that in schools that support their vulnerable and disadvantaged children successfully, staff track the wellbeing of individual children carefully. This helps schools to quickly identify individuals or groups of children that need additional support, to help them address barriers to their engagement in school.

Inspection reports for schools in Caerphilly over the last four years acknowledge the central focus on wellbeing and the systems of tracking and monitoring.

Estyn 'Effective school support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils' (2020) recognises that *leaders in effective schools realise that they cannot work in isolation to support vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. The most successful schools know their community well and work closely with other agencies and services that will benefit their pupils and their families.*

This strategy focuses on a partnership approach that aligns clearly with this. The LA is engaged in partnership working at many levels to ensure a collegiate and collaborative approach to supporting wellbeing and understanding the needs of vulnerable learners.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent 'Understanding The Triggers' (2021) report focuses on the link between vulnerability, criminality and exploitation. Although this focuses on a small sample there are key lessons for education within the report such as the need to adopt an early intervention and prevention approach when working with vulnerable children and the importance of joint working and information sharing.

There is a strong focus on implementing inclusive, multi-agency practice and working together to promote inclusion and wellbeing, thus developing whole school and LA approaches which in turn improve attendance and reduce exclusions for all children.

The LA's focus in supporting schools in keeping with our 'Shared Ambitions' includes:

- work with the consortia to continue support the development of highly effective leaders and high quality teaching and learning within the schools system;
- a focus on embedding systems to support improved attendance and reduced exclusions;
- supporting building capacity around wellbeing;
- identification and enhanced understanding of vulnerability;
- understanding the need for environments and individuals within them to feel nurtured, empowered, safe and trusted;
- effective tracking and monitoring systems.

This strategy provides definitions for inclusion and wellbeing and the underpinning principles and values of the approach. The principles are consistent with the Welsh Government approach to reshaping the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) agenda in terms of person-centred practice. The aim is to support the further development of our collective vision of inclusion and wellbeing as being central to underpinning a high quality education, promoting good attendance and minimising the use of exclusion wherever possible.

In realising our collective commitment towards disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of learners, there must continue to be a focus upon what is important for the individual, and what will work best for them. In this regard the voice of the child is vital. Accompanying this Strategy is a separate policy into practice document which includes the voice of the child.

It is important to recognise and learn that expectations should not be compromised as much as possible by the advent of a pandemic. However it is clear that this had a significant impact on the organisation of the LA services, the teaching and learning environment and the emotional responses to the circumstances both in terms of children, parents and carers and teachers. Moving forward is critical but understanding individual and school circumstances is important when considering the capacity to develop and respond.

## **2. Context**

This strategy supports the aims and objectives identified in wider Local Authority strategies including the Corporate Plan (2018-2023) the EAS Business Plan, Caerphilly Council Wellbeing Objectives 2018-2023 and Shared Ambitions Strategy (2019 – 2022).

### **Wellbeing**

There has been significant focus from the House Of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (report on the first thousand days) from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales (Aces, Together for Mental Health) and Estyn (Healthy and Happy report), for a number of years on ensuring a collective focus on improving children's wellbeing.

Locally in Gwent there is a significant focus on children's wellbeing and mental health particularly in relation to the Whole School Approach (WSA), early help and enhanced support, CAMHS in-reach project and EAS strategy for wellbeing and equity. Caerphilly makes a significant contribution to the WSA agenda at both a national and regional level.

### **Behaviour / relationships**

There is a range of policy and guidance documentation from the Welsh Government including: Practical approaches to Behaviour Management in the Classroom (2010), Exclusion from schools and Pupil Referral Units (2015) The Children Act 1989 and The Social Services and Wellbeing act (2014), Successful Futures (Donaldson 2015), New Curriculum for Wales 2022 and Challenging Bullying: Rights, Respect Equality statutory guidance (2019), and Welsh Government statistical releases which have informed this strategy.

Welsh Government has also issued a range of legislation and guidance which requires local authorities, schools, and other educational settings to:

- promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners;
- review their policies and practice to ensure they do not discriminate against particular groups of learners, including those with characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010;
- pro-actively promote equality in relation to disability, race, gender, religious belief and sexuality;
- ensure the needs of vulnerable groups including those with additional learning needs are identified and met in a timely fashion;
- adopt person centered approaches;
- have a systematic approach to the prevention of bullying and agreed interventions and procedures for responding to and monitoring incidents of bullying when they do occur.

## **Exclusions**

In July 2018 the 'House of Commons Education Committee report Forgotten Children: alternative provision and scandal of ever increasing exclusions', made a number of recommendations and was followed by the Timpson review in 2019, similarly making recommendations highlighting that every child, regardless of their characteristics, needs or the type of school they attend, deserves a high-quality education that allows them to flourish.

As a Local Authority (LA) we expect schools to have well trained staff and appropriate systems in place to manage the impact of compromised wellbeing and the resultant social emotional and behavioural difficulties. However it is essential that teachers and other school staff are equipped with the right tools, capability and capacity to deliver, and provide support where children need it.

Working with partners the Samaritans produced a report considering all the issues linked to exclusion. This highlights that exclusion is far more than the act of removing a child from school. Exclusion from school is linked to a much wider set of recurring inequalities, circumstances and consequences. These include social isolation, mental health issues, being stuck in a cycle of poverty, and poor outcomes. A key theme emerging is the need to shift the focus from firefighting to prevention across schools in Wales.

Research shows that those children who are not accessing education due to exclusion and those who are not attending school or having their needs met in school are more likely to be not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), develop severe mental health problems, require involvement from the Youth Justice Service and may go to prison. Reducing exclusion from schools and other education settings by ensuring all education settings are inclusive and able to meet the needs of all children is the clear ambition of the LA.

### **3. The Inclusion compendium**

The Local Authority's Inclusion compendium provides a comprehensive suite of documents underpinned by this Inclusion Strategy. The strategy is aligned with the strategic direction of the Education Directorate and other linked strategies and policies. The LA recognises that there are number of factors to consider in further developing a truly inclusive ethos across schools and education providers and has taken into account the direction of travel for Welsh Government (curriculum reform, ALN reform, CAMHS transformation, support for vulnerable learners), thematic reviews by Estyn (as identified), research, school inspections, case studies, stakeholder views and the voice of the child in developing this approach.



The compendium comprises an executive summary for members, information leaflets for children and parents / carers, comprehensive guidance for schools and other settings and examples of policy and practice including case studies reflecting the voice of the child, and support for self-evaluation.

#### 4. Aims

The strategy aims to:

- Review and further develop a holistic LA education approach to inclusion, wellbeing, behaviour and relationships;
- support and empower schools to further develop their coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, relationships and behaviour;
- support schools to reduce exclusions and improve attendance;
- provide a framework for associated guidance;
- promote effective partnerships and cluster working;
- support effective working between schools and other education providers to share good practice.

#### 5. Definitions

##### **Inclusion**

Inclusion focuses on the right to include all people irrespective of race, gender, ability, disability, medical or any other need.

Inclusion in education aims to ensure the participation of learners in the curriculum and the wider community, to enable the highest achievements and attainments of all and promotes a sense of belonging. This ethos will impact on the cultures, policies and practice of every establishment and service, and promote the learning and participation of vulnerable children, young people and adults. The outcomes associated with inclusion are key to ensuring equality of opportunity.

Children will be educated in mainstream schools wherever possible, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act

2018 (and the proceeding SEN legislation and guidance).

### **Equality**

Equality is the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct. It is also the advancement of equality of opportunity and fostering of good relations to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to upholding and promoting equality as outlined in The Equality Act 2010.

The Education Directorate is committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity for all learners. In order to ensure accessibility for all, reasonable adjustments may be required to support individual learners and will be linked to the schools equality plans.

### **Equity**

Equity means fairness and justice and brings with it the recognition that not everyone starts from the same place and therefore adjustments need to be made to address any imbalances. This involves an ongoing process of identifying and overcoming intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

### **Diversity**

Diversity refers to groups of social differences such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual-orientation, gender preferences, country of origin, dis/ability, cultural, political, religious, or other group affiliations.

### **Wellbeing**

There are many definitions of wellbeing from that of the WHO, the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, the National Excellence Framework and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

For the purpose of this strategy the focus is upon emotional health, developing positive relationships, healthy behaviour and developing knowledge and skills (Appendix 1).

## **6. Philosophy, principles and values – a framework for inclusion and wellbeing**

An inclusive society will seek to ensure that the potential of every individual is fully developed by addressing their needs in a holistic way in order to achieve better outcomes for all. Inclusion involves celebrating, not just tolerating, diversity and the creative use of resources to support all children to learn effectively. The LA is committed to the principles of inclusive education and its responsibilities to implement this across all relevant service areas and activities.

**“Inclusion requires active involvement from all concerned. It places the onus on schools to adapt their organization and their ways of responding to the needs of all children and young people and to value their development in all areas.”**

(Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 2015)



The Local Authority (LA) considers that inclusion is a fundamental principle that underpins all our practice and procedures and is committed to an effective and inclusive education system in which all children are:

- valued equally;
- treated with respect;
- able to participate in processes which affect them and have the right to have their voices heard;
- given equality of opportunity;
- given opportunities to achieve and are supported to progress holistically in accordance with their individual learning needs;
- given access to environments that nurture, empower, are safe and promote trust.

All children should have access to an appropriate and high quality education, which will inspire them to participate in lifelong learning. In order to achieve this the Local Authority (LA), schools, early years and other educational settings will:

- work collaboratively to promote equality of opportunity for different groups of learners and make all necessary or reasonable adjustments to enable participation for all;
- review policies and practices to ensure they actively support the engagement of all learners including the most vulnerable and do not discriminate against particular groups of learners;
- pro-actively promote equality in all areas in relation to all protected characteristics under current UK and Welsh Government legislation on Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights;
- provide a curriculum which promotes equality and diversity and which develops the four core purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.

As identified positive relationships between children in education settings, teachers, youth workers and parents / carers are key to developing safe and healthy schools where children are able to achieve and there should be clear mechanisms and structures which support these positive relationships. Schools and other education settings should have an inclusive ethos and culture that fosters resilience and promotes wellbeing of all.

## **7. Vulnerable learners**

Children may be seen as vulnerable for a number of reasons. In accordance with Estyn, vulnerable children may be defined as those who may be more likely to experience emotional, social, and developmental barriers to learning. This may be as a result of their life experiences and disadvantage. This includes children with additional needs, children looked after, those at risk of exclusion, young carers, young offenders and those adversely affected by the pandemic as an example. The role of the LA is to ensure that schools and providers are supported to identify the vulnerable learners in a broader context and that there are clear links for support for schools from EAS and LA officers. It is often the most vulnerable learners for whom education other than at school (EOTAS) is considered. The LA has a clear EOTAS policy which aligns with the principles outlined in this Strategy.

### **a. Additional Learning Needs**

The LA has an ALN Policy (Appendix 2) which defines Caerphilly Local Authority's (LAs) approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to meet the needs of children with additional learning needs (ALN) to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential.

The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to support the creation of a fully inclusive, person centered education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Caerphilly LA will include the participation of children and young people in decisions which affect them, which ultimately may contribute to better outcomes for them.

### **b. Children Looked After**

The LA has a policy for children looked after (CLA) which outlines the LA approach, supports the development of schools policies, implementation and monitoring of a consistent approach, working in partnership with children's services and the EAS. (Appendix 3)

## **8. Wellbeing**

Welsh Government defines a Healthy School as one which "Actively promotes the physical, mental and social health of its community through positive action by such means as policy, strategic planning and staff development, with regard to its curriculum, ethos, physical environment and community relations."

Relationships between children and adults are critical. Those who know children well are best placed to identify wellbeing concerns, build resilience and deliver low-level therapeutic input.

In schools and other settings, relationships with adults such as teachers, teaching assistants and youth workers, are key to developing safe and healthy provisions where children are able to achieve and there should be clear mechanisms and structures which support positive relationships.

Schools and other education settings should strive to have an inclusive culture that fosters schools ability to provide protective factors that develop resilience and promote wellbeing.

The LA, working together with partners, aims to support schools to develop a coherent whole school approach to wellbeing, focusing on the Welsh Government 'whole school approach' and to develop a coherent whole education approach to wellbeing across a range of dimensions. School to school working will be essential in sharing good practice.

These aims are consistent with the recommendations outlined in Estyn's (2019) report: Healthy and happy: school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and with the 'Mind Over Matter' (2018) report.

Feeling safe in school is fundamental and schools work to promote wellbeing will be closely aligned with their active approach to bullying prevention and the LA's bullying prevention policy which shares core principals with the Inclusion Strategy.

At the heart of the approach for wellbeing is the principle that positive and respectful relationships are the foundation upon which all strategies rest (staff, children and parents / carers and Local Authority (LA) and third sector agencies). The elements which promote healthy relationships are:

- Support for staff wellbeing;
- Building resilience in organisations;
- Parental engagement;
- The voice of the child;
- Strong and effective communication;
- Ongoing skills, development and training.

Implementation of this approach will be supported through:

- Effective screening activities that support schools to identify children in need;
- Activities that support whole-school approaches;
- Activities to support schools to implement wellbeing approaches;
- Implementation and evaluation.

Different schools might identify development at different levels. The Local Authority (LA) response can then reflect the specific identified need(s) of that school, in relation to whether a universal, targeted or specialist intervention is required.

*a. Emotional wellbeing*

The LA, working with partners aims to further empower schools to develop a whole-school approach appropriate to their setting. This will enable schools to: identify children who are vulnerable and offer targeted support where possible and know when and where to refer more significant concerns. The approach reinforces the need for early intervention and support for a range of universal, targeted and specialist emotional wellbeing initiatives (see toolkit).

*b. Physical wellbeing*

Currently, every school within Caerphilly is signed up to the Healthy School scheme and is actively engaging. Schools implementing a whole-school approach to wellbeing will be encouraged to apply for the National Quality Award for promoting health and wellbeing through the Welsh Network of Healthy School Scheme.

The Healthy Schools Team supports schools by implementing a range of health initiatives, such as:

- Whole school approach in delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education and Substance Use and Misuse Education within the curriculum;
- Designed 2 Smile tooth brushing scheme delivered in foundation phase;

- Supporting uptake of the annual flu immunisation programme;
- Daily Mile or alternative activity based programme;
- Active travel to and from school;
- Eco Schools / Forest Schools;
- E-bug hygiene programme;
- Signpost schools to use the services listed; Police Liaison Scheme, School Nursing Service, NSPCC, Spectrum Cymru, Gwent Ngage, Tenovus Cancer Care, Young Minds, Fearless Crime Stoppers, EYST and Samaritans.

The Sport Development Team run a number of programmes and projects that impact on the promotion of wellbeing (e.g., Positive futures, walking football/netball, school sports programmes and the daily mile), in addition to sports clubs, which are held in local leisure centres over the school holiday periods (such as half-term football clubs).

Alongside the department's programmes, the team deliver on multi agency projects where services come together to deliver additional programmes such as the Caerphilly 10k, Park Runs, Healthy Schools & Safer Caerphilly. These projects & programmes have a direct impact on the promotion of wellbeing.

### *c. Staff wellbeing*

Research has found psychological wellbeing to be the most powerful and reliable predictor of performance and staff turnover. Therefore, it is important that we consider staff wellbeing in addition to children's wellbeing. In support of this, Caerphilly EPS can provide a whole-school wellbeing training package for school staff, which is accompanied by a 39-week wellbeing programme, for which the educational psychologist can support staff to identify their wellbeing targets and tailor the wellbeing initiatives from the programme to meet the needs of the school.

- Council wellbeing group

The Council is committed to supporting the wellbeing of its staff and has a multi- directorate group responsible for promoting wellbeing.

- Managing ill health

Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises that a proactive approach to health, wellbeing and safety will make a significant contribution to an employee's health and wellbeing and has clear processes in place.

- Care First

Caerphilly CBC employees are able to access Care First advice, information and counselling service. The Care First helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. This service is completely independent and confidential. Counsellors can help with work-related issues or personal problems and all the counsellors are members of, and accredited to, the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), with significant experience in a supervised clinical setting. The highly trained professional information specialists can provide comprehensive answers and assistance on a wide range of issues which affect daily life.

## 9. Relationships and Behaviour

In seeking to support the development of appropriate relationships and behaviour the LA recognises that developing effective practice is essential. All those working with children need to have a developed understanding of why behaviour is causing concern. This will include understanding the underlying causes or triggers for challenging behaviour including emotional, social difficulties, trauma, neuro developmental needs and difficulty accessing the curriculum as a result of learning difficulties.

The Local Authority (LA) promotes working in partnership with schools and education settings and others to improve outcomes for children. Supporting the schools approach to relationships and behaviour involves:

- ensuring appropriate school policies are put in place and are embedded into practice;
- securing positive behaviour through effective teaching and learning environments in which there is a positive ethos and supportive relationships between staff and children;
- providing an emotionally secure, caring, safe, supportive and secure learning environment which promotes positive and purposeful learning, and positive relationships, where all individuals are accorded respect and dignity and where all children are able to learn self-control, self-discipline and personal accountability;
- preparing children to contribute to, and cope with, the demands of a rapidly changing world and go on to become responsible, independent and caring young people who will make a positive contribution to society;
- providing a framework to establish a coordinated, consistent approach to developing positive behaviour and reducing exclusions;
- developing a consistent approach to identifying behaviour that is causing concern and to respond in an appropriate and consistent manner (e.g. use of behaviour scripts, restorative conversations and a graduated response that seeks to support the young person's ability to change their behaviour);
- creating an ethos that promotes de-escalation and supports positive behaviour;
- ensuring there is a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluating progress;
- developing programmes to help develop all children's emotional and social wellbeing. This should be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum;
- implementing a range of initiatives to support children's emotional and social skills at a group and individual level (e.g. SEAL, ELSA, ) and using data effectively to inform practice;
- ensuring there are effective training programmes available to schools;
- developing the continuum of specialist support and provision to meet the range of identified need in the Local Authority (LA);
- sharing good practice across the Local Authority (LA).

## **10. Exclusions**

The LA approach to exclusions focuses on the commitment to work together to promote inclusion and wellbeing and reduce exclusions for all children. The aim is to implement strong inclusive, multi-agency practice working towards a situation where fixed term exclusions are considered in the context of a proactive approach and permanent exclusions are only ever used as the very last resort.

The decision to issue an exclusion of any sort rests with schools. However in considering the use of exclusion the LA and schools will work together to develop a more consistent approach. When considering fixed term exclusions schools must be clear about why they are using this and whether this is having any impact. Where schools are regularly issuing fixed term exclusions or several fixed term exclusions for individual children, the school and LA would work together to consider whether this is having the intended impact and consider alternative approaches. Schools are expected to use permanent exclusion as a last resort and, whilst taking due regard of the needs of other children they should use every reasonable means to support and intervene with children thus preventing exclusions of any kind. It is clear that children who are permanently excluded from school have great difficulty in returning to mainstream education and rarely fulfil their educational potential. These children are also likely to be at risk of becoming involved in crime, antisocial behaviour and other activities that may cause them to be at risk.

Most children will have their needs met in mainstream settings and in nearly all cases disengagement with learning, individual needs and challenging behaviour are addressed and resolved in mainstream school. However there is also a clear understanding by the LA that at a given time a level of intervention may be required to support schools and individuals to ensure that this happens effectively.

In realizing our collective commitment towards this vulnerable group of learners, there must be a focus upon what is important to and for the individual, and what will work best for them. In this regard children's voice is vital. The principles here are consistent with the Welsh Government approach to reshaping the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) agenda in terms of person centered practice.

Schools should ensure they are compliant with legislation and guidance (for example exclusions, equalities and discrimination, additional learning needs, safeguarding and children looked after) when considering whether to issue an exclusion. Exclusion should be considered the 'last resort'.

Essential in developing the whole LA and school approach is leadership. The vision and culture of the LA and its schools drives the belief that all children can develop and improve with the right support, consistently communicated to staff, children and parents / carers, and that school leaders will both enable and hold staff to account to achieve this.

The most effective and ambitious schools are those that are open to influence, welcome challenge, are reflective and self-evaluative, are keen to share their good practices with others, work collaboratively to support, and benefit from, the work of other schools and agencies and are actively seeking to learn from best practice elsewhere.

A focus that adopts and implements a consistent approach is important across schools. Underpinning principles are to ensure that approaches are viewed in the context of restorative and rights respecting methods. Schools will have a clear focus upon understanding ACES, trauma and attachment, embedding the whole school approach to mental health, excellent approaches to supporting learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and commitment to developing and delivering a curriculum that embodies principles of learning skills for life.

Where a young person begins to present with patterns of absence or behaviour in their education setting which are giving rise for concern, staff teams should be well supported to confidently identify the next steps to be taken through their whole school/setting policies, systems and processes.

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team should ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of early intervention and of using a strengths based approach to be taken to gain a full understanding of both the reasons for the young person's absence or behaviour and the range of interventions that can be used to support them (see toolkit).

Schools should have well embedded universal systems in place to meet the needs of all learners, (irrespective of whether there are any specific circumstances) and a repertoire of interventions to support a range of need. The use of relevant individual plans as working documents is critical in documenting identified needs and provision that schools / settings put in place to respond to needs, to enable developments to be tracked, and to inform next steps.

## **11. Partnerships**

Working in partnership is critical in ensuring inclusion across the LA, schools and education settings. The LA will promote existing and new partnerships within the LA and between LA and health, social care, voluntary agencies and stakeholders.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that:

- all learners are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included;
- learners are at the centre of all decisions;
- learners are challenged and supported to achieve success in their learning;
- the achievements of all learners are recognised and celebrated;
- the views of learners and parents / carers are sought about decision which affect them;
- appropriate support and intervention is available and based on assessment of need;
- transitions are carefully planned and supported;
- children are supported to attend mainstream schools, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal for (Wales) Act (2018);
- inclusion and equality is promoted in daily interactions with learners, thus ensuring an ethos of achievement, empowerment and engagement to promote self-esteem, wellbeing and a sense of belonging;
- the needs of learners are identified and met;

- staff understand their role and responsibility in relation to the requirements of The Equality Act 2010;
- all learners are supported to express their views and are encouraged to be involved in making decisions about their learning;
- parents / carers are encouraged to play an active part in relation to their child's education and are effectively consulted.

Existing partnerships include:

a. Health and Social Care

The Local Authority (LA) works in partnership with Health, Social Care and Youth Offending Service in relation to several regional groups; these include:

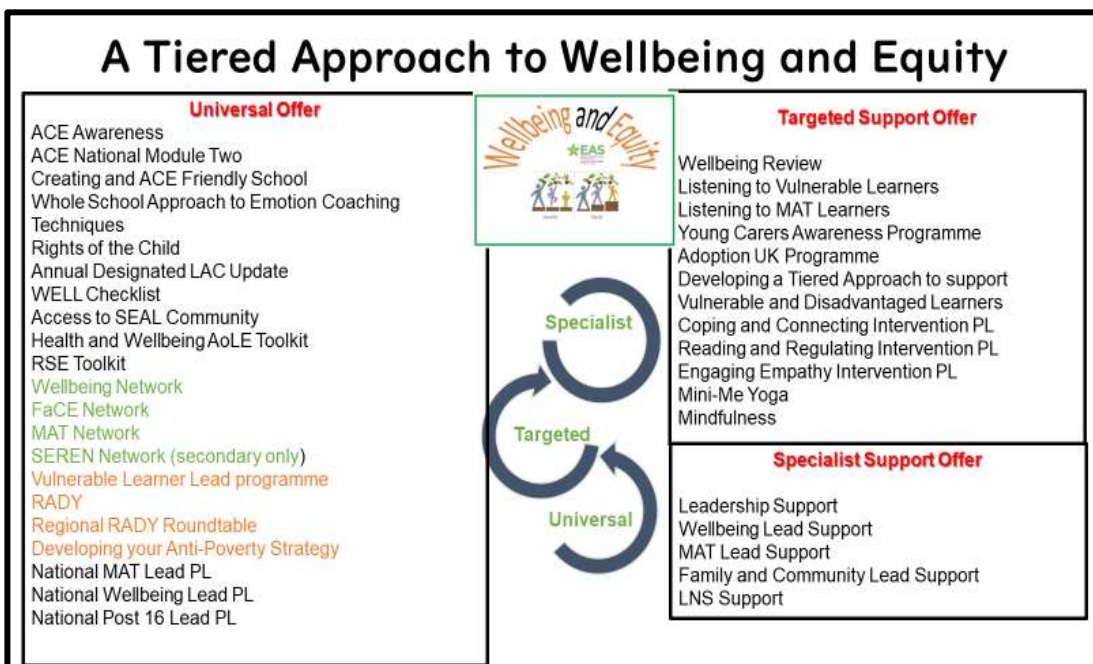
- Trauma Stress Wales Children and Young People (CYP) work stream. This group aims to develop and pilot an integrated trauma pathway and outcome measurement for CYP; develop training resources; and deliver specialist, evidence-based psychological therapies and supervision to support the implementation of the integrated trauma pathway.
- Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP) Early Help and Enhanced Support work stream. This group aims to facilitate a whole system and whole school approach to meet the mental health needs of the 'missing middle' and represents a cultural shift in thinking about specialist services. The group has developed a framework to ensure that children and parents/carers have easy access to expertise and co-produced innovations from a NEST of people, experiences and environments that feel Nurturing, Empowering, Safe and Trusted.
- CAMHS Transformation Steering Group. This was set up to facilitate a multi-agency model which has a focus on early intervention and prevention. This aims to embed specialist clinical expertise alongside frontline childcare staff and within communities, to enable frontline staff to 'hold on' to children and their families, in order to embed stability and consistency in children's lives. This model is consistent with the proposed step-change to CAMHS that was set out in the Mind Over Matter report, which advocates for a whole system approach to address the 'hidden burden' of mental health problems. The aim is to ensure sustainability by meeting families' needs at an early stage to prevent Health, Social Care or Education needs from escalating by ensuring effective early intervention and support.
- Gwent Partnership Board: Integrated and multi-agency safeguarding, early intervention and prevention arrangements. The purpose of the Partnership Board is to provide a governance structure for the development and implementation of integrated, multi-agency and all age safeguarding, early intervention and prevention arrangements in Gwent.
- The Education and Social Care Directorates work closely together to safeguard children and ensure that the critical importance of collaboration and partnership is understood and embedded across the organisation.

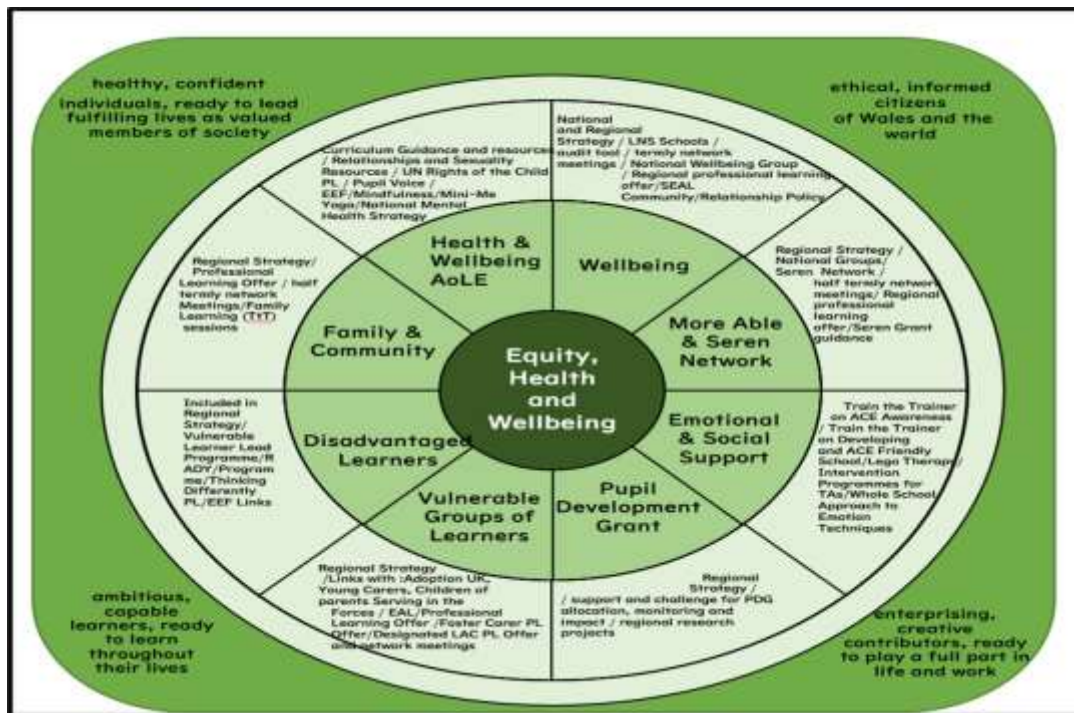


b. Education Achievement Service (EAS) - Wellbeing and Equity Strategy

The EAS Wellbeing and Equity Strategy has been established to support all schools across the region in the development of their own strategy to support all learners and all members of the workforce. This strategy outlines the national and regional picture and is supported by a Wellbeing Directory/Toolkit (available on Hwb).

The diagrams below illustrate the tiered approach and how the EAS will work in close collaboration with Local Authorities and partners to realise the wellbeing goals for the region.





The EAS supports schools and clusters to build capacity to provide high quality support and resources to ensure all children have equal access and that those requiring support, receive appropriate provision. This is achieved by:

- supporting schools to ensure effective use is made of all grant spend;
- implementing network meetings for school-based Family and Community Engagement Officers;
- providing professional learning opportunities that focus on trauma informed practice and the effect that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have on learner's wellbeing;
- working in partnership with Local Authorities to deliver national policy in line with the Equity and Wellbeing agenda;
- working with key partners to support schools and clusters to improve the provision for Equity and Wellbeing at all levels;
- delivering a professional learning offer that uses the Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Framework as a tool to improve outcomes for all learners;
- the development of a Wellbeing Directory/Toolkit of resources and case studies in collaboration with Local Authorities that will be hosted on the Hwb platform;
- the development of a 'Wellbeing Walk Audit' that will enable schools to evaluate current provision and identify priorities for improvement linked to the wellbeing agenda;
- developing the role of the Learning Network Schools in supporting, coaching and guiding schools in the delivery and evaluation of the Professional Learning Offers.

### c. Youth Service

The efficacy of the youth work relationship with young people is well known and a key focus of youth service support links to support for young people to develop their health, wellbeing and resilience, and provision of targeted intervention for young people that have/are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences.

The Youth Service has an Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy which aligns with this strategy. Youth Work and Teaching approaches are complementary and in particular, Youth Work provides broad engagement opportunities that promote both educational and social inclusion. The Youth Service ethos lies within the vision and opening statement of the Policy which is *for young people to have fun, feel valued and listened to, and to learn, achieve and aspire to do well now and in the future.*

The Youth Service provides services for young people that are designed for them, their interests and needs. The Youth Service aims to help young people to understand who they are, how they relate to others, and support them through experiences that enhance their personal and social development. The youth work relationship, in particular, can provide for more informal opportunities for involvement in activity that promotes wellbeing, including for those who may have experienced trauma as a result of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Though for any and all young people, Youth Work can be particularly effective in engaging those with vulnerabilities and specific strands of the Youth Service focus on support for:

- those that require low level mental health/wellbeing support;
- vulnerable young people of school age who are at risk of becoming NEET at the point of leaving formal education;
- LGBTQ+ young people;
- those at risk of becoming homeless;
- those that are vulnerable in a family context.

Broader involvement opportunities that promote inclusion are with the service's Junior and Youth Forums, its information services, its EOTAS activity, its community safety and community involvement teams and the via the Targeted Youth and Family Engagement Project.

### d. Healthy Schools

The Healthy Schools team:

- supports schools in developing a whole school approach to supporting mental and emotional health and wellbeing (children staff, parents / carers and local community);
- ensures relevant policies are in place, which consider mental emotion health and wellbeing (MEHWB) considerations and school provision;
- provides opportunities for school staff to access a range of training that can support MEHWB within their setting;
- helps schools to set up and actively deliver a range of health initiatives that support MEHWB issues across the school (children, staff, parents / carers and local community);

- supports schools to deliver a full PSE curriculum to all year groups that includes a range of MEHWP education;
- reviews and promote new curriculum resources that support PSE topics;
- supports and develop the children's voice within the school. Ensuring schools have a range of committees in place for children to be actively involved with;
- develops positive links with internal and external partners that can directly support the MEHWP of children and staff;
- provides professional advice to schools on how they can directly support MEHWP within their school;
- supports schools in providing opportunities to develop MEHWP of their parents / carers, families and local communities;
- encourages schools to promote a positive attitude towards staff wellbeing, as well as providing a range of options to support;
- ensures the school environment (classrooms, staff room and outdoor grounds) supports and promotes MEHWP.

#### e. Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service is a specialised support service that work closely with families and schools to improve pupil attendance, which in turn supports wellbeing and attainment. This includes:

- Support for schools in re-engaging reluctant learners and their families;
- Specific focus on vulnerable groups, including FSM pupils, those at risk of becoming NEET and Children Missing in Education;
- Supporting schools in producing monitoring and tracking of those pupils with poor attendance;
- Additional monitoring and scrutiny of processes where children may require a licence for performance in the creative arts industry;
- Additional monitoring and scrutiny of processes where children may be in employment;
- Targeted work with families where relationships with the school have deteriorated;
- Participation in multi-agency approaches to meet the needs of the learner;
- Delivery of training to key school staff to share best practice and introduce new initiatives.

## **12. Monitoring, evaluation and review**

In seeking to further develop unified and consistent approaches, respond flexibly in times of crisis such as a pandemic, learn from good practice and understand what we need to do differently we must review whether we are making a difference. There are a range of measures that we may consider as evidence to support evaluation. It is critical that the LA, schools and education settings, partners and stakeholders work together to measure impact using an appropriate suite of indicators.

From an LA perspective this involves:

- ensuring clear systems and processes are in place;
- promoting early intervention;
- appropriate identification of vulnerable groups;
- ensuring needs of learners are met;
- appropriate use of resources;
- evaluating LA services (delivery and impact) via the SIP;
- links to School Causing concern (SCC) meetings as appropriate;
- partnership meetings with EAS as appropriate
- links to review meetings (within LA or with schools);
- evaluation of stakeholder feedback;
- holding schools to account;
- reporting to Education Scrutiny;
- review meetings with Estyn.

From a schools and staff perspective this includes:

- ensuring a consistent and graduated whole school approach to inclusion, wellbeing and behaviour;
- delivering an inclusive curriculum, responding to the national agenda and children's needs;
- identifying further areas for development through evaluation, review and monitoring of the SDP;
- use of School Health research Network (SHRN) data
- expressing and demonstrating competence in and confidence responding to children' needs;
- reporting increased personal and social wellbeing in work.

From the children's perspective this involves:

- reporting they feel safe in school;
- reporting increased personal and social wellbeing in school ;
- demonstrating increased engagement;
- improved outcomes;
- showing changes in behaviour towards others.

From a data perspective this will show:

- attainment is maintained or improved;
- exclusions are reduced;
- attendance is improved.

### **13. Training**

The LA will work with partners to provide training and professional learning linked to wellbeing, additional learning needs, behaviour and the exclusion process. This is available to Governors, teachers, TA's and other school / setting staff as appropriate.

The offer will include opportunities to collaborate across clusters and the region, shadowing, learning from research based practice, and access to formal training events.

#### **14. Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – wellbeing definitions
- Appendix 2 – Additional Learning Needs Policy
- Appendix 3 – Children Looked After Policy
- Appendix 4 – Document hyperlinks (Equalities Act, Children Cct, Wellbeing of Future Generations, Inclusion and Pupil Support, Hwb, Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal for (Wales) Act (2018), Welsh Language Measure, School Effectiveness Framework )

