

**WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH – PROMOTING MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN SCHOOLS**

Whole School Approach

SUMMARY REPORT

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Introduction to Therapy Partners

Welcome to Therapy Partners, we believe in the transformative power of our focussed whole school approach, (WSA) which integrates therapeutic principles and strategies into every facet of school life. This approach prioritises the emotional well-being of students, teachers, and staff, ultimately creating an environment that supports optimal learning, growth, and resilience.

Our Partnerships



Executive Summary

The Whole School Approach is an evidence-based comprehensive framework that focuses on promoting mental health and well-being within the school environment. By integrating mental health principles into leadership, curriculum, staff training, and community engagement, schools can create a supportive atmosphere that benefits students, staff, and the entire school community.

The Whole School Approach (WSA) framework is designed to foster positive mental health and well-being among students, staff, and the school community as a whole. The following summarises the key aspects of the Whole School Approach, as presented on the Therapy Partners' website. [Supporting Positive Mental Health in Schools \(therapypartners.co.uk\)](https://www.therapypartners.co.uk).

1) Understanding the Whole School Approach: The Whole School Approach is a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the entire school environment, policies, practices, and curriculum, with the aim of promoting mental health and well-being. It recognises that the school plays a crucial role in supporting the emotional and psychological needs of students.

2) Key Elements of the Whole School Approach: Effective leadership and clear governance structures are vital for implementing and sustaining the Whole School Approach. School leaders should prioritize mental health and well-being as an integral part of the school's mission.

3) Staff Development: Providing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff members is essential. Training programs can enhance their understanding of mental health issues, equip them with appropriate skills, and foster a supportive environment.

4) Student Engagement: Engaging students actively in decision-making processes and empowering them to be advocates for mental health can create a sense of ownership and involvement. Encouraging student-led initiatives and involving them in designing well-being programs are crucial aspects.

5) Curriculum and Teaching: Integrating mental health and well-being into the curriculum ensures that students develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and resilience to navigate challenges effectively. Embedding well-being topics in various subjects and providing holistic education are key considerations.

6) Partnership and Collaboration: Collaboration with parents, guardians, and external agencies fosters a holistic approach to mental health and well-being. Strong partnerships enable schools to access additional resources, support networks, and specialist expertise.

7) School Environment: Creating a positive and supportive physical and social environment is fundamental. Schools can establish systems for recognising and celebrating achievements, implementing anti-bullying measures, and promoting inclusivity and diversity.



Brief: Whole School Approach

Benefits of the Whole School Approach:

Implementing the Whole School Approach can yield numerous benefits, including:

- Improved student well-being and mental health outcomes.
- Enhanced academic performance and motivation.
- Reduced stigma around mental health issues.
- Increased staff satisfaction and well-being.
- Enhanced school climate and community cohesion

Key Considerations and Challenges:

- **Sustainability:** Embedding the Whole School Approach requires long-term commitment and ongoing evaluation to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.
- **Resource Allocation:** Adequate allocation of resources, including funding, time, and personnel, is crucial for implementing and maintaining the Whole School Approach.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Schools need to be culturally sensitive and address the unique needs of diverse student populations to ensure inclusivity and equitable access to mental health support.

Why a Whole-School Approach?

Research consistently demonstrates that a whole-school approach to emotional well-being has profound benefits for the entire school community. Smith (2022) highlights the positive impact of such an approach, including improved academic performance, enhanced social-emotional skills, reduced behavioural issues, and increased overall well-being. By addressing emotional needs proactively, schools can create an atmosphere where students feel safe, understood, and empowered to navigate life's challenges.

Implementing a Whole-School Approach: Key Strategies

- 1) Providing Professional Development:** Johnson and Anderson (2023) emphasize the importance of equipping educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to support students' emotional well-being effectively. Regular professional development sessions can introduce therapeutic techniques, enhance empathic communication, and equip teachers with practical strategies for fostering emotional resilience.
- 2) Creating a Supportive Environment:** A positive school climate plays a crucial role in promoting emotional well-being. Educators can cultivate a nurturing environment by integrating mindfulness practices, promoting inclusivity, fostering positive relationships, and implementing restorative justice practices (Brown, 2021). These efforts contribute to a sense of belonging, safety, and social connectedness among students.
- 3) Collaborating with Mental Health Professionals:** Therapy Partners school counsellors, psychologists, and other mental health professionals serve as essential partners in our whole-school approach. Embedding within local schools offering ongoing onsite support and working collaboratively with SMT we offer early intervention, personalised support, and comprehensive mental health services for students in need. By incorporating our expertise into the school's wellbeing strategy enhances the effectiveness of the approach.
- 4) Involving Families and the Community:** A holistic approach to emotional well-being extends beyond the school walls. Engaging families and the wider community in promoting emotional wellness creates a strong network of support. Regular communication, workshops, and partnerships with community organizations can strengthen the foundation for students' well-being both inside and outside the school environment.

Summary

A whole-school approach is not just a theoretical concept; it is a transformative framework that empowers educational communities to prioritise emotional well-being. By implementing evidence-based strategies, fostering collaborative partnerships, and engaging all stakeholders, schools can create an environment where emotional well-being is not only valued but also actively promoted. Together, we can build a nurturing educational ecosystem that fosters resilience, growth, and flourishing for every student.

References:

1. Smith, J. (2022). The Impact of a Whole-School Approach on Emotional Well-being: A Comprehensive Review. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 45(3), 120-135.
2. Johnson, A., & Anderson, B. (2023). Implementing a Whole-School Approach: Strategies and Challenges. *Journal of School Counselling*, 18(2), 67-82.
3. Brown, C. (2021). *Promoting Resilience and Mental Health in Schools: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Routledge.
4. National Association of School Psychologists. (2022). *Comprehensive School Mental Health: A Call to Action*.

Background: Whole School Approach

Following a literature review we identified the ten key challenges affecting school students and parents that can impact mental health in UK schools:

1) Academic Pressure: High expectations and academic pressure can lead to stress, anxiety, and mental health issues among students. In the UK, a survey conducted by the National Union of Students (NUS) found that 78% of students experienced mental health issues due to academic pressure (NUS, 2018).

2) Bullying and Harassment: Bullying and harassment can have severe negative effects on students' mental health. According to the Department for Education (DfE), in the academic year 2019/2020, 44% of students in England reported experiencing bullying (DfE, 2021).

3) Exam Stress: The pressure to perform well in exams can significantly impact students' mental health. In a survey by the mental health charity Mind, 78% of UK students reported experiencing exam-related stress (Mind, 2019).

4) Social Media and Online Pressures: The rise of social media and online platforms can expose students to cyberbullying, body image issues, and unrealistic standards. The Royal Society for Public Health found that 70% of young people surveyed believed that social media negatively impacted their mental health (RSPH, 2017).

5) Lack of Mental Health Support: Insufficient access to mental health support services in schools can hinder early intervention. The charity Young Minds reported that only 25% of local authorities in England have a fully implemented mental health plan for schools (Young Minds, 2021).

6) Transition and Change: Transition periods, such as starting a new school or moving to a different grade, can cause anxiety and stress among students. The Office for National Statistics reported that approximately 25% of young people experienced symptoms of a mental health disorder during a transition period (ONS, 2020).

7) Pressure to Succeed: The pressure to achieve high grades and secure future opportunities can contribute to mental health problems. The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report found that 30% of UK children aged 10 to 15 were unhappy with their lives due to pressure to succeed (Children's Society, 2021).

8) Lack of Physical Activity: Insufficient physical activity and sedentary lifestyles can negatively impact mental health. The NHS Digital survey reported that 16.0% of children and young people in England aged 5 to 16 did not meet the physical activity guidelines (NHS Digital, 2020).

9) Inequality and Socioeconomic Factors: Socioeconomic inequalities can contribute to mental health issues among students. The Education Policy Institute highlighted that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience mental health problems (EPI, 2020).

10) Stigma and Lack of Awareness: Stigma surrounding mental health and a lack of awareness can prevent students and parents from seeking help. The Time to Change campaign reported that 90% of young people facing a mental health problem have experienced stigma (Time to Change, 2019).

The Impact of Poor Mental Health on Teachers in the UK

Introduction

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, and it plays a crucial role in the lives of individuals working in demanding professions, such as teaching. Teachers in the United Kingdom face numerous challenges that can significantly impact their mental health. This webpage will explore the impact of poor mental health on teachers in the UK, highlighting relevant data, statistics, and research findings.

1) Prevalence of Mental Health Issues Among Teachers

The prevalence of mental health issues among teachers in the UK is a matter of growing concern. According to a survey conducted by the Education Support Partnership in 2021, 84% of education professionals experienced work-related stress, 80% reported feeling demotivated, and 57% experienced symptoms of depression. These figures highlight the substantial impact poor mental health has on teachers within the UK.

2) Increased Workload and Stress

Teachers often face heavy workloads, which can contribute to elevated stress levels and negatively affect mental well-being. The demands of lesson planning, marking assignments, and managing administrative tasks can lead to feelings of overwhelm and burnout. The National Education Union reported that teachers in the UK work an average of 48.2 hours per week, significantly exceeding the average for other professionals. This prolonged exposure to high workloads contributes to increased stress levels and potential mental health issues.

3) Challenging Classroom Environments

Teaching can be challenging due to disruptive behaviour and the need to manage diverse classroom environments. Dealing with unruly students, challenging disciplinary issues, and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere can take a toll on teachers' mental health. Research conducted by the Teacher Development Trust found that teachers' stress levels were significantly affected by disruptive student behaviour, with 79% of teachers reporting this as a primary cause of stress.

4) Lack of Support and Resources

Teachers often report feeling unsupported in their roles, which can exacerbate mental health issues. The increasing demands of the profession, combined with limited resources and inadequate staffing levels, can leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and isolated. A study published in the British Journal of Educational Psychology found that lack of support and resources were significant predictors of stress and burnout among teachers.

5) Impact on Job Satisfaction and Retention

Poor mental health among teachers can lead to reduced job satisfaction and higher turnover rates within the profession. Research conducted by the University and College Union revealed that over half of teachers in the UK have considered leaving the profession due to stress, workload, and mental health concerns. The loss of experienced teachers not only impacts the well-being of individuals but also affects the quality of education for students.

Conclusion

The impact of poor mental health on teachers in the UK is a pressing issue that requires attention. The prevalence of mental health issues among teachers, increased workload and stress, challenging classroom environments, lack of support and resources, and their effect on job satisfaction and retention all contribute to the overall problem. Addressing these concerns and prioritizing the mental well-being of teachers is essential to maintain a healthy educational system in the UK.

References:

1. Education Support Partnership. (2021). Teacher Wellbeing Index 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/teacher-wellbeing-index-2021>
2. National Education Union. (n.d.). Working Hours Campaign. Retrieved from <https://neu.org.uk/advice/working-hours-campaign>
3. Teacher Development Trust. (2015). Developing Great Teaching: Lessons from the International Reviews into Effective Professional Development. Retrieved from [<https://www.tdtrust.org/wp>]



Our Proposal

Future Challenges for Schools

The various challenges affecting wellbeing and mental health over the next five years are variable and dependent on emerging factors, including changes in societal dynamics, educational policies, and socio-political trends. Based on our research and evidence gained by operating within the educational sector for over 5 years our proposal will tackle the existing challenges to be considered when developing our whole school approach for your school(s):

Emerging Challenges

- **Increased Mental Health Concerns and growing demand for mental health support:** There is evidence of a growing need for mental health services in schools due to factors such as academic pressure, social media influence, and societal changes. the Children's Commissioner for England report in 2021 stated that more than 800,000 children in the UK had a probable mental health disorder, representing a significant increase compared to pre-pandemic levels. The prevalence of mental health issues among students is rising, including anxiety, depression, and self-harm.
- **Limited resources:** Schools and academy trusts often struggle with limited resources, including funding and staffing, to adequately address mental health needs, and access to specialised NHS mental health professionals.

- **Stigma and lack of awareness:** Mental health issues may still be stigmatised, leading to reduced awareness, reluctance to seek help, and challenges in implementing mental health initiatives which hinder progress in creating a supportive environment.
- **Teacher well-being and workload:** Teachers' own mental health and well-being can be compromised due to high workloads, which can impact their ability to effectively support students and ultimately themselves.
- **Inadequate Training and Support:** Teachers and staff may lack the necessary training and support to identify and address mental health concerns effectively.
- **Achievement Gap:** Mental health challenges can impact academic performance and widen the achievement gap between students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Inequality Geographical and socio-economic factors:** Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional mental health challenges due to socio-economic factors, which can impact their educational experiences. There may be disparities in access to mental health services, with some students facing barriers due to location and geographical issues.
- **Transition periods:** Transitions between different stages of education, such as primary to secondary school or school to college can be stressful and affect students' mental health.
- **Cyberbullying and online safety:** The varied online platforms have introduced new challenges, including cyberbullying and concerns regarding online safety, which can negatively impact mental health.
- **Social Media:** The increasing use of technology and social media presents challenges in managing digital well-being and the impact it can have on mental health.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engaging parents and guardians in supporting students' mental health can be challenging and may require additional strategies

- **Supporting neurodivergent students:** Students with neurodevelopmental conditions, such as autism spectrum disorders or ADHD, may require specialised support to address their mental health needs.
- **Limited access to NHS statutory external services:** Collaborating with external mental health services and ensuring timely access to appropriate interventions can be challenging, particularly due to long waiting times or limited availability.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Tracking the effectiveness of mental health initiatives, measuring outcomes, and ensuring continuous improvement can be complex without robust monitoring and evaluation systems.

How will our 'Whole School Approach' help support schools?

- 1) Create a supportive school culture:** Foster an environment that promotes mental health, well-being, and open communication through staff training, policy development, and regular awareness campaigns.
- 2) Establish partnerships:** Consult and collaborate with students, staff, parents, families, and other stakeholders to enhance support networks and ensure a comprehensive approach to mental health.
- 3) Provide staff training:** Equip teachers and staff with knowledge and skills to identify mental health concerns, Signpost to provide initial in school counselling support, and signpost students to relevant services.
- 4) Implement early intervention programs:** Develop targeted interventions and programs to identify and support students who may be at risk of mental health difficulties.
- 5) Provide in-school counselling services:** Provide access to qualified mental health professionals within the school setting to offer counselling and therapeutic support to students and staff.

6) Look to develop peer support programs: Facilitate peer mentoring or buddy systems where older students support younger students, which can create a positive social support network within the school.

7) Integrate mental health into the curriculum: Embed mental health education within the curriculum to enhance understanding, promote well-being, and reduce stigma.

8) Enhance parental involvement: Engage parents in mental health discussions, provide resources, and create opportunities for them to support their child's mental well-being.

9) Continue to monitor and evaluate initiatives: We have established monitoring systems to measure the effectiveness of our mental health interventions by collecting clinical impact scores and feedback, which means we can measure effectiveness and make informed adjustments based on outcomes to shape our clinical work.

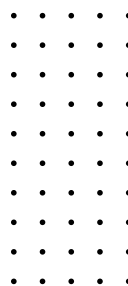
10) Look to seek external support and consultation: Review with educational consultants and local universities to evaluate our approach and ensure evidence-based practices and stay up to date with current research and strategies.

It is essential to note that specific evidence-based therapy and treatment plans will vary depending on individual needs and circumstances. A comprehensive treatment plan should consider assessments. Counselling already carried out by Therapy Partners professionals will be tailored to the specific needs of the student/ staff member. Timelines will also vary based on the severity of the mental health concerns and the recommended treatment approach. Ongoing dialogue and access to relevant research, guidelines, and best practices will be considered when developing treatment plans.

Service Roll Out – a Whole School Approach:

- 1) Training and Professional Development:** Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of mental health issues, identification, and support strategies.
- 2) Mental Health Curriculum:** Integrate mental health education into the curriculum, covering topics such as emotional well-being, stress management, and resilience.
- 3) Positive School Climate:** Foster a positive and inclusive school climate that promotes mental well-being, with clear policies against bullying, discrimination, and stigmatisation.
- 4) Early Intervention and Prevention:** Implement early intervention programs to identify and address mental health concerns at an early stage, preventing escalation.
- 5) Student Support Services:** Ensure access to mental health support services within the school, such as school counsellors, psychologists, and therapists.
- 6) Partnerships and Collaboration:** Collaborate with external organizations, such as mental health charities or local NHS services, to enhance support for students and access additional resources.
- 7) Parental Engagement:** Establish effective channels of communication with parents and guardians, providing information and resources to support their involvement in their child's mental well-being.
- 8) Data Collection and Evaluation:** Regularly collect and analyse data on mental health outcomes, monitoring progress and identifying areas that require improvement.
- 9) Staff Well-being Initiatives:** Prioritize staff well-being initiatives, such as workload management, access to support services, and fostering a positive work environment.
- 10) Community Engagement:** Engage with the wider community to raise awareness of mental health issues and develop partnerships that support students' mental well-being.

Data Measures & Outcomes



It is vital that we can ascertain the severity of symptoms that students are experiencing at the start and end of their therapeutic journey with us. Therefore, where applicable and appropriate, we use assessment questionnaires in both the first and last therapy session.

The questionnaires we use have been validated for use in primary care, and they ask the student to rate the frequency with which they have experienced symptoms associated with either anxiety or depression in the preceding 2 weeks. These questionnaires are as follows:

- **GAD-7 (Generalised anxiety disorder questionnaire)** which reflects the (DSM-5-TR) (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition) criteria. It classifies current symptoms on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day) – the maximum score is 21.
- **PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire-9)** which reflects the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition) criteria. It classifies current symptoms on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day) – the maximum score is 27 ([Assessment | Diagnosis | Depression | CKS | NICE](#))

Outcome Measures for Invicta students in Terms 1-5 in 22/23

PHQ-9:

We used this questionnaire with 22 students, who started their counselling sessions with symptoms of depression. **The results indicated that by the end of their 6 counselling sessions, on average:**

- Their clinical scores improved by 5 points (out of 27).
- Their symptoms had decreased by 23%

GAD-7:

We used this questionnaire with 23 students, who started their counselling sessions with symptoms of depression. **The results indicated that by the end of their 6 counselling sessions, on average:**

- Their clinical scores improved by 3 points (out of 21).
- Their symptoms had decreased by 14%

Staff Feedback in 2022 & 2023:

On a scale of 1-10, how helpful did you find Therapy?	On a scale of 1-10, how happy are you with the service your Therapist provided?	On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the service Therapy Partners provided?	Date & Comments
10	10	10	"Really great sessions with Rachel - just wanted to say thank you so much, I have valued this opportunity to grow and I really am grateful for the support from Rachel and the progress made in sessions." Jan 2022
9	10	10	April 2023
10	10	10	April 2023
10	10	10	"My therapist was able to build a quick and strong relationship. I felt these sessions were highly useful and would recommend others using this service." June 2023
9	10	9	June 2023

Collaboration

Our strong partnership with our partner school's Safeguarding and Inclusion Officer has been a fundamental part of our work within the school. This collaboration has ensured that referrals are handled sensitively, sessions are scheduled effectively, and safeguarding concerns can be communicated and acted upon efficiently and safely. We would therefore seek the same partnership with your school(s) in order to replicate this successful way of working.

Please click [here](#) to read the full report!