



Department
for Education

Learning outcomes for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges

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This document sets out the learning outcomes that will enable a senior mental health lead to implement and sustain an effective whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting, aligning to the 8 principles outlined in [Public Health England's \(PHE\) promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#).

Every senior mental health leads learning needs are unique, and influenced by a range of factors, for example: their prior knowledge and skills, experience, phase of education & type of setting, as well as personal learning preferences.

It is intended that any grant-funded senior lead training received meets the specific needs of each individual, helping them develop either i) all the learning outcomes, or ii) focussing on specific aspects / priority learning needs; and, supports them not only by increasing knowledge but crucially also giving them the practical skills and tools to be able to effect positive whole school or college change.

1. Leadership and management

That champions efforts to promote and support mental health and wellbeing, and that brings about strategic change to deliver an effective whole school or college approach in settings.

What lead will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the benefits of a whole school or college approach, and the purpose and expectations of the senior mental health lead role.
- the factors important to lead strategic change to implement an effective whole school or college approach.
- the importance of working effectively with the senior leadership team, Governors, parents/carers and pupils, and with staff in mandatory roles such as SENCOs, Designated Safeguarding Leads, teachers and Virtual School Heads to deliver a whole school or college approach.
- how the senior lead role fits within the wider mental health system to be able to make best use of mental health support services across the NHS, their Local Authority and Voluntary and Community Sector partners.
- existing best practice in schools and colleges, and the benefits of sharing practice and experiences to sustaining an effective whole school or college approach.
- the importance of collecting and assessing data to support implementation of a whole school or college approach.

What lead will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- create a plan to develop, implement and sustain a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing, tailored to their setting's needs.
- put in place strategies to identify, understand and overcome resistance, and bring key stakeholders with them.
- reflect on personal development needs, and put in place plans to be effective in role.

- sustain and continually improve the approach in their setting, working effectively with peers and support networks.
- build stronger links with appropriate local services and feel empowered to take a role in shaping these.
- monitor the impact of a whole school or college approach in their setting.

2. Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions

To understand and plan appropriate responses to pupils' and students' mental health and wellbeing needs.

What lead will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the impact that poor mental health and wellbeing can have on children and young people's readiness to learn – and other indicators, such as attendance, attention, behaviour and attainment.
- the importance of measuring need across the whole school or college and monitoring the impact of interventions to measure progress and adapt approach.
- the range of mental health issues likely to be encountered in schools and colleges, and the risk factors associated with specific groups, including those who have suffered from trauma, vulnerable groups such as children who have or have had a social worker, looked-after and previously looked-after children, young carers and those identified as [otherwise vulnerable](#), those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- how life experiences can lead to mental health fluctuations.
- how to differentiate when the need of the child or young person would be better met by an education or health intervention, specifically in relation to SEND.
- the tools used by mental health professionals to baseline and measure outcomes of interventions.
- how they can monitor the impact of interventions in their setting.

What leads will be able to

Leads will be able to:

- use (and be able to adapt as required) relevant tools to assess need, and monitor interventions to support pupil and student progress.
- implement a process to identify those who may need additional support, working with other staff across the school to use pre-existing documents, such as Education Health Care Plans, where appropriate.
- make a decision about whether a health or education intervention is more appropriate and access this support with reference to the Local Offer.
- seek feedback from and give feedback to staff, pupils and parents, to ensure those experiencing poor mental health get the support they need to be able to engage in all aspects of school/college life and participate in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

- work with staff, families and local services to understand the mental health and wellbeing issues that could be impacting on behaviour and attendance to improve outcomes for pupils/students, and ensure that all school policies reflect this.
- monitor the impact of interventions provided to individuals or small groups and adapt the approach as needed.

3. Targeted support and appropriate referrals

To ensure children and young people can get timely and appropriate support.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the types of statutory and independent mental health services that commonly exist in each local area, the needs they each meet, and when they are appropriate to access as part of a whole school or college approach.
- the importance of forming strong partnerships with local services and the wider community.
- the threshold for making a referral to various services including NHS children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS, previously CAMHS), and the scope and limitations of what the NHS can offer.

What lead will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- work in partnership with local service providers and mental health professionals (including Mental Health Support Teams where these are in place) to ensure the needs of pupils and students and relevant adults are known, understood and used to shape the local support offer.
- identify and access the most appropriate statutory or independent mental health service provision available in their local area.
- make or support effective referrals to children and young people's or adult mental health services, or other services as appropriate.

4. Staff development

To support their own mental wellbeing, and that of pupils and students.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the importance of staff looking after their own mental health
- the importance of working with staff to promote and support a positive culture of staff mental health and wellbeing.
- evidence-based approaches for supporting their own, staff and pupil or student mental health and resilience, such as trauma informed, counselling, mindfulness and other approaches, and the role these can play as part of a holistic approach.

- signposting and arranging appropriate support for staff dealing with mental health issues and incidents in the school/college.

What lead will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- access and utilise tools, strategies and resources to support their own mental health so that they can look after themselves.
- identify and utilise tools, strategies and resources to confidently engage staff to help promote and support their mental health and wellbeing.
- share simple evidence-based strategies and exercises with staff and pupils/students to help them manage their mental health and develop their own coping strategies.
- facilitate development of school staff, identifying critical training and ensuring that all staff can recognise and understand the process to respond to mental health concerns.
- signpost and increase and promote awareness of resources to support staff.

5. Creating an ethos and environment

That promotes respect and values diversity.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the importance and potential impacts of cross-cultural contexts, health inequalities, disadvantage, discrimination and vulnerabilities within the school/college community and local area and their potential relationship to, and impact on, mental health.
- how critical the relationships between staff, children and young people are in promoting wellbeing and a sense of belonging to - and liking of - school or college.
- the wider interventions that children and young people might be going through, such as contact with the justice system or social services, and how these may impact on mental health and wellbeing.
- the importance of creating an ethos and conditions that support positive behaviours for learning and for successful relationships to provide an emotionally secure and safe environment that prevents any form of bullying or violence.

What leads will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- use their knowledge to effectively communicate a positive values-based approach, and to promote openness and understanding to normalise mental health and its fluctuations throughout life.
- understand how they can use local services/resources to enhance their school/college messaging and develop social, emotional and mental health partners in the community.
- connect different policies and processes (equality & diversity, bullying & harassment, behaviour and safeguarding) to ensure they are working together to support wellbeing.

6. Enabling the Student Voice

So that the voice of every learner is heard and valued, and influences decisions.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the role of pupils and students in developing an inclusive whole school or college approach.
- the importance of ensuring that a range of voices are heard, which reflect the diversity of the pupil and student community.
- a range of strategies for engaging with pupils and students with different communication preferences or needs.
- how and why to feedback to students about the impact that their participation or consultation has had.

What lead will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- develop effective plans to empower and involve pupils and students, including those with additional needs and communication difficulties, in the co-production, and embedding, of their whole school or college approach.
- identify opportunities for appropriate use of pupil or student peer-led wellbeing support.

7. Working with parents, families and carers

So that everyone works as a genuine team around pupils and students, with a consistency of approach and shared aims and strategies.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the importance of effective engagement with parents, families and carers in the local community, to implement an effective whole school or college approach, and to support the mental health of individual pupils and students.
- what prevents some parents, families and carers from engaging.
- how they can make their school or college feel more accessible.
- a range of strategies for successfully engaging parents, families and carers in mental health, including when relationships are difficult or a parent, carer or child is distressed.

What leads will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- develop strategies to engage parents, families, carers, virtual school heads and the local community in promoting a culture of wellbeing within and outside school hours.
- develop positive relationships and work jointly with parents, families and carers from a range of backgrounds.
- support or signpost relevant evidence-based resources for parents, families and carers so they can develop skills and strategies to support both their child and themselves.

8. Curriculum, teaching and learning

To promote resilience and support social and emotional learning.

What leads will learn about

Leads will learn about:

- the mental health and wellbeing content in the statutory health education curriculum in schools (PSHE and RSHE programmes), and associated guidance on the safe teaching of difficult mental health issues, including the importance of close collaboration with leads for child protection/pastoral/safeguarding and SENCOs, to ensure that teaching is age and developmentally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of all pupils.
- how to integrate mental health and wellbeing into the wider curriculum to support outcomes for pupils and students.

What lead will be able to do

Leads will be able to:

- develop, with others, a cross curricular approach to promote mental health and wellbeing.
- recognise the links between physical and mental health and how to work across the school to promote this.



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