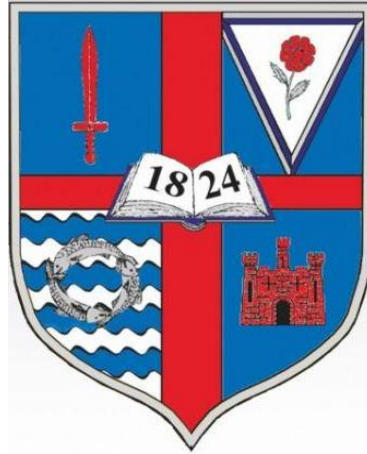


Macosquin Primary School



Health and Well-being Education Policy



‘Together as a school family, we are committed to nurturing and motivating our children, enabling them to reach their full potential and shine- today and in the years ahead!’

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1. Rationale

At Macosquin Primary School we recognise and value the importance of health and well-being in child development and the need to encourage healthy lifestyle habits from an early age, to help children reach their full potential. Thus it is embedded in our school ethos. It is important we consider all elements of our work to ensure that awareness of healthy living and well-being is promoted to all members of the school and wider community. Our school not only promotes but teaches health and well-being through a broad and balanced curriculum, school assemblies, pupil participation, Shared Education and dedicated celebration events.

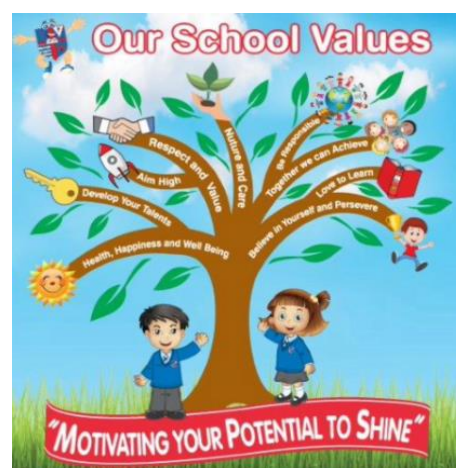
We believe that the school, in partnership with parents and carers, can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of what a healthy lifestyle is and helping them to make healthy choices. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's suite of safeguarding and pastoral care policies.

2. School Ethos

'Together as a school family, we are committed to nurturing and motivating our children, enabling them to reach their full potential and shine- today and in the years ahead!'



As a School Community we aim to achieve our vision by developing our Core Values which will help all our pupils to achieve their potential and shine! Our core value **'Health, happiness and Well-Being,'** is a fundamental part of Health Education at Macosquin Primary School. It ensures self-esteem, health and happiness are at the core of our pupils' education and that our pupils gain the strategies needed to maintain their well-being throughout their lives.



3. Aims and Objectives

At Macosquin we aim to:

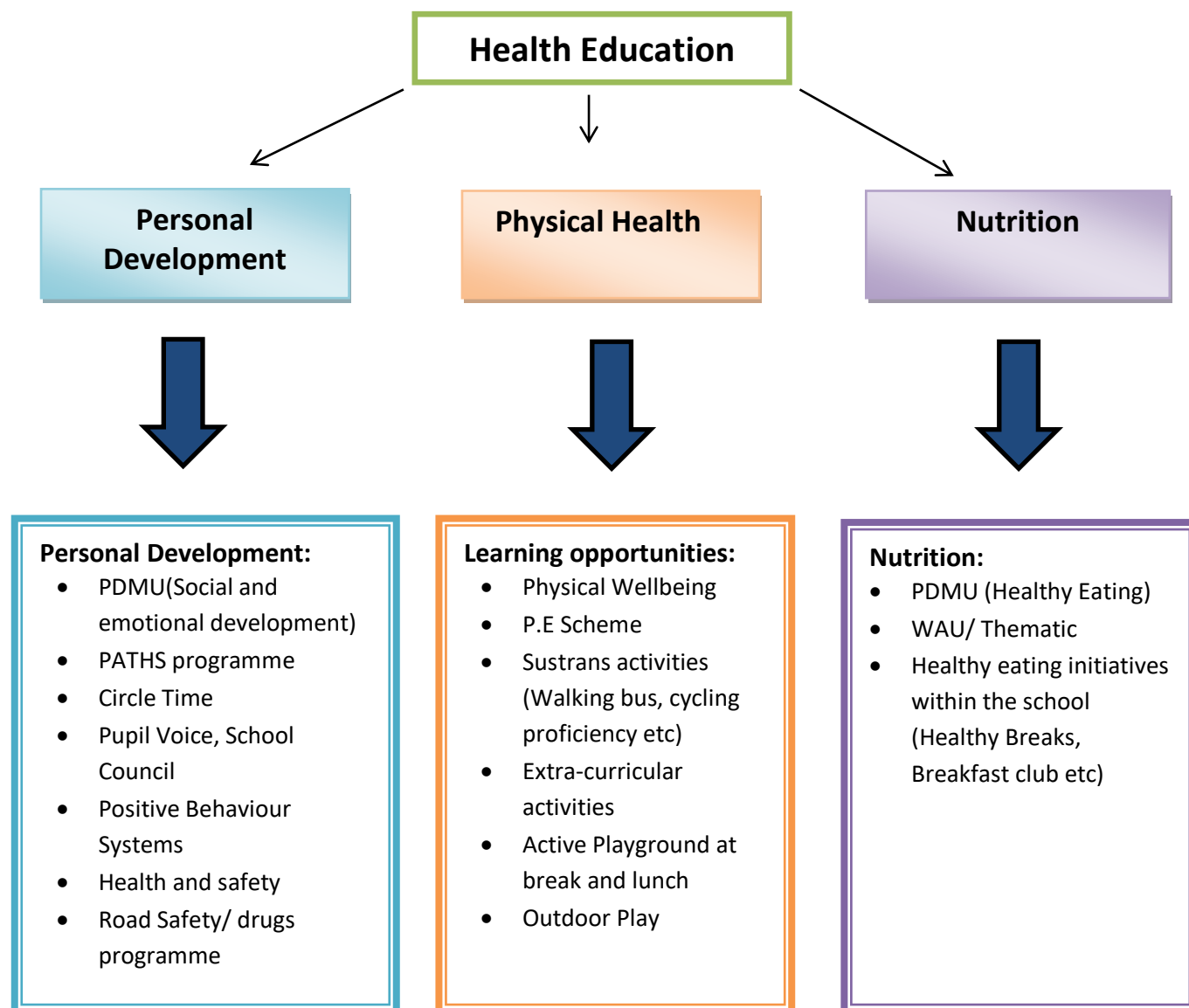
- To promote the physical, social, mental and emotional health and well-being of all pupils within the school environment.
- To work with outside agencies in meeting the health and well-being needs of the whole school.
- Provide Health Education throughout the curriculum.
- Encourage parents to become actively involved in Health Education within the school.
- Ensure that children get the recommended time for P.E and take part in active learning opportunities where possible.
- To encourage healthy eating habits among the children in our school.

4. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

At Macosquin Primary School the children are taught about healthy living in order to equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to live positive, successful and healthy lives.

The children are kept aware of health and well-being issues through regular assemblies on the topic of health and well-being. Teachers use displays in school to celebrate the children's work in this area as well as portray important messages on health and well-being. PDMU displays are evident in every classroom. Throughout the various year groups, children receive visits from various community members in order to promote good health such as the Fire Service NI, PSNI, Nurse, Dentist, Sustrans, Coastguard and Farm Safety Officers to educate on lifestyle choices or dangers presented e.g. stranger danger, road safety, firework safety etc.

There are many dimensions to Health Education:



Wellbeing and Mental Health in the Northern Ireland Curriculum

'Wellbeing describes a state of feeling healthy, happy, and that life is going well. Good mental health is a state of wellbeing in which we realise our own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life and work productively, and are able to contribute to our community. Wellbeing and mental health are central to the aim and objectives of the curriculum. Distinct Areas of Learning address wellbeing and mental health explicitly and specify the teaching of social and emotional skills, as well as physical health and safety.'

(Education Authority, 2020)

Our school nurtures the behavioural, emotional and social well-being of our pupils, such development is the key to lifelong well-being and success. Pupils are taught through the PDMU curriculum, PATHS programme and strategies, social stories, circle time and role-play scenarios. Conflict and resolution scenarios are discussed and worry boxes exist in classrooms along with calm corners in younger classrooms. Feelings diaries are used as appropriate and SEBD needs are met through support in our Nurture Room. A specific programme of work e.g. Calm Plan / individual educational/ behaviour plans are also drawn up alongside pupils and parents to help address any concerns and provide suitable support. Growth and mindset activities have been adopted throughout the school in order to promote a positive mindset amongst our pupils. Through our school values we promote perseverance and encourage pupils to believe in themselves. Class Behaviour Management Plans (Ref: Positive Behaviour policy) also promote emotional well-being as children are rewarded for effort and progress in all areas of school life.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) is an Area of Learning in the primary curriculum that links directly to Wellbeing and Mental Health (Ref: PDMU Scheme of Work with PATHS).

Teachers at Macosquin ensure the two connected strands of PDMU are met:

- ✓ Personal Understanding and Health and;
- ✓ Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community.



To embed the majority of the key elements of the first strand our school currently uses the **PATHS** programme from Primary 1 to Primary 7. PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) is an evidence based programme designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness and inter-personal problem solving skills. This is supported by Thematic learning and other Health and Safety topics such as drugs and road safety (Ref: PDMU Scheme of Work with PATHS).

To develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of the second strand of **PDMU**, Macosquin Primary School takes part in a Shared Education Programme every year with several schools in Northern Ireland. This Area of Learning enables children to develop respect for others, explore community similarities and differences and make social relationships.



Physical well-being

Physical wellbeing is strongly linked to mental wellbeing, and it's important that children and young people learn about the role of exercise, healthy eating and healthy habits as part of good health.

'Teachers should give their pupils opportunities to understand the importance of recognising and managing factors that may influence physical and mental health. They should encourage them to explore the range of influences that can have both a positive and negative impact on all aspects of their health and safety.' (Education Authority 2020)

Physical Education is an important Area of Learning in the curriculum. It focuses on children's physical development, health and wellbeing. The Department of Education recommends that schools should provide pupils with at least two hours of curricular Physical Education each week. Exercise not only brings physical benefits but psychological ones too. Research has shown that it can help combat depression and raise self-esteem. Our school uses its own developed PE scheme alongside active outdoor playground sessions and swimming from year 1-7.

All children are encouraged to actively participate in Physical Education and swimming lessons. We also offer a variety of extra-curricular activities including Tennis, Netball, Multi-skills, Surfing, Horse Riding and Football clubs. Some classes in school participate in the Daily Mile initiative, whereby children from each class walk, jog or run with their classmates in the safety of the playground. This helps children improve their physical, emotional and social health and well-being by doing at least 15 minutes of physical activity each day. Additional information is available in the school's PE Policy.

Macosquin Primary School takes part in Sustrans Active School Travel programme. And have achieved Silver status. This programme provides schools with a planned programme of physical activities throughout the year both in and out of the classroom. This programme aims to:

- Increase the number of children who walk, cycle or scoot to school.
- Increase physical activity levels resulting in improved health and well-being.
- Reduce congestion and pollution around our school.
- Increase safety awareness.
- Increase confidence, self-esteem and independence.



See the Sustrans and Road Safety Policy for further information on how the school implements Sustrans into our school curriculum.

During break and lunchtime we have an active playground where each class has a range of physical and fun activities to choose from. We also use playground pals in the playground at break and lunchtime. Older children are trained as playground pals and help the younger children playing games, socialise and help them feel secure outside. Lunchtime supervisors have undergone training in lunchtime routines and also participate in playing active games with children.

Spiritual well-being

Spiritual well-being is promoted through our Christian ethos, weekly RE sessions and maintaining close links with our local churches and clergy. Children enjoy two assemblies every week – one taken by staff which promotes a spiritual and moral theme and one taken by a local minister. Children take part in church events e.g. choir participating in friendship group, Carol Service in local church.

Online Safety

We regularly use the Internet in school. In order to minimise the risk of children coming across unsuitable material, we provide constant supervision, and we use only a filtered service, selected links, and child-friendly search engines. Parents/ pupils are asked to sign authorisation for their child to use the Internet. We also seek parental permission before using photographs of children or their work on the school's website, or in newsletters and other publications. A preventative curriculum is taught through our online safety scheme P1-7 and pupils are made aware of the dangers that can exist through inappropriate contact, conduct and content as well as a yearly visit from the PSNI and attending Bee Safe Events (Ref: Online Safety Policy).

Positive Behaviour/ Anti-Bullying

High standards of behaviour are in place at our School and every member of staff is committed in delivering the Positive Behaviour Policy. School council members have helped create many positive behaviour systems and each class creates a yearly class management plan with rewards and consequences (Ref: Positive Behaviour Policy). Bullying is not tolerated in our school and any incidents of bullying will be

taken seriously and dealt with in accordance to our Anti-Bullying Policy. Anti-bullying is addressed frequently throughout the year in assemblies and also in PDMU sessions in class. A theme is adopted during Anti-Bullying week every year and this is shared with parents via seesaw.

5. Food and Drink Provision Throughout the Day

Our school aims to encourage healthy eating during the school day and guide pupils and parents in choosing a variety of foods to ensure a balanced intake in line with the National nutrition guide and nutrition standards.

Breakfast club

We provide a healthy breakfast for children of families that have an early start to their day. The club offers a calm, clean, happy environment for children to eat a healthy breakfast and to socialise with other children and adults.

Healthy Breaks

Macosquin have a Healthy Break Policy which has been created by the school council. Parents should supply their child with their own break bringing fresh fruit or vegetable portions, natural/fruit yoghurt or a small sandwich/roll with healthy filling for break time. Other snacks such as chocolate, crisps, snack bars, sweet bread etc. will not be allowed to be consumed at break time. Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration. It is impossible for staff to check every child's snack. We rely on our parents to send an appropriate snack following the above guidelines. It is advised that the snack sent to school is fresh as many processed or dried snacks contain high amounts of sugar.

School Meals

The importance of health education in the curriculum is reinforced by the canteen staff, who serve nutritious meals. Free milk/ water are provided with school dinners. All kitchen / school staff value positive relationships with the children and there is a happy atmosphere amongst pupils and staff during lunchtime.

Packed Lunches

To promote healthy eating in packed lunches we will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches and involve pupils and staff. We will talk to parents and carers where necessary and offer advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches. Pupils and parents/carers are responsible for providing a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to bring packed lunches in reusable plastic containers, rather than disposable plastic bags and bottles. Foods are at risk of bad bacteria if they are prepared and stored in warm temperatures, so it is advised that an ice pack is included in the food container.

Water

Research indicates that school children do not drink enough water during the school day and that this affects their concentration and behaviour. The school recognises that children concentrate better, are healthier and more comfortable if they are not dehydrated, and the best way of ensuring adequate fluid intake is to provide access to water as needed. All children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to

school each day. We advise that these bottles are metal, glass or bpa free plastic. This is kept in an accessible place according to the rules of each particular class.

Allergies and Special Diets

All individual pupil allergy or special diets and their needs are entered on the yearly entry records and updated regularly. Canteen staff are alerted of the individual needs. First Aiders names are listed at first aid points around the school.

Nut Free School

We are a nut free school but we cannot guarantee that food products are totally nut free. Parents are asked to refrain from providing food products, which may contain nuts, in packed lunches or any other food brought into the school and children with a nut and/or peanut allergy have an individual management plan. Staff are trained to recognise and manage allergic reactions. All epi-pens are stored in a child's classroom in a safe accessible place. Staff and pupils are made aware of particular allergies through child display in the staff room, in each classroom and the school office. Further information on this subject can be obtained through contacting the school nurse. It is important that there is strict avoidance of this food in order to prevent a life-threatening allergic reaction. Examples of some types of foods that children should avoid bringing to school are listed below:

- Any type of nuts
- Fruit cereal bars containing nuts e.g. Tracker bars, Alpen bars etc. (check the wrapper for ALLERGY ADVICE)
- Nutella spread
- Peanut butter spread
- Bags of nuts
- Bags of fruit and nuts
- Coconut
- Chocolate (Check all packaging- e.g. Cadburys Fruit and Nut or Whole nut or Toblerone Fruit and Nut)

Food Safety

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available, that food handlers undergo appropriate food hygiene training and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. We consult our local Environmental Health Department about legal requirements.

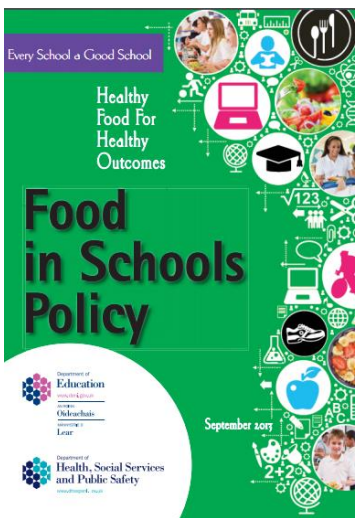
6. Food Advice for Parents and Carers

A good variety and healthy balance of foods as recommended by the Balance of Good Health (Food Standards Agency, 2001):

1. A good portion of starchy food, e.g. lower salt/sugar breakfast cereals, bread, toast, fruit bun or bagel
2. Fruit and vegetable choices such as orange juice, fresh or dried fruit
3. A portion of milk or dairy food e.g. semi skimmed milk on cereals or low fat yogurt
4. A choice of drinks e.g. water, pure fruit juice, and semi skimmed milk
5. An opportunity to have exercise outside when the weather permits

Check out the Government website below and further useful links in Appendix 1 of this Policy, for advice on healthy eating for children.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/healthy-eating-children>
<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/school-meals/healthy-eating>



Resources and References to Support Nutrition can be accessed in Appendix 1.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The whole school Health Education Policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff and parents. The Board of governors will also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a timetabled, on-going review process. Any amendments will be updated throughout the school year.

Appendix 1 Resources for Healthy Eating Education

Education Authority- Healthy Eating

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/school-meals/healthy-eating>

The School Food Plan and School Food Standards

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/>

Healthy Food for Healthy Outcomes- Food in Schools Policy

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/food-in-schools-policy.pdf>

School food in England: Departmental advice for governing bodies

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/393122/School_food_in_England_2015.pdf

Information on food allergens

www.food.gov.uk/allergy and food allergen poster: <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa-dfe-eu-fic-schools-posterv2.pdf>

Government Buying Standards for food and catering services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/food-buying-standards-for-the-public-sector-the-plan-toolkit>

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme fact file

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/5ADAY/Documents/SFVS%20Factfile%20for%20Schools.pdf>

Safer Food Better Business Pack

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/sfbb>

Change 4 Life

www.nhs.uk/change4life

School food plan

www.schoolfoodplan.co.uk

Change 4 Life School Zone

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

Children's Food Trust

Understand your responsibilities and get expert help. Includes 'Let's Get Cooking', online learning, accreditation programme.

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/schools/>

Why kids need to eat well

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/parents/why-kids-need-to-eat-well/>

Food Standards Agency

<http://www.food.gov.uk/>

Food - a fact of life

(provides a wealth of free resources about healthy eating, cooking, food and farming for children and young people aged 3 to 18 years).

<http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/>

British seasonal food chart

<http://www.whats-in-season.com/>

School Food Matters

Examples of best practice and fun ideas to get children cooking, growing and out onto a farm.

<http://www.schoolfoodmatters.com/>

Give Up Loving Pop

Campaign to raise awareness of the health harms associated with over consumption of sugary drinks

<http://www.giveuplovingpop.org.uk/>

Appendix 2 Restarting Education COVID-19 Addendum Section A:

This Guidance is intended as a support for schools as they focus upon the Department of Education's 'Education Restart'.

'COVID-19 has significantly impacted on society as a whole, the impact of the virus and lockdown restrictions have been widely recognised as potentially traumatising experiences. Potentially the whole school community could be affected by these experiences, i.e. staff/pupils/parents/guardians. Safeguarding should permeate all aspects of school life, schools should ensure that this Guidance is read in conjunction with their Special Educational Needs Policy, Child Protection and suite of Safeguarding Policies.'

Taking a 'Trauma Informed Approach' to Education Restart will support the whole school community

Understanding and Responding to Trauma

Trauma affects us all, directly or indirectly. Many people live with the ongoing effects of past and present overwhelming stress – trauma. Despite the large numbers of people affected, many of us often don't think of the possibility that someone we meet, speak with or support may have experienced trauma. This makes us less likely to recognise it. Keeping the possibility of trauma on our radar means keeping the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of people who may be trauma survivors in mind. It means being respectful, acknowledging and understanding. Having a basic understanding of how stress can affect any of us can help this process. Knowing this will make us less likely to fuel other people's stress levels. This means paying attention to the way we engage with other people, as well as to 'what' we do. It also means thinking about what may have *happened* to someone, rather than judging what is 'wrong' with them.

Our interactions with one another are always important. They are especially important for people living with the impacts of trauma. Trauma interrupts the connections between different systems of functioning in the brain. People recover from trauma when disruptions between different levels of functioning – physical, emotional and cognitive (thinking) – become connected or 'integrated' again.

It is important to understand that:

- **positive experiences in our relationships can help us heal**
- **negative experiences make our emotional and psychological problems worse**

We should not underestimate the capacity of positive interactions, even in routine interactions, to be soothing and validating. This applies to all of us and especially to those with trauma histories. Support is crucial to the process of recovery and will ensure that re-traumatisation does not occur.

Positive experiences of relationships are central to trauma recovery. They are also important to general well-being. By employing trauma-informed principles, we can build a 'trauma-informed' society. This creates possibilities for psychological and physical healing on a grand scale.

Predictability

Creating a sense of predictability is a priority – the human brain is designed for predictability, this is what helps us to feel safe and able to settle to learn/engage cognitively. Our nervous system does not respond positively to the uncertainty and the unpredictability that COVID-19 brought and the uncertainty around

being able to make plans for the future (short-term or long-term) is one of the key factors as to why mental health has been impacted so significantly. It is important to ensure that members of school community are kept well-informed of the planning being done by the school and that timetables for example, will be kept as consistent and predictable as possible (think in terms of staffing, classrooms, assignments/tests, social areas that can be used, etc.), it is crucial that this should also include planning activities for pupils and staff to look forward to.

Connection

Our ability to connect with one another has been deeply impacted by the COVID-19. Humans are fundamentally social beings and a major buffer for our mental health is our sense of connection with others. *Within trauma research, COVID-19 has been described a 'paradoxical challenge' to our nervous system; when we are feeling under threat our 'normal' response is to connect with others, but with social distancing etc. we are hampered in activating this coping strategy.* Online activity, the main source of connection throughout COVID-19, has been helpful to a point, but it does not provide the same as face to face interactions do. The aim of such interactions is to seek a shared experience which is much harder to achieve online.

Consistent use of the following strategies will promote connectedness:

- Class teachers/form tutors/key adults need to be involved in **face to face return meetings** with pupils
- For pupils within the 'vulnerable category' regular **connection time** needs to be maintained, <https://www.educationni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Guidance%20on%20Vulnerable%20Children%20and%20Young%20People.pdf>
- *Social interactions regulate physiology and promote health and restoration*, so identify and teach any replacement behaviours that will be required e.g. "Instead of hugging we now tap toes" or, "For meet and greet we touch elbows"
- Ensure that the emphasis is on **physical distance rather than social distance**, consideration must also be given to social and emotional 'connection' time, with each other and with staff.

Communication and Information

In order to create feelings of safety and connection, communication needs to be clear and accessible. We need to rethink our responses to behaviours that seem inappropriate or challenging in light of the fact that COVID-19 has created a 'trauma environment' for everyone, consider these key areas that the school community may now have heightened anxiety around:

- feeling safe, physically and emotionally
- being in physical proximity to others
- physical contact

Clear communication is needed to explain how such anxieties are being navigated by school, with opportunities for fears to be shared and discussion as to how they can be alleviated. This communication needs to be ongoing and reciprocal.

Emotional Health and Well-Being

Safe, Seen, Soothed

In order to make wellbeing a priority, the focus should be on helping the whole school community to feel safe, seen and soothed. This will be particularly important for those who have not felt safe during COVID-19 restrictions. **Safe** can be achieved through predictability, communication and connection as discussed. **Seen** can be achieved through dedicated face to face time and a willingness to listen and see things from the other person's perspective. **Soothed** can be achieved by understanding behaviour within a trauma framework and first responses to behaviour should be focussed upon co-regulation, rather than consequences.

Connect before Correct

Remember that behaviour needs to be understood and responded to within a COVID-19/Trauma Informed Practice framework. Dr. Bruce Perry, an influential neuroscientist within the field of trauma, recommends that first we should help the pupil to **regulate** and calm their fight/flight/freeze responses. Then we need to **relate** and connect through an attuned and sensitive relationship before attempting to **reason**, i.e. support reflection, learning/remembering a more appropriate alternative to the behaviour.

Movement ('Mobilisation' within a trauma framework)

Greater priority should be given to movement and activities that involve rhythm and creativity. This will help reduce some of the 'numbing' that occurred during COVID-19 restrictions, again particularly relevant in terms of excess screen time, video gaming, substance abuse etc. and lack of interpersonal interactions.

Movement breaks should be scheduled regularly, all pupils and staff will benefit from greater access to exercise, dance, music, mindfulness, yoga etc. during their school day.

"Stress Brake"

The impact of significant disruption to everyday life and ongoing uncertainty, means that minor everyday stressors that we previously would have managed can now overwhelm our ability to cope, this can reinforce feelings of stress and create a very negative cycle. Therefore, we need to be ready to be the ones to pull the 'stress brake' for pupils and colleagues:

- take a preventative approach, identify and respond to early stress signals
- be ready to provide greater support for tasks or challenges that the individual would previously have managed independently and have flexible expectations.