

Behaviour and mental health in schools

Best practice examples and resources

The [behaviour and mental health in schools inquiry](#) was set up to explore the links between behaviour and mental health in schools, to understand the impact of school behaviour policies on young people's mental health and to understand what can be done to change the approach in schools to better support behaviour, mental health and wellbeing.

Throughout the inquiry, we collected evidence of best practice and useful resources focused on behaviour and mental health. We have collated the resources, research and literature we were made aware of during the inquiry in this document.

Government guidance on behaviour and mental health

Behaviour in schools guidance

Government guidance on how school staff can develop a behaviour policy and promote good behaviour in school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>

Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance

Government guidance on how schools can support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour and how to create a whole school culture.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

The guidance is a summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and examples of effective practice.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

School suspensions and permanent exclusions

Government guidance and legal responsibilities on the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from local-authority-maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Whole school approach - Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

Guidance on the 8 principles of a whole school or college approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>

Statistics

Mental health of children and young people

Data collected by NHS Digital on the mental health of children and young people living in England, as well as their household circumstances and their experiences of education, employment and services.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey>

Special educational needs (SEN)

Statistics collected by the Department for Education on pupils with SEN, including information on educational attainment, destinations, absence, exclusions and characteristics.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen>

Pupil attendance in schools

Data on the levels of attendance and overall authorised and unauthorised absence in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. It includes daily, weekly and yearly information on attendance and absence, in addition to reasons for absence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>

Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England

This publication from DfE presents statistics on suspensions and permanent exclusions across state-funded schools and includes data on the reasons schools report for suspending and excluding pupils, suspensions and permanent exclusions by pupil characteristics, and permanent exclusion independent review panels.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england>

Research and reports

BACP: Trauma-informed approach in schools helps staff and benefits students

This report by BACP says that trauma-informed schools could make a positive difference to young people's behaviour and to their mental wellbeing, attainment and future life chances.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/9-january-trauma-informed-approach-in-schools-helps-staff-and-benefits-students-new-report-says/>

Centre for Mental Health: Trauma, challenging behaviour and restrictive interventions in schools

This briefing focuses on restrictive interventions in schools, highlighting the way they can exacerbate distress and behaviour problems among children who have experienced trauma.

<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/trauma-challenging-behaviour-and-restrictive-interventions-schools>

Chance UK: Making the case for preventing primary school suspensions and exclusions

This briefing explores primary school exclusions, setting out why exclusions at primary school level are a problem, some of the key issues that are leading to increasing numbers of primary school exclusions and how children can be better supported to prevent exclusion.

<https://www.chanceuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Preventing-Primary-School-Exclusions-Policy-Briefing-FINAL.pdf>

Education Endowment Fund: Improving behaviour in schools evidence review

This evidence review synthesises the best available international evidence regarding approaches to behaviour in schools.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Improving_Behaviour_in_Schools_Evidence_Review.pdf

Frontiers in Psychology: Evaluation of Passport Skills for Life programme

Randomized control study of the implementation and effects of a new mental health promotion program to improve coping skills in 9- to 11-year-old children.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.573342/full>

Partnership for Children: Zippy's Friends and Apple's Friends programmes

An evaluation of the Zippy's Friends and Apple's Friends programmes by The Trimbos Institute, the Netherlands (2016).

<https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/uploads/Files/evaluation/Trimbos%20Evaluation.pdf>

Place2Be: Mental health support can reduce exclusions

This study from Place2Be and the University of Cambridge shows how school-based mental health interventions may positively influence educational engagement as well as mental health.

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2022/may/in-school-mental-health-support-can-reduce-school-exclusions-finds-place2be-and-university-of-cambridge-study/>

University of Oxford: Alex Timpson attachment and trauma awareness training in schools programme

The aim of this programme was to explore the impact of attachment and trauma awareness training on schools and young people.

<https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/the-alex-timpson-attachment-and-trauma-programme-in-schools/>

Literature

Paul Dix: When the Adults Change

Series of books delivers exceptional training with leading edge thinking by Paul Dix

<https://whentheadultschange.com/>

Purchase: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/When-Adults-Change-Everything-Changes/dp/1781352739>

Simpson and Barker: A school without sanctions

Offers an innovative approach to behaviour management in schools, prioritising compassion and behaviour modification over punishment.

SecEd article: [Vulnerable students: A school without sanctions](#)

Purchase: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/School-Without-Sanctions-Steven-Baker/dp/1472974522>

Dave Whitaker: The Kindness Principle: Making relational behaviour management work in schools

Advocates a behaviour management approach rooted in values, acceptance and a genuine understanding of children's behaviour.

Purchase: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Kindness-Principle-relational-behaviour-management/dp/1781353859>

Square Pegs: Inclusivity, compassion and fitting in – a guide for schools

A book for educators who find themselves torn between a government/Ofsted narrative around behaviour, attendance and attainment, and their own passion for supporting square pegs and their families.

Purchase: <https://www.crownhouse.co.uk/square-pegs>

Guidance

Council for Disabled Children: Disabled Children and the Equality Act 2010: What teachers need to know and what schools need to do

This guide is designed to help teachers understand the legislation and how it applies to their work with disabled pupils in their school.

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Equality%20Act%20Guide%20for%20schools.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools

This guidance is designed to support schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-schools>

The Traveller Movement: Good Practice Guide for Improving Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children in Education

This report outlines good practice in the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller school children.

<https://education.travellermovement.org.uk/good-practice-guide/>

SEND the Right Message: Supporting your Neurodiverse Child – written for parents by parents

SEND the Right Message (STRM) Support Services, My Own Time and Space (MyOTAS), and Essex Family Forum have produced a pack which is full of useful information, personal experiences, tips, best practice and an overview of the most relevant information that can help support families with a neurodiverse child.

<https://strmsupport.co.uk/ecc-supporting-your-neurodiverse-child/>

Resources and helpful websites

Barnardo's: Education Community

Platform for education staff across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, providing a range of free resources, training and support.

<https://www.educators-barnardos.org.uk/>

Place2Be: Mental health support in schools

Place2Be provides child counselling and mental health support in schools, including primary, secondary, high and all-through schools across England, Scotland and Wales.

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/services-for-schools/mental-health-support-in-schools/>

Khulisa: Therapeutic support for young people

Khulisa provides a range of support to excluded or marginalised young people whose behaviour is deemed challenging, and the professionals, peers and carers who support them. Khulisa deliver therapeutic group programmes for young people, and also train professionals, parents and carers in how to create trauma-informed environments.

<https://www.khulisa.co.uk/>

Nurture UK: The Boxall Profile

This unique online tool assesses the social, emotional and mental development of pupils aged 4-18. It provides you with a precise picture of a pupil's strengths, as well as any difficulties which could affect their learning.

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/what-we-do/the-boxall-profile/>

UNICEF UK: Rights Respecting Schools

Award programme run by UNICEF to support schools to become Rights Respecting, providing training, lesson plans and guidance.

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school/>

Training

Emotion Coaching UK

Emotion Coaching UK develops and provides training and consultancy for educational establishments and other groups where adults interact with children and young people on emotion coaching.

<https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>

Thrive Approach

Thrive training equips staff in schools, trusts, early years settings or colleges to understand, identify and tackle the root causes of behaviour, so more time is spent productively on learning.

<https://www.thriveapproach.com/>

Trauma Informed UK Schools

Provide appropriate training for schools, communities and organisations so that they become trauma-informed and mentally healthy places for all.

<https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/>

Work in the devolved nations

ACE Hub in Wales

Set up to support Welsh society to create an ACE Aware Wales and make Wales a leader in tackling, preventing and mitigating ACEs.

<https://aceawarewales.com/about/>

Scottish Government: Guidance on preventing school exclusions from the Scottish Government

Part two of guidance document 'Included, Engaged and Involved', which refreshes the national policy on preventing and managing school exclusions.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/>

Scottish Government: Nurture and trauma-informed approaches: A summary of supports and resources

An overview and exemplars of nurture and trauma-informed approaches, including a framework to support whole school improvement through a nurturing lens.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/nurture-and-trauma-informed-approaches-a-summary-of-supports-and-resources/>

To read the report and its accompanying documents, use this QR code:

