

The Well-Being Programme

Well-Being and the National Healthy School Standard (NHSS)

Guidance has been issued by the National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) as part of a more rigorous approach. Since September 2005, schools have had to show evidence of meeting the criteria in **all four** of the core NHSS areas in order to gain Healthy School status:

1. personal, social and health education
2. healthy eating
3. physical activity
4. emotional health and wellbeing

“A Healthy School promotes the health and wellbeing of both its pupils and its staff”

The Well-Being Programme addresses a wide range of the issues, which are predominantly included in the fourth area. These include leadership and change management; the professional development of staff; school environment and culture; and identifying and supporting the emotional-health needs of staff. The Well-Being Programme has raised awareness within countless schools that the emotional health of their pupils is directly linked to, and dependent on, the emotional health of their staff. These schools have successfully started to look at the school community as a whole and many of them have used their participation in the Well-Being Programme as evidence to help them qualify for Healthy School status.

- The NHSS explicitly demands a whole-school approach. As the Well-Being Programme is based on a survey of all staff groups, gives every individual a voice and encourages the development of personal responsibility, it can be used as evidence of meeting this NHSS requirement
- Well-Being encourages staff engagement in communication, decision making, change management and personal and professional development, all of which impact on staff (and thus pupil) wellbeing
- The NHSS also states the need for clear leadership in creating and managing an environment that enhances emotional health and wellbeing. The leadership team can play an important role by ensuring the issue becomes embedded in the school ethos through channels such as the school development plan and performance management procedures
- The WLS Employee Assistance Programme can help a school attain the NHSS criterion of providing a “confidential, pastoral support system” for staff. Well-Being also helps meet this requirement (and one related to training staff in pastoral roles) through appointing and training ‘facilitators’ who can guide staff to sources of support and help them take responsibility for their own wellbeing
- Another NHSS criterion states that a school should make explicit the values of emotional health. Being part of the Well-Being Programme ensures that emotional health and wellbeing become a deep-rooted part of a school’s language and culture. Including the Well-Being Programme in the school’s prospectus and displaying evidence that staff are included in the Healthy School ethos will also ensure a high profile for emotional health and wellbeing within the school

- The Well-Being Programme's survey can identify groups of staff who feel they need further professional development; it therefore helps schools to retain these vital staff members by acting on this information and providing training and development opportunities before it is too late
- Well-Being raises staff awareness of the importance of their own wellbeing and the contribution they, as individuals, make to a healthy and effective school - and to healthy and effective pupils. Staff can make a difference by modelling behaviours they want their pupils to adopt; anti-bullying or behaviour-management policies aimed at pupils can similarly be turned into HR policies for staff
- The NHSS recommends ongoing assessment, using self-evaluation tools as a starting point. The Well-Being Programme's survey enables staff to evaluate their own wellbeing annually within the school's wider context. The ultimate aim is to bring about a long-term, sustainable, positive shift in both individual wellbeing (that of both staff and pupils) and school culture

Providing evidence of being a Healthy School is a key part of meeting the new Ofsted requirements under the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Gaining Healthy School status, and the role the Well-Being Programme plays in this, therefore forms a core part of a school Profile.

Government has set a target that all schools will be participating in the National Healthy Schools Programme by 2009 and that 75% of schools will have achieved National Healthy School status.