

PE2183/A: Make Suicide Awareness and Prevention training mandatory for high school students

Scottish Government written submission, 1 October 2025

Thank you for your email of 10 September 2025 on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee seeking the Scottish Government's views on the petition submitted by Craig Paton. The Scottish Government is grateful to the petitioner for raising an issue that is of great importance to the young people of Scotland.

It may help if I set out the basis of Scotland's current curriculum framework, the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). CfE is a broad, national framework and is not a statutory curriculum prescribed to the level of individual courses that must be followed by each school. Health and Wellbeing (HWB) is one of the eight curricular areas within CfE and is fundamental to children and young people's learning. Its importance is reflected in its central position in the curriculum, its prominence in the Scottish Attainment Challenge, and its role within the National Improvement Framework for Education. Alongside literacy and numeracy, HWB is one of the three core areas identified as a Responsibility of All, meaning all staff across the school community share responsibility for its delivery. The HWB curriculum is designed to ensure learners develop the knowledge, skills, capabilities, and attributes they need for their mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing, both now and in the future.

An overview of the HWB Curriculum is noted below:

- Primary education: delivered through six organisers – mental, emotional, social and physical (MESP) wellbeing, planning for choices and changes, food and health, physical education, physical activity and sport, substance misuse, and relationships, sexual health, and parenthood (RSHP).
- Secondary education: delivered through Physical Education (PE), Home Economics (HE), and Personal and Social Education (PSE).
- Senior phase: vocational and academic pathways in HWB support further study or employment in health, care, sport, and wellbeing sectors.

Resources to support learning in mental health, self-harm, and suicide prevention are available from Education Scotland, including professional learning and links to NHS Inform. Schools are encouraged to consult with children and young people to ensure learning meets their needs, and to integrate support for positive mental wellbeing across the curriculum. These resources were published in 2022 and updated in 2023, however they remain current.

[Safeguarding: Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

There are also resources on positive mental wellbeing, which provide a comprehensive package of information including information on support organisations, to support primary and secondary school staff to support positive mental wellbeing. These resources were published in 2020 and updated in 2024.

Education Scotland is leading on development and delivery of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC). This represents a planned and systematic approach to strengthening the curriculum to ensure it remains forward looking, and supports more consistent teaching and learning experiences and improved attainment and achievement of our children and young people. The CIC, which covers all curricular areas including Health and Wellbeing (HWB), is considering all curricular areas and key aspects – including the subject area of HWB, where work is already underway, drawing on robust interrogation of evidence and a co-design process with practitioners and wider stakeholders of the curriculum. The CIC aims to ensure HWB remains a key part of Scottish education for children and young people, responsive to both local and global priorities. The Cycle will consider curriculum content, the role of knowledge, transitions across early years, primary and secondary, and strong progression between Broad General Education (BGE) and the Senior Phase. Work to update all eight curricular areas under Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), including Health and Wellbeing, began in academic year 2024/2025. Further information and updates on progress can be found on the Education Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle webpage - [Curriculum Improvement Cycle – Education Scotland](#).

I hope the information contained in this letter is helpful to the Committee in their consideration of this petition.

Learning Directorate, Curriculum and Qualifications Division