Health and Well-being Curriculum

Introduction
Members asked for information about the coverage of LGBT issues and also coverage of mental health issues in the ‘PSE’ curriculum. These are both covered by the ‘Health and Well-being” experiences and outcomes as part of the broad general education.

Health and Well-being “across the curriculum”
Health and well-being, like literacy and numeracy, is to be integrated across the curriculum rather than only be treated as a ‘stand-alone’ subject. The experiences and outcomes cover:

- mental, emotional, social and physical well-being
- planning for choices and changes
- physical education, physical activity and sport
- food and health
- substance misuse
- relationships, sexual health and parenthood

“Principles and practice”
The ‘Principles and Practice’ documents provide an overview of the approach to each of the BGE subject areas. The following extracts from Health and Well-being are particularly relevant to the issues of both equalities and mental health.

Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and the wider school community.

Everyone within each learning community, whatever their contact with children and young people may be, shares the responsibility for creating a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust

Practical responsibilities include understanding of anti-discriminatory, anti-bullying and child protection policies by all staff and knowledge of the steps to be taken in any given situation, including appropriate referral.

In relation to individual support and pastoral care:

It is important that children and young people feel that they can share their anxieties with an appropriate individual who has the skills, rapport, responsibility and the time to listen and to help, or can identify appropriate sources of support.

Experiences and Outcomes
Relevant Es and Os are listed below:
• I can expect my learning environment to support me to: acknowledge diversity and understand that it is everyone’s responsibility to challenge discrimination, develop my self-awareness, self-worth and respect for others

• I understand and develop my physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and social skills

• I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.

• I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.

• As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.

While LGBT issues are not addressed specifically in the Es and Os, the breadth of language enables them to be covered. For example, at ‘second level’ there is an E&O:

• I understand that a wide range of different kinds of friendships and relationships exist.

and at ‘third/fourth’ level (S3):

• I understand my own body’s uniqueness, my developing sexuality, and that of others.

An ‘impact report’ on health and well-being, published by Education Scotland in 2013, noted that:

Most schools need to do more to ensure that the entire school community is aware of its approaches to promoting and enhancing health and wellbeing. In particular they could do more to inform all stakeholders about how they can contribute to and support the crucial aspects of mental, emotional and social health and wellbeing.

**Sex and Relationships Guidance**

Scottish Government guidance on “Conduct of relationships, sexual health and parenthood education in Schools” was updated in 2014. this states:

36. It is also important that RSHP education addresses diversity and, for example, reflects issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people or children with LGBTI parents, such as same sex marriage and hate-crime reporting. A survey has shown that LGBT young people experience high levels of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Another useful resource for schools and teachers is the ‘Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools, a Toolkit for Teachers’. As indicated above, all bullying is wrong.

45. A focus on relationships throughout RSHP education is vital in order to encourage discussion and critical thinking about young people’s rights and to
promote questioning of gender stereotypes and gender inequality. During these discussions, use of gender neutral and non-judgemental language is good practice and is highly recommended to ensure that children and young people feel included at all times and are embraced as full members of the school community.

In relation to denominational schools, the guidance stated:

41. National guidance on the curriculum is always developed on the basis of wide consultation. It is recognised that religious authorities with a role in denominational education provide guidance on RSHP education for their denominational schools and that right will continue as at present. This national guidance should be seen to be complementary to the guidance provided by the religious authority while at the same time serving as a useful basis for everyone.

RSHP guidance from the Scottish Catholic Education Committee, “Called to Love”, is available from the Scottish Catholic Education Service. SCEC states that:

Called to Love is a set of resources which support the delivery of education about relationships and aspects of health education, designed for young people of secondary school age, and built on a Catholic Christian vision of loving relationships and marriage. The Catholic Bishops of Scotland recommend the proper and judicious use of these resources by teachers who have been appropriately trained to ensure that their approach is both faithful to Church teaching and cognisant of statutory guidance.

Learning Resources
The Education Scotland website includes resources relating to equalities in schools, including LGBT issues, which teachers can use if they wish.


For example, one learning resource (“Embedding Equality” 2015) has been developed to help learners:

- Understand what is meant by LGBT.
- Have an awareness of their own attitudes and values around LGBT identities.
- Can express their feelings in an appropriate manner.
- Are able to reflect on others’ views and values respectfully.
- Learners can discuss sexual orientation as a political, social and emotional issue.

Mental health as an additional support need
Members also said they were interested in the way that schools dealt with mental health issues as an additional support need. The ASL report to parliament 2016 (the final statutory report under the 2004 Act), focuses on mental health. As part of this report, Education Scotland set out what they consider to be good practice:

Strategic Actions

- Authorities and schools have a clear strategy or policy for supporting children and young people who experience mental health difficulties.
Systematic, research-based approaches are in place to measure the impact of support, interventions and programmes related to children’s and young people’s mental health.

Schools establish a nurturing ethos and culture which ensures that all young people including those with mental health difficulties to feel valued and engage with learning.

Local authorities and services provide high quality training which builds the capacity of school communities to meet the increasingly diverse mental health needs of children and young people.

Planning and Partnership

Schools deliver effective planning for vulnerable children through enhanced support during key transition periods.

Well-targeted, personalised support for children with mental health needs is based on high quality assessment and multi-agency planning.

Schools have high quality partnership working with health professionals who provide specialist support and advice for supporting children, young people.

Peer Support and relationships

Schools provide children and young people with the language to recognise and express feelings and responses and staff share and model appropriate responses and language for children.

Vulnerable children and young people receive sustained support through mentoring to help them to build skills for life and work and achieve a positive post school destination.

Young people take a leading role in supporting vulnerable peers and help to deliver programmes which improve the health and wellbeing of all.

Schools recognise how important positive relationships with each other are to children and young people.

Parliamentary Activity

A member’s debate, proposed by Jenny Gilruth, was held on mental health education on 29th September 2016.

A recent PQ outlines current government policy in relation to supporting pupils with mental health issues.

Question S5W-03058: Pauline McNeill, Glasgow, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 21/09/2016
To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that secondary schools have sufficient resources to provide support for pupils with mental health issues.

Answered by John Swinney (28/09/2016):
The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act (Scotland) 2007 places a number of duties on local education authorities including ensuring that schools are health promoting. This includes promoting physical, social, mental and emotional wellbeing
by supporting pupils to make positive lifestyle choices in relation to their health and wellbeing.

In addition, as part of Curriculum for Excellence, all practitioners are expected to embed aspects of health and wellbeing in their lessons, regardless of what subject specialism they are delivering. It is for the local authority and schools to decide how to develop their own approaches to implement Curriculum for Excellence and they will be using a range of approaches and resources to support children and young people with their mental and emotional wellbeing based on local needs and circumstances.

Education Scotland have developed a national resource to support the development and practice of nurturing approaches for secondary and primary schools. This aims to ensure that all schools are equipped to support all children and young people to have equal opportunities to learn and develop. Education Scotland is also supporting the delivery of ‘Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid: Young People’ training nationally in secondary school communities. This will complement the range of initiatives and approaches to support mental health and mental wellbeing that local authorities already have in place.

By working closely with schools, teachers and parents, as well as other professionals, educational psychologists have a key role in building capacity to meet the learning and mental health needs of pupils. In addition, every school has a named contact in specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) who can be contacted for advice if they have any concerns about a pupil and can provide ongoing support.

The Scottish Government is due to publish an update to its mental health strategy.

A recent SPICE briefing (September 2016), provides the broader context of child and adolescent mental health.

In relation to LGBT issues and education, the Equalities and Human Rights Committee recently held an evidence session bullying and harassment which included coverage of LGBT issues. Witnesses included representatives from TIE (Time for Inclusive Education) which has been campaigning for greater inclusion of LGBT issues in school education. The Scottish Government is due to publish updated guidance on preventing bullying, but have said they will delay this to take on board issues raised at this meeting.

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