

# Report

Report to:	<b>Education Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>18 August 2020</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing through Transition, Reconnection and Recovery: An Attachment Informed Approach</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on the guidance prepared for educational establishments to support positive mental health and wellbeing during the post COVID recovery period; and
- ♦ report on progress made on the implementation of the Education Resources Attachment Strategy.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) note the guidance prepared during the period of the pandemic for educational establishments, on supporting mental health and wellbeing through transition, reconnection and recovery: an attachment informed approach
- (2) note the revised arrangements for the launch and implementation of the Education Resources Attachment Strategy
- (3) note additional approaches available in schools and services to support mental health and wellbeing

## 3. Background

- 3.1. It is acknowledged that the Coronavirus pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our lives. As we move forward into a 'new normal', it is recognised that we must take account of the individual experiences of our children, young people, families and staff, consider that for some there will be a need for recovery and acknowledge that for all there will be a need to reconnect. Moving forward, relationships will matter more than ever and establishments will need to take an attachment informed approach to support reconnection and promote recovery and resilience.
- 3.2. Against this backdrop, the Educational Psychology Service has developed guidance to support the promotion of positive health and wellbeing across educational establishments during the period of post COVID recovery- *Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing through transition, reconnection and recovery: an attachment informed approach.*

- 3.3. The guidance is intended for senior managers and practitioners across South Lanarkshire Education Resources in considering their forward planning as we develop new ways of working and move forward, responding to the needs of our education communities.
- 3.4. It is rooted in an attachment informed approach and takes account of:
- best practice, including literature on recovering from critical incidents
  - the Scottish Government's five principles for reopening educational establishments: safe, fair, ethical, clear and realistic
  - South Lanarkshire Council's Education Resources building blocks to recovery.

**Critically, the guidance takes full account of South Lanarkshire Education Resources Attachment Strategy.**

- 3.5. The guidance outlines the key aspects of whole school wellbeing illustrated within ten factors necessary in supporting mental health and wellbeing through transition, reconnection and recovery. Staff are offered guidance and prompted to consider key aspects of practice and next steps for action within the following areas of practice:
1. Promoting an attachment informed ethos and environment that promotes safety, reconnection and belonging
  2. Leadership and action
  3. Effective curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support mental, emotional and physical wellbeing
  4. Enabling children and young people's voices to influence decisions
  5. Staff support and development to support their own wellbeing and that of their children and young people
  6. Identifying need and monitoring impact
  7. Working with parents and carers
  8. Engagement with stakeholders in the wider school community
  9. Transition
  10. Authority approaches to supporting mental health and wellbeing

The guidance document can be accessed via the link below:

<https://t.co/r74sZM2fBu?amp=1>

**4. Implementation of Education Resources Attachment Strategy**

- 4.1. The official launch of the Education Resources Attachment Strategy for all staff was planned for 27 March 2020 but was unfortunately and unavoidably cancelled due to the pandemic crisis.
- 4.2. Elements of the launch included the sharing of the strategy document, distribution of posters, leaflets and pledge cards which illustrate the key elements of attachment-informed practice and the outline of a training plan to incorporate on-line learning and to be compulsory for all staff throughout Education Resources.
- 4.3. The pledge which is central to reconnection and recovery and which is illustrated in the related resources is as follows:
- See the 'whole person'
  - Recognise behaviour as communication

- Respond with compassion
- Act to make a difference
- Believe in change

A short film which sets the scene for the work within the context of the key messages (pledge) central to reconnection and recovery, can be accessed via the link below:

<https://youtu.be/bhsJHUiRV8k>

4.4. In order to maintain momentum and progress the implementation of the Attachment Strategy, it was agreed that it would be launched at each of the seventeen Learning Community meetings taking place virtually during May and June 2020, by a representative of the Educational Psychology Service/Attachment Strategy Group. The launch was successfully achieved in this way and generated a high level of enthusiasm and demand from senior leaders for the information to be further disseminated to staff within their educational establishments. This was implemented through a series of webinars for access by all staff from 15-19 June 2020 across each Learning Community, utilising the materials from the original launch events which had been refreshed to take account of the potential impact of the COVID pandemic on school communities. Sessions were recorded to enable staff unable to access in real time, to view at a later date. This staff development activity was accessed by over 2000 education staff and has significantly contributed to laying the foundations for a positive return to education for our children, young people and staff.

4.5. The Attachment Strategy training plan will be delivered at three levels:

Level 1 – awareness raising for all facilities staff

Level 2 – basic attachment strategy training for all teaching, Youth, Family and Community Learning Service and Early Years staff

Level 3 – attachment leads and ambassador training for senior managers nominated by establishments. The purpose of level 3 training is sustained implementation at the whole school level.

Mode of delivery will depend on public health advice as it develops.

## **5. Additional approaches to supporting mental health and wellbeing in educational establishments**

5.1. Education Resources' establishments and services will continue to work collaboratively to provide a staged intervention approach to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people through session 2020-21 and beyond. Establishments already meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of learners by creating the right culture and ethos, delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education within Curriculum for Excellence, provision of personalised learning and targeted support for those in need.

5.2. Universal approaches will be further strengthened by thorough implementation of the Education Resources' Attachment Strategy to support wellbeing, positive relationships, resilience and connection to school.

5.3. There will be a continued and enhanced focus on supporting children and young people who have experienced loss and bereavement, including facilitator training for *Give us a Break!*, the loss and bereavement programme developed by South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service, in collaboration with MacMillan Cancer Support and NHS Lanarkshire. *Give us a Break!* is an eight session group work

programme based on a solution focused approach. It is aimed at 10-14 year olds who have experienced loss and negative change and encourages young people to develop their personal strengths, meet others who have experienced similar changes, think towards their future, develop effective coping strategies, and reduce inappropriate distress. The groups are managed by two trained facilitators. *Give us a Break Plus!* Has been developed to support a differentiated approach to the delivery of the programme for young people with additional support needs, and will be launched during session 2020-21.

- 5.4. A new on-line mental health and wellbeing resource known as Togetherall (formerly *Big White Wall* and rebranded in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement) has been introduced by Education Resources. All 16-19 year olds living in South Lanarkshire are able to access Togetherall by providing their postcode and date of birth when they register.

[www.Togetherall.com](http://www.Togetherall.com)

- 5.5. Once registered young people will have access to the 24/7 online global community which offers:

- A safe space to express how they are feeling
- On-line anonymous support from other members of the Togetherall community
- Access to resources about mental health and wellbeing
- Courses to learn how to self-manage aspects of mental health and wellbeing
- On-line support from trained counsellors who act as moderators and can intervene if a user is at high risk

- 5.6. The main way in which young people access Togetherall is through self-referral and secondary schools and the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service have been instrumental in raising awareness of the resource through social media, support networks and the range of communication systems available to them.

- 5.7. Some children and young people may benefit from a more individualised approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therapeutic interventions can be offered to identified pupils aged 10 and above through the *Counselling through Schools* initiative. Comprehensive guidance for schools when considering the provision of counselling for a child or young person, is detailed in the South Lanarkshire Framework for the Delivery of Counselling through Schools.

## **6. Employee Implications**

- 6.1. There are no employee implications in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. There are no financial implications in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 8.1. There are no significant implications for climate change, sustainability and the environment arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 10.1. Training content and related materials will be influenced by the findings generated from the Education Resources COVID-19 children, young people and parent/carer well-being surveys conducted in June 2020.

**Tony McDaid**

**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

10 August 2020

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning

### **Previous References**

- ◆ Education Resources Committee – 3 March 2020
- ◆ Education Resources Committee – 19 February 2019
- ◆ Education Resources Committee – 27 November 2018

### **List of Background Papers**

None

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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