

Becoming Trauma Aware through Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools

*Supporting Whole-School Well-Being
includes the Staff too*

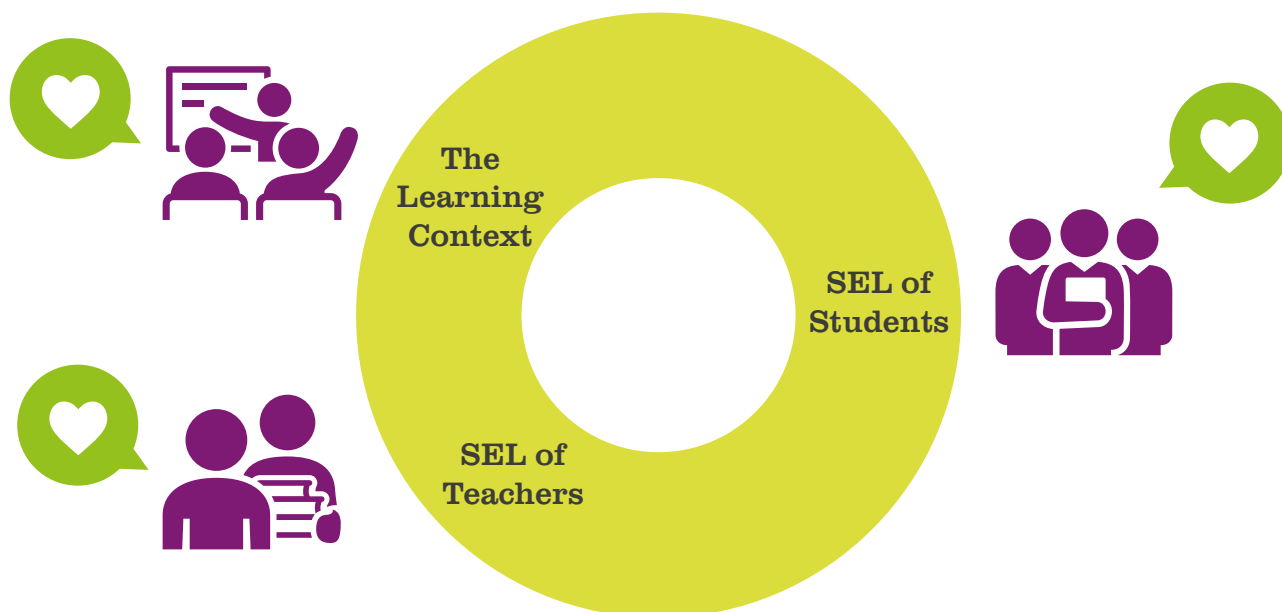


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1. School staff are Carers and Educators

Why do we need to promote the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) of teachers and other school staff?



Whole School Well-Being isn't only for children and young people – teaching and other school staff also need support and encouragement to foster their own well-being. As a children's charity Barnardo's works with thousands of children (often within a school setting) across the UK. As schools get ready to return for the new school year there has been much written about the importance of embedding pupil mental health and wellbeing at the centre of the curriculum. Something we wholeheartedly agree with. However whole school well-being strategies need to include the school staff also.

It is well documented that teaching is a stressful profession (**Nuttfeld Foundation** and **Education Support**). The Mental Health and Well Being of teachers undoubtedly influences that of their pupils, and teacher under stress can experience poor mental health as well as have a negative impact on the well-being of pupils.

“To make a difference in someone's life, you do not have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care.”

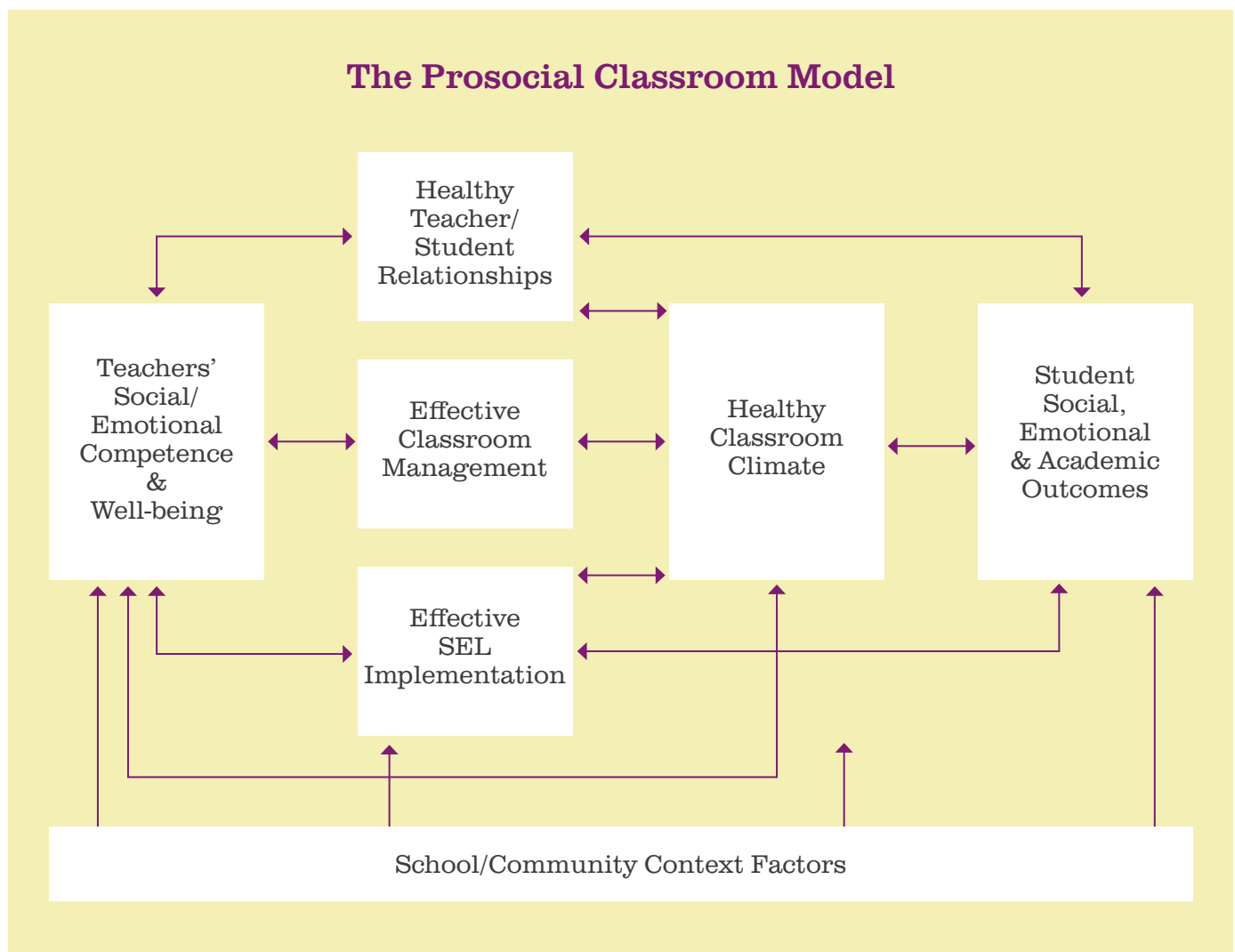
Mandy Hale

***“Your words have great power.
Use them to support & inspire.”***

Karen Salmansohn

Patricia Jennings and Mark Greenberg in their **Prosocial Classroom Model** state that *“the quality of teacher-student relationships, student and classroom management, and effective social and emotional learning program implementation all mediate classroom and student outcomes.”*

Therefore, teacher’s own social-emotional competence and wellbeing affect the classroom management strategies they use, the relationships they form, and their ability to implement SEL in the classroom.



“The trick to having happy students is to first be happy yourself.”

Anon

“Put your own oxygen mask on first.”

Anon



2. School Staff feel the stress around them

Added Stress as a result of COVID-19

In addition to the stress already facing the teaching profession, the COVID19 pandemic has placed further pressure on school staff. Throughout the pandemic, the teaching profession have adapted to a completely new way of working, developing materials for home-learning, teaching via a variety of online tools, preparing for children of key-workers who are still in school, and preparing for children's eventual return. Added to that, many teachers are navigating their own 'new normal' throughout the pandemic,

e.g. home-schooling their own children while attending to the increasing needs of pupils and families, joining staff meetings via zoom or other video calls, responding to emails from parents and colleagues, all while managing their own anxieties and mental health as a result of trauma, isolation or shielding.

“A dysregulated adult will never regulate a dysregulated child. Keep calm to help calm.”

Anon

“Self-Care is not Selfish.”

Anon

Further reading about this can be found here:

1. Education Support: Coping with the Unknown

2. Time for a Clean Slate: Children's Mental Health at the Heart of Education

3. Lessons from Lockdown: Supporting vulnerable children and young people returning to school and to learning

4. New Term, New Challenges, New Opportunities: Putting Children's Mental Health at the Heart of Education



3. School staff need to look after their own well-being too

What can schools / school staff do to support their own wellbeing post-COVID?

1. Further understanding of trauma, adversity and mental health issues facing children and young people.

Ideally this would take the form of training and include understanding of child development, including adolescent brain development, alongside more traditional mental health and wellbeing topics. **Let's put mental health and wellbeing at the heart of children's school experience, Mental Health Foundation, Oct 2018.**

However many online resources and tools are available to freely access should training not be possible within school. For example:

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/>

“An empty tank will take you nowhere. Take time to refuel.”

Anon

2. Acknowledge and prioritise Mental Health and Well-Being Needs of staff

Teachers need encouragement to look after their own mental health and supported to do so. School leaders need to view this a key workplace issue and develop policies to make schools a healthier place for everyone who works in them. At an individual level staff can develop a Wellness Action Plan to be aware of the stressors and triggers that can lead to poor mental health and share this with colleagues.

3. Set Clear Boundaries between Home/School

This can be difficult but a few practical steps can help. Agree a time with colleagues where emails will not be sent or answered, e.g. 7pm-6am and set specific days each week where you do not bring work home.

4. Supervision or Mentoring Support

A report from Barnardo's Scotland highlighted that school staff would really benefit from specific 1:1s or supervisions. This support is key to promote good mental health and well-being. Further reading can be found here **“Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff through professional supervision structures”**, Barnardo's Scotland, June 2019.

“Relaxation is a skill worth exercising each and every day.”

Anon

4. School staff use Resources

Additional links to support school staff develop a positive mental health

- [Mental Health Resources for Teachers dealing with COVID-19](#)
- [Mental Health and Well-Being Support for all School Staff](#)
- [Practices for Cultivating the Social and Emotional Well-Being of School Staff Members](#)
- [Teacher Resilience in times of Crisis](#)
- [Additional Support for School Staff dealing with Trauma and ACEs](#)

“You can’t pour from an empty cup.”

Anon

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

Anne Lamott



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