

Wellbeing Measurement for Schools
Modular surveys

Emotional health



**Evidence Based
Practice Unit**

A partnership of



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About Wellbeing Measurement for Schools

Wellbeing Measurement for Schools (WMfS) is a comprehensive approach that allows schools to understand areas of strength and challenge for their pupils and staff. The approach is suitable for pupils in the older year groups in primary and all secondary aged pupils.

Developed by CORC, a project of Anna Freud, this approach builds on many years of experience using questionnaires and surveys to measure and understand children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in schools and services.

Wellbeing Measurement for Schools modular surveys

Our WMfS modular resources support schools to design their own questionnaires and surveys to understand more about their pupils' wellbeing. Each module collates tried and tested sets of questions covering different areas of wellbeing. These are grouped into five broad areas:

- [emotional health](#)
- [emotional strengths and skills](#)
- [relationships](#)
- [school life](#)
- [help and support](#)

We provide [guidance](#) to help schools use these questionnaires in a range of ways with different groups of pupils. This includes:

- a step-by-step guide to developing and running your own survey
- resources and recommendations for making the most of the results of your survey
- guidance about using questionnaires to identify need and evaluate the impact of interventions and support.

More from Wellbeing Measurement for Schools

Our [WMfS staff survey](#) helps schools understand the wellbeing of staff, how staff feel about the support systems in schools, their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and their confidence to support pupils.

Our team can also provide [tailored support](#) to individual schools and groups of schools to help them to measure and understand mental health and wellbeing.

Our support includes:

- bespoke consultancy to build your approach
- workshops and training sessions
- data analysis and reporting

Contact corc@annafreud.org for details and costs.



Anna Freud 5 Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our free [5 Steps framework](#) provides evidence-based materials and a framework for promoting wellbeing in your setting.



[Understanding need](#) is one of our 5 Steps towards a whole-school or whole-college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The simplest way to understand what pupils need to support their mental wellbeing is to ask them. Using questionnaires and surveys can help schools and colleges to better understand:

- the range and level of need in the setting
- how supported pupils feel
- what is driving mental wellbeing and mental ill-health in school or college
- any additional support pupils need for their mental health and wellbeing.

This can help schools and colleges to identify:

- pupils who are experiencing or at risk of developing mental ill-health
- suitable support to address pupils' needs
- how pupils' needs change over time.

Introducing regular surveys and consistently creating opportunities to [gather pupil voice](#) can enhance the ability of a school or college to understand the wellbeing of its community.

Our Wellbeing Measurement for Schools [guidance](#) and [resources](#) support schools to do this.

Using this booklet

This booklet includes a set of questionnaires, chosen to help schools understand the emotional health of their pupils. We have included instructions for scoring the questionnaires. More information about the scores and what they mean is available on our [website](#).

The questionnaires can be used to 'temperature check' how cohorts of pupils are feeling. Schools can also use the questionnaires to identify pupils who may be struggling and to help evaluate the impact of support and interventions.

The questionnaires can be used individually or together. Schools may want to select questionnaires from [other booklets in this series](#) and combine them to form a longer survey. We recommend that schools use all the items within each questionnaire and keep the wording the same to enable accurate scoring.

A [step-by-step guide](#) is provided on our website.

Emotional health is about how children and young people think and feel. It is about their ability to successfully manage their behaviour and emotions, their mental wellbeing, and how they experience stress and anxiety. In this booklet, we include four short questionnaires to help schools understand different aspects of pupils' emotional health:

- ▶ **Emotional and behavioural difficulties** – being able to manage behaviour and emotions.
- ▶ **Psychological wellbeing** – the presence of positive feelings and the sense of meaning and purpose.
- ▶ **Stress** – the degree to which an individual perceives life as unpredictable, uncontrollable and overwhelming.
- ▶ **Anxiety** – feelings of unease, such as worry or fear.



Emotional difficulties^{1,2}

Below is a questionnaire which is going to ask you how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. You should just pick the answer which is best for you.

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	I feel lonely	0	1	2
2	I cry a lot	0	1	2
3	I am unhappy	0	1	2
4	nobody likes me	0	1	2
5	I worry a lot	0	1	2
6	I have problems sleeping	0	1	2
7	I wake up in the night	0	1	2
8	I am shy	0	1	2
9	I feel scared	0	1	2
10	I worry when I am at school	0	1	2

¹Deighton, J., Tymms, P., Vostanis, P., Belsky, J., Fonagy, P., Brown, A., Martin, A., Patalay, P., & Wolpert, M. (2013). The development of a school-based measure of child mental health. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 31(3), 247–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282912465570>

² Patalay, P., Deighton, J., Fonagy, P., Vostanis, P., & Wolpert, M. (2014). Clinical validity of the Me and My School questionnaire: A self-report mental health measure for children and adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 8(1), 17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-8-17>

Emotional difficulties – scoring and interpretation

1 Each statement receives a score

Responses for this scale are scored as follows: Never = 0, Sometimes = 1, Always = 2

2 Total the scores for each statement

The maximum score is 20.

Example scoring:

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Always	Score
1	I feel lonely	0	1	2	0
2	I cry a lot	0	1	2	1
3	I am unhappy	0	1	2	0
4	nobody likes me	0	1	2	2
5	I worry a lot	0	1	2	0
6	I have problems sleeping	0	1	2	1
7	I wake up in the night	0	1	2	0
8	I am shy	0	1	2	2
9	I feel scared	0	1	2	1
10	I worry when I am at school	0	1	2	1
Total Score					8

Understanding your results

Pupils who score more highly are likely to have greater emotional difficulties and may need support to manage their emotions and behaviour.

On our [website](#) you can find more information to help you put the scores in context. Where possible we provide examples of how other children and young people have scored to help schools make comparisons.

Behavioural difficulties^{3,4}

Below is a questionnaire which is going to ask you how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. You should just pick the answer which is best for you.

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Always
1	I get very angry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	I lose my temper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	I hit out when I am angry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	I do things to hurt people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	I am calm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	I break things on purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

³ Deighton, The development of a school-based measure of child mental health.

⁴ Patalay, Clinical validity of the Me and My School questionnaire.

Behavioural difficulties – scoring and interpretation

1 Each statement receives a score

Responses for this scale are scored as follows: Never = 0, Sometimes = 1, Always = 2

Except Item 5 ('I am calm') which is reverse scored: Never = 2, Sometimes = 1, Always = 0

2 Total the scores for each statement

The maximum score is 12.

Example scoring:

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Always	Score	Scoring
1	I get very angry	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1	Positively scored
2	I lose my temper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	2	Positively scored
3	I hit out when I am angry	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	0	Positively scored
4	I do things to hurt people	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1	Positively scored
5	I am calm	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2	Reverse scored
6	I break things on purpose	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	0	Positively scored
Total score					6	

Understanding your results

Pupils who score more highly are likely to have greater behavioural difficulties and may need support to manage their emotions and behaviour.

On our [website](#) you can find more information to help you put the scores in context. Where possible we provide examples of how other children and young people have scored to help schools make comparisons.

Psychological wellbeing⁵

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each **over the last two weeks**.

	Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
1	I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
2	I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
3	I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
4	I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
5	I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
6	I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
7	I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5

⁵Clarke, A., Putz, R., Friede, T., Ashdown, J., Adi, Y., Martin, S., Flynn, P., Blake, A., Stewart-Brown, S. & Platt, S. (2010). Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS) acceptability and validation in English and Scottish secondary school students (The WAVES Project). *NHS Health Scotland*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-11-487>

Psychological wellbeing – scoring and interpretation

- 1 Each statement receives a score ranging from 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time)
- 2 Total the scores for each statement
- 3 Transform the total raw scores into metric scores using the [SWEMWBS conversation table](#)

Example scoring:

	Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time	Score
1	I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5	2
2	I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5	4
3	I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	3
4	I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5	2
5	I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5	2
6	I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5	4
7	I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5	3
Total score:							20

The total raw score translates into a metric score of **18.59**.

Understanding your results

Pupils who score more highly are likely to have higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Pupils who have lower scores may benefit from support with their mental wellbeing.

On our [website](#) you can find more information to help you put the scores in context. Where possible we provide examples of how other children and young people have scored to help schools make comparisons.



Stress^{6,7}

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts **during the last month**. In each case, please indicate with a tick how often you felt or thought a certain way.

	Question	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1	How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	1	2	3	4	5
2	How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
3	How often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?	1	2	3	4	5
4	How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	1	2	3	4	5
5	How often have you felt that things were going your way?	1	2	3	4	5
6	How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	1	2	3	4	5

⁶ Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 385. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136404>

⁷ Kechter, A., Black, D. S., Riggs, N. R., Warren, C. M., Ritt-Olson, A., Chou, C., & Pentz, M. A. (2019). Factors in the Perceived Stress Scale differentially associate with mindfulness disposition and executive function among early adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(3), 814–821. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-01313-4>

Stress^{8,9}

	Question	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
7	How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
8	How often have you felt that you were on top of things?	1	2	3	4	5
9	How often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	1	2	3	4	5
10	How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	1	2	3	4	5

⁸ Cohen, A global measure of perceived stress.

⁹ Kechter, Factors in the Perceived Stress Scale differentially associate with mindfulness disposition and executive function among early adolescents.

Stress – scoring and interpretation

1 Each statement receives a score

The questions ask about feelings and thoughts **during the last month**. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way on a five-point scale from 'never' to 'very often'. Answers are then scored as follows:

Never = 0, Almost never = 1, Sometimes = 2, Fairly often = 3, Very often = 4

Four of the items (items 4, 5, 7 and 8) first need to be reverse scored (i.e., Never = 4; Almost never = 3; Sometimes = 2; Fairly often = 1; Very often = 0).

2 Add together the scores to calculate the total score

Scores range from 0 to 40.

Example scoring:

	Question	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often	Score	Scoring
1	How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	1	2	3	4	5	1	Positively scored
2	How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	1	2	3	4	5	3	Positively scored
3	How often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?	1	2	3	4	5	2	Positively scored
4	How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	1	2	3	4	5	1	Reverse scored
5	How often have you felt that things were going your way?	1	2	3	4	5	4	Reverse scored
6	How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	1	2	3	4	5	2	Positively scored
7	How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	1	2	3	4	5	3	Reverse scored
8	How often have you felt that you were on top of things?	1	2	3	4	5	2	Reverse scored
9	How often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	1	2	3	4	5	4	Positively scored
10	How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	1	2	3	4	5	1	Positively scored
Total score							23	

Understanding your results

Pupils who score more highly are likely to be experiencing higher levels of stress and, therefore, are likely to benefit from support.

On our [website](#) you can find more information to help you put the scores in context. Where possible we provide examples of how other children and young people have scored to help schools make comparisons.

Anxiety¹⁰

Please put a circle around the word that shows how often each of these things happen to you. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I worry about things	0	1	2	3
2	I feel afraid	0	1	2	3
3	I worry about being away from my parents	0	1	2	3
4	I feel scared if I have to sleep on my own	0	1	2	3
5	I have trouble going to school in the mornings because I feel nervous or afraid	0	1	2	3
6	I suddenly start to tremble or shake when there is no reason for this	0	1	2	3
7	I worry that I will suddenly get a scared feeling when there is nothing to be afraid of	0	1	2	3
8	I would feel scared if I had to stay away from home overnight	0	1	2	3

¹⁰Reardon, T., Spence, S. H., Hesse, J., Shakir, A., & Creswell, C. (2018). Identifying children with anxiety disorders using brief versions of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale for children, parents, and teachers. *Psychological Assessment, 30*(10), 1342–1355. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000570>

Anxiety - scoring and interpretation

1 Each statement receives a score

The responses are scored: Never = 0, Sometimes = 1, Often = 2, Always = 3 ,

2 The total score is the sum of all items.

The maximum possible score of 24.

Example scoring:

	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Score
1	I worry about things	0	1	2	3	1
2	I feel afraid	0	1	2	3	3
3	I worry about being away from my parents	0	1	2	3	2
4	I feel scared if I have to sleep on my own	0	1	2	3	2
5	I have trouble going to school in the mornings because I feel nervous or afraid	0	1	2	3	0
6	I suddenly start to tremble or shake when there is no reason for this	0	1	2	3	1
7	I worry that I will suddenly get a scared feeling when there is nothing to be afraid of	0	1	2	3	2
8	I would feel scared if I had to stay away from home overnight	0	1	2	3	3
Score						14

Understanding your results

Pupils who score more highly are likely to experience higher levels of anxiety and, therefore, are likely to benefit from support.

On our [website](#) you can find more information to help you put the scores in context. Where possible we provide examples of how other children and young people have scored to help schools make comparisons.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the CORC Advisory Group, Anna Freud Champions and Anna Freud Education Advisory Panel for their support in developing this booklet.



The Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) brings together organisations and individuals committed to using and improving evidence to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. We are experts in measuring mental health outcomes.

Founded in 2002 by a group of mental health professionals determined to understand the impact of their work, today our network includes mental health providers, education settings, cultural and community services, local authorities, professional bodies and research institutions from across Europe and beyond.

CORC holds data relating to mental health and wellbeing outcomes of more than 400,000 children and young people in the UK. We support others to gather and understand their own data. We build expertise about using this information to improve support.



www.corc.uk.net

Evidence Based Practice Unit

A partnership of



Anna Freud



Founded in 2006 as an academic group in the Faculty of Brain Sciences at UCL (within the Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology) in collaboration with Anna Freud, the Evidence Based Practice Unit bridges cutting-edge research and innovative practice in children's mental health.

We conduct research, develop tools, provide training, evaluate interventions and disseminate evidence across four themes:

Risk - what is the range of contexts and conditions that put a child or young person at risk of mental ill-health?

Resilience - what is it that enables some children to cope better than others in difficult circumstances?

Change - what influences change in children's mental health and wellbeing over time?

Choice - what is the positive impact of children, families and practitioners making decisions together, and what are the ways this can happen?



www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit



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