

Health and Well-being AoLE:

Submission to Curriculum &
Assessment Group: December 2017

(Revised following CAG feedback during AoLE workshop 13 December 2017)

Health and Well-being AoLE: proposals for CAG

Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. A statement defining ‘what matters’ in the context of the AoLE	2
2. Initial titles for strands of ‘what matters’.....	3
1. Physical confidence and competence has considerable lifelong benefits to health and well-being <i>or</i> We experience the world through our body	3
2. Life experiences impact on our feelings, thoughts and physical state:	4
3. Our decision making and subsequent actions impact on the quality of our lives and others:	4
4. Our physical, social and cultural environments are connected to our health and well-being:	5
5. Relationships connect us with each other and the world:	5
3. A further developed ‘what matters’ key concept.....	6

Introduction

In July 2017 Welsh Government published an [update](#) outlining an approach to curriculum development and sharing early thinking about the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) outlined in *Successful Futures*. This January update describes the next stage of the development process - the identification of 'what matters' within the six AoLEs.

The 'what matters' approach is the identification of the key elements that all learners should experience during their journey along the continuum of learning. The four purposes of the new curriculum are at the heart of all discussions relating to this work.

Each AoLE will contain a series of 'what matters' statements. In developing these statements, the Pioneers have conducted extensive research and invited experts to make presentations and join debates with their groups.

This approach has been endorsed by Professor Donaldson and other leading academics. A combination of commissioned academic papers and secondary academic research has also confirmed the belief amongst Pioneers and advisory groups that this is the right approach for Wales to take in curriculum development.

The papers contain the initial drafts of 'what matters' statements with supporting rationale, to provide a basis for sharing and discussion. They reflect the AoLE groups' thinking in December 2017. As part of an iterative process the AoLE groups will continue to refine the 'what matters' statements, in parallel with work to develop the underpinning progression frameworks, and the detail of the AoLEs.

As the work progresses, a newly established Coherence Group, chaired by Professor Richard Daugherty, will ensure consistency and coherence across the curriculum. The group will evolve to become a Manageability group to provide critical challenge about the size of the curriculum and how it is to be delivered, as more detail becomes available.

Outline of approaches taken during the Autumn term 2017

Pioneers met across three working groups of two days each. The group organised as three sub-groups to consider the domains of: body; mind and emotions and relationships. Initially, the groups drafted statements around these, however it was decided that these did not reflect the holistic nature of Health and Well-being and wider social influences. Statements also tended towards aspirations and learner outcomes and lacked adequate scope for progression. An agreed definition of Health and Well-being was also needed to guide the statements.

The statements were revised to reflect these conclusions. Having developed these, each sub-group met to develop "what matters", including possible knowledge and skills for each statement. Statements were then agreed by the working group as a whole.

The group met with pioneers from Science and Technology and LLC to consider interdependencies.

The group recognises the fundamental importance of whole-school approaches in learners' health and well-being and will consider implications for this arising from the AoLE throughout development.

Expertise in working groups has been provided by:

- Professor Emma Renold, Professor of Childhood Studies, Cardiff University;
- Gethin Thomas, School of Sport, Health and Exercise studies, Bangor University;
- Deborah McMillan, Welsh Government, presenting the film, *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope*, considering information and guidance around Adverse Childhood Experiences;
- Public Health Wales;
- CAMAU.

To inform the design process, feedback on the key concepts was provided by:

- Professor Robin Bannerjee; Professor of Developmental Psychology, Sussex University.
- Professor Mark Priestley; University of Stirling and CAG;
- Dr Dusana Dorjee, School of Psychology, Bangor University;
- Public Health Wales;
- PSE Advisory Group;
- Consortium cluster of Healthy Schools Leads;
- Staff within Pioneer schools.

Evidence was also considered from the curriculum models of British Columbia and Ontario in respect of mind and emotions and papers by the International Physical Literacy Association.

1. A statement defining 'what matters' in the context of the AoLE

Health and well-being encompasses the interdependencies of the physical, psychological, emotional, cultural and social dimensions which enable everyone to participate in life as best they can in an ever changing world.

Ambitious, capable learners can recognise how aspects of their environment, mind and physical state impact on their health and well-being and readiness to learn. They develop resilience, confidence and empathy in response to social, emotional and physical experiences and challenges. They seek new experiences and take ownership over their learning.

Enterprising, creative contributors express and explain ideas, thoughts and emotions. They demonstrate an understanding of how emotions may be experienced and externalised. They understand the importance of safety, learning how to recognise and manage risk and are able to seek help and support. They contribute

to their communities. They can use creative methods in engaging with and addressing difficult issues relating to emotions and relationships.

Ethical, informed citizens make choices based on knowledge and values. They understand that choices can impact on the health and well-being of themselves and others. They have an understanding of their rights and have respect for the rights of others. They develop tolerance as a respectful member of society. They value and contribute positively to their physical and social environments. They are able to engage with the wider social and ethical issues connected to Health and Well-being.

Healthy, confident individuals understand how factors such as nutrition, substances and physical activity influence their health and well-being and are developing positive dispositions in respect of these to support informed decisions. They recognise that different environments and experiences impact on and influence their emotion. They are able to seek support and to manage these. They learn to develop positive relationships and recognise that their identity is linked to their health and well-being.

2. Initial titles for strands of ‘what matters’

The five initial draft of titles for the strands of what matters or Key Concepts are:

1. **Physical confidence and competence has considerable lifelong benefits to health and well-being or We experience the world through our body**
2. **Life experiences impact on our feelings, thoughts and physical state**
3. **Our decision making and subsequent actions impact on the quality of our lives and others**
4. **Our physical, social and cultural environments are connected to our health and well-being**
5. **Relationships connect us with each other and the world**

The explanatory narrative for each Key Concept is included below in alphabetical order.

1. Physical confidence and competence has considerable lifelong benefits to health and well-being or We experience the world through our body

Leading a physically active lifestyle consistently demonstrates significant health benefits. The development of physical confidence and competence underpinned by physical literacy supports learners to engage as fully as possible with their environments and make the appropriate decisions to enable this. In order to become physically literate, learners require development of confidence and motivation to engage in regular physical activity for life. They also need the physical competence to be able to do so effectively as well as the knowledge and understanding that underpins this and awareness of its health benefits.

In working towards a lifetime of engagement and enjoyment in physical activity, learners will improve their physical, emotional and mental health and well-being. Physical literacy is fundamental to social and emotional decision making and

supports the development of positive relationships (for instance through team games) and resilience (for instance through competitive sport).

This would operate across the continuum of learning through to lifelong learning. Progression is unique to the individual.

Physical development directly impacts on cognition, meaning that physical literacy underpins all learning and has implications for all AoLEs. Specific overlaps and interdependencies exist with Science and Technology through understanding of biological functions, nutrition and movement within Expressive Arts.

This will also give learners scope to consider the body more generally, including body confidence and image as well as consideration of broader health literacy, in co-ordination with statement 3.

2. Life experiences impact on our feelings, thoughts and physical state:

Schools in Wales have a 'well-being duty' to support the emotional and mental well-being of all learners as stated in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Life experiences can leave a lasting impression on levels of health and confidence. By understanding their impact and developing appropriate responses, learners will be better equipped to understand and regulate their emotions; grow resilience; build confidence and develop empathy which collectively contribute to their readiness to learn. This key concept enables learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of how both adverse and favourable experiences influence our emotional and mental well-being. This would operate across the continuum of learning from the earliest developmental stages, leading to life-long learning. Learners will be given opportunities to explore the various pressures and influences relevant to their developmental stage and experience and develop coping strategies. Learners will be supported to develop dispositions to work towards becoming *healthy confident individuals* able to live fulfilling lives as members of society.

There are clear overlaps with the other AoLEs for example Maths and Numeracy can support the impact of financial issues on thoughts and feelings and the Expressive Arts provide learning opportunities to develop empathy and explore different emotions.

The group recognised the importance of making this statement more active, to emphasise the importance developing learners' strategies to respond to experiences.

3. Our decision making and subsequent actions impact on the quality of our lives and others:

Decisions and actions influence the health, personal safety and quality of life of learners as well as wider society. Making effective decisions is vital to promoting healthy life choices and safety. These decisions are informed by learners' knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values. They will develop the knowledge and skills to support them in a range of areas to carefully consider available options and understand possible consequences.

Key areas of decision making include: decisions around health literacy, including food/nutrition; personal care including sleep, recovery and hygiene and use of substances as well as risk-taking behaviour. Learning would operate across the continuum, beginning with the individual learner, considering the immediate impacts of actions. As learners develop, they acquire a more sophisticated understanding of what influences decision-making, with scope to introduce behavioural economics. They will also develop a more complex understanding of the impact of decisions, possibly including biological/neurological factors and social/ethical issues. Learners will develop skills to support those decisions such as cooking skills to support nutrition and knowing when and where to seek help and support.

This could support understanding of social and cultural influences within Humanities and financial decision-making in Maths. The biological influences and impacts and decisions in the digital world present interdependencies with Science and Technology.

Scope is also included for exploring financial management.

4. Our physical, social and cultural environments are connected to our health and well-being:

The diverse range of environments and circumstances in which we live influence our health and well-being. Our identity is informed by how we engage with the space, time and place around us. These environments include the natural environment (including sustainability issues); the physical and virtual worlds, in particular our interaction with technology; our cultural, social and spiritual communities and wider society. Part of being ready to learn and learning for life involves understanding and engaging with our environment and developing the skills which enable us to do this effectively.

Considering and understanding the interdependencies of the health and well-being of individuals, society and environments supports learners to contribute to wider communities; respect different environments and help address challenges.

Learning to engage proactively with our environments is a continuous aspect of life and therefore is relevant across the age spectrum in schools, building from learners' immediate communities through to understanding the environmental implications of wider society, cultures and the world.

There are significant interdependencies and overlap with Humanities where aspects of learning can be further developed, including the environment, citizenship; social and ethical influences; human geography and learners' spiritual development.

5. Relationships connect us with each other and the world:

Relationships are a key influence on health and well-being and our personal identity. Learners will develop awareness of a diverse range of different relationships including friend, familial, romantic, sexual, professional and spiritual relationships. This also includes understanding of how these may function and the differences between them. They will develop understanding of how different perceptions of healthy relationships are influenced by and reflected in communities,

organisations and cultures. They will also learn how relationships are influenced by cultural and social factors, including in the digital world and how their own identity is formed within these. Learners will also develop awareness of the possible power dynamics within relationships and issues arising from this. Learners will begin to develop the skills to form and maintain positive relationships; manage conflict within relationships as well as knowing when and how to seek help and support.

Building relationships is ongoing throughout life and therefore relevant across progression. Other AoLEs provide meaningful contexts to develop understanding of concepts around relationships, including Expressive Arts for drawing on creative methods to address difficult topics and role play and empathy. LLC and Humanities allow for a wider social and cultural consideration of relationships in literature and societies.

3. A further developed 'what matters' key concept

Life experiences impact on our feelings, thoughts and physical state

The understanding of feelings and thoughts is a complex and inherently personal and individual process. Progression in this area is not a linear process, with a clear and defined path, but one that continues throughout life. Furthermore, learners will develop at different rates, dependent upon their responses to varied life events and experiences such as bereavement, puberty and relationships. Learners should have regular, repeated and consistent opportunities to explore experiential learning and to make links with their own thoughts, feelings and life experiences. Practitioners should model desirable values and dispositions through their daily interactions with learners.

Education and neuroscience has a natural fit. Learners will be taught about the brain's capacity to forge new neural connections in response to experience, and that the brain retains this property to a greater or lesser degree throughout life. They will also learn about the body's stress-response system which lays the foundation for social and emotional development throughout life. The basic principles of neuroscience will be taught at a developmentally appropriate level. In the first instance, for example, a child may learn about the 'upstairs brain' and 'downstairs brain', rather than the cerebral cortex and limbic system. As they progress along the continuum, learners will develop an increasingly sophisticated level of understanding of the interconnectedness of emotional, mental and physical states of well-being.

At the earliest stage of development learners will **demonstrate** and **express** a range of emotions in order to communicate. They will begin to **identify** and **recognise** basic feelings such as sad, happy and angry, in self and others. They may be able to **describe** simply some of the physical effects that these feelings cause, and will progress to identifying a wider range of feelings and the associated physical impacts. Learners will become increasingly able to **describe** their feelings and worries and begin to learn and **apply** strategies for self-regulating and building resilience. As they progress, learners will be taught how to become more self-aware. They will be able to more accurately **describe** and **assess** their feelings and emotions, and

learn to recognise and empathise with the feelings of others. As their knowledge and understanding deepens, learners will be supported to **analyse**, **evaluate** and **reflect** upon their emotional responses, and to develop appropriate and effective strategies to manage and express their feelings effectively in response to life events.

Good teaching and learning requires a strong, supportive relationship between the practitioner and the learner. The key principle of relational pedagogy will therefore underpin the cognitive, social and emotional development of learners by establishing a safe and secure learning environment in which to explore their feelings. Emotional and mental well-being is not simply a subject which can be taught, but a combination of individual experiences which have to be lived in order to be meaningful.