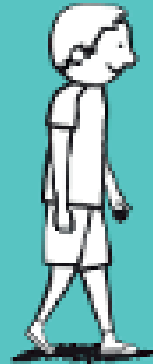# Manchester Inclusion
Strategy Toolkit

THE KEY APPROACHES FOR INCLUSIVE UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

We believe it is important that every child and young person in our early years' settings, schools and post 16 provisions, whatever their age, identity, circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and is valued for who they are.

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Universal Provision

Manchester City Council have highlighted some approaches as examples of good inclusive practice for schools and education settings.

- Inclusion, diversity and children's rights
- Fostering a sense of belonging
- Attachment and trauma aware
- Nurturing principles
- Restorative practice
- Whole school mental health and wellbeing

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INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Remember:

"Nothing is more powerful than professional curiosity and support; listening, being flexible and demonstrating empathy when working with children and their families".

Inclusion means welcoming and respecting the diversity of Manchester's children and young people in all its forms:

- Neurodiversity
- Linguistic, cultural and religious diversity
- Diverse life stories including attachment and trauma
- Diverse sexualities, identities and personalities

Manchester is lucky to be a thriving multicultural city which is one of the most linguistically diverse, relative to its size, in Europe. Some 40% of Manchester's children speak more than one language (United Nations, 2023). Our children come to our settings from a diverse set of backgrounds and with a huge range of preschool experiences and familial and cultural influences.

When considering the potential vulnerabilities and differences of our population, it can be helpful to consider the protected characteristics of the Equality Act (2010) plus wider characteristics that shape lived experiences of discrimination, inequality and privilege such as socio-economic disadvantage, occupation and care-experience. Having a protected characteristic means that you have a right not to be treated less favourably, or subject to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic.

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It might be helpful to consider some of these key questions

- How does your setting ensure inclusion, diversity and human rights principles influence all policies and are integrated into everyday practice?

- Do your displays, resources and learning objectives reflect the diversity in your setting in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping? How?

- How does teaching take account of neurodiversity (such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia) and help to reduce barriers?

- How do you ensure all children and young people contribute to decision making and their voices are heard? (Including second language learners; younger, more vulnerable, quieter pupils, those who don't enjoy school and reluctant attenders?)

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FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING

"school should be a safe and affirming place for children where they can develop a sense of belonging" (DfE, 2016, p.8).

"the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school's social environment" (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 80).

High levels of school belonging are associated with many positive outcomes such as:

- life satisfaction and happiness
- motivation, persistence, self-belief and engagement
- reduction in absenteeism and improved school attendance
- fewer incidents of bullying or aggression
- higher levels of self-efficacy and lower rates of substance misuse
- better friendships and improved relationships with teachers
- more able to seek help

What this might look like in your school:

- Teachers that are available to speak to and willing to listen
- Opportunities to access emotional support from peers and adults
- Timely academic support
- A commitment from leadership to promote and develop strong communication between staff
- Working in partnership with parents to share the whole school ethos
- Engagement with the local community to provide further opportunities to foster belonging (e.g. supporting afterschool clubs, productions, sports events, education events)

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We have a sense of belonging in school when:

★ We have friends and are friends to others
★ We can express ourselves without fear of negative judgement
★ We feel safe without fear of threat, exclusion or isolation
★ We feel known for being ourselves by peers and adults
★ We know we are accepted
★ We know that our ethnicity, religion and culture is understood and accepted
★ Our school promotes participation in lots of different activities

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Children who experience lots of positive attachments, safety and support during adverse life experiences or following trauma are more able to:

- regulate their emotions
- respond more calmly to difficult situations, stress and anxiety
- seek help from adults at appropriate times
- attend, concentrate and focus in lessons
- build and maintain positive friendships and relationships
- engage with learning across the curriculum
- problem solve and have flexible thinking

Relationships and positive attachment figures:

- the key adult helps the child feel safe first and foremost
- the key person is an active presence
- the key adult enables the child to become dependent before becoming independent
- the adult attunes to the needs of the child and is available for them
- the adult works with the child to help them to experience fun and joy
- the adult helps the child feel kept in mind at all times, even when the adult is not there
- the adult helps guide the child's social interactions and sense of belonging

ATTACHMENT AND TRAUMA AWARE

Attachment is what allows children to develop a secure base from which they can explore the world. Attachment to caregivers lays the foundations for social and emotional well-being and the capacity to learn and develop. When children do not have their attachment needs met they suffer unregulated stress and do not develop stress regulation. This affects the child's ability to form relationships and to learn.

Developmental trauma is a term frequently used to describe the effects of prolonged or repeated experiences of trauma in childhood which impact on a child/young person's social, emotional and/or cognitive development.

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Trauma healing ingredients:

1. Relational safety
2. Relevant developmentally matched activities
3. Repetitive and patterned activities
4. Rewarding and pleasurable activities
5. Rhythmic activities that resonate with neural patterns
6. Respectful of the child, family and culture

Explore trauma, mourn and process loss

Self-esteem, identity and being resilient and resourceful

Empathy, reflection and managing behaviours in relation to others

Care, comfort and co-regulation from others

Developing relationships

Feeling safe physically and emotionally

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NURTURING PRINCIPLES

Nurture is to grow, develop and succeed. A baby's survival is reliant on another to provide near/constant physical and emotional care: someone to nurture. The formation of these strong nurturing bonds leads to secure, strong attachments and allows a child to flourish and thrive.

Throughout life, we will need varying levels of nurture and in school is no exception!

Key to nurturing-based approaches are:

- Focusing on children to flourish emotionally and develop as an individual based on their individual needs
- Emphasis on early intervention
- Acknowledging and responding to behaviour as communication
- Relationships are placed first and foremost
- Activities that are soothing, calming, reassuring and where the world is made to feel predictable, safe and warm.
- Where children feel taken care of, valued and worthy of love.

What this might look like in your school:

- Nurture is emphasised as key for developing mental health and wellbeing: this is reflected in the whole school ethos
- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom is a safe base and staff are positive role models
- Structure, challenge, expectations and care are balanced in the classroom
- Adults understand and respond to language and behaviour as a vital means of communication
- Transitions are acknowledged as important and a key time to for support and planning

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Restorative approaches aim to include:

1. Creating a learning environment where there is better attendance and fewer behavioural incidents
2. To develop emotional literacy, responsibility and empathy
3. To raise students' awareness of the impact of their choices on others

This will hopefully:

- Increase attendance and reduce exclusions
- Prevent bullying and respond to bullying effectively
- Increase staff confidence to manage and respond to bullying
- Build a culture of response and discipline within a school

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES

Restorative approaches are based on:

- Respect for one another, acknowledging that each person has an opinion that is unique and of value
- Taking responsibility for your own actions
- Developing the skills of the whole school community to solve problems and repair harm

Relationships are built, repaired and strengthened

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WHOLE SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental health is " the foundation for the well-being and effective functioning of individuals. It is more than the absence of a mental disorder; it is the ability to think, learn, and understand one's emotions and the reactions of others. Mental health is a state of balance, both within and with the environment. Physical, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and other interrelated factors participate in producing this balance. There are inseparable links between mental and physical health. "WHO, 2017

There is evidence that highlights that all within the community benefit from a whole school mental health:

- Students have more success in academic learning. They are more motivated, have a sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and school. They develop social, emotional and mental health skills that support them for life
- Staff have improved mental health, stress is reduced, there is less sickness and absences, and staff are more able to teach effectively
- Mental health problems are prevented or reduced (e.g. depression, anxiety)
- Behaviour in school is improved with less bullying, exclusions, absenteesm and there is less risky behaviour (e.g. alcohol use, drug use, anger)

"Schools can be confident that a focus on well-being and mental health not only enables them to provide health and happy school environments for pupils ad staff and prepare the citixens of tomorrow with sound character and balues, nbut also directly supports their more immediate mission: the promotion of effective learning" (NCB, pg 12)

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OneEducation
Putting children first

MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

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