Belonging Framework

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Purpose

Very simply we will put the Child at the core of all we do through our Language, Relationships and Culture.

From birth, children develop a sense of who they are. Relationships with family members, other adults, children, peers, friends and members of their community play a key role in building their identities.

Belonging is about having a secure relationship with or connections within a particular group of people. When children and young people feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, their peers, and their communities, they develop emotional strength and a tenacious approach which often means they are able to deal with challenges and difficulties.

Education is the constant foundation for every child, universally and consistently able to enable people to lift people from poverty and deprivation, but the messages of respect, love, approval, and encouragement enables them to develop a positive sense of who they are and a feeling that they have an important contribution to make wherever they are.

> *"The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation."* **Nelson Mandela**

Positive messages about their families, backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, and languages help children and young people to develop pride in who they are. These messages also give them confidence to voice their views and opinions, to make choices and to help shape their own learning and future.

By embracing difference, by exploring their own attitudes in relation to equality and diversity and by realising that their attitudes and values influence children, adults can develop the insights, self-awareness and skills that are needed to help children develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. This helps to ensure that all children are respected and valued and that they can recognise and deal with discrimination and prejudice.

Adults play a crucial role in guiding and mentoring children and young people on the journey to adulthood. When these adults embrace difference, by exploring their own attitudes in relation to equality and diversity and by realising that their attitudes and values influence children, they can develop the insights, self-awareness and skills that are needed to help children develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. This helps to ensure that

all children are respected and valued and that they can recognise and deal with discrimination and prejudice.

Aims of the Framework:

The Belonging Framework is not intended as a detailed plan of all the actions or interventions that could be introduced. Rather, it provides an overarching framework with specific aims to guide future action planning.

The framework will be delivered in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and carers, children and young people and schools.

The first element of this framework are the aims, relating to the child and their journey to adulthood.

These aims will be delivered through three strands that are interlinked:

Social Inclusion	**Shared Aim:** Upholding children's rights articles 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 23, 30. **Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories. In partnership with the adult, children will:** • build respectful relationships with others • appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday) • understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities • have a sense of 'who they are' and be able to describe their backgrounds, strengths and abilities • feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment • express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency. **Social Inclusion Aim** (upholding children's rights articles 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 31, 39) Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others. In partnership with the adult, children will • express their views and help make decisions in matters that affect them • understand the rules and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour • interact, work co-operatively, and help others • be aware of and respect others' needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs • have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour • demonstrate the skills of co-operation, responsibility, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

School Inclusion	**Shared Aim:** Upholding children's rights articles 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 23, 30. **Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories. In partnership with the adult, children will:** • build respectful relationships with others • appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday) • understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities • have a sense of 'who they are' and be able to describe their backgrounds, strengths and abilities • feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment • express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency. **Social Inclusion Aim** **(upholding children's rights articles 6, 29, 30, 31, 42)** **Children will see themselves as capable learners. In partnership with the adult, children will** • develop a broad range of abilities and interests • show an awareness of their own unique strengths, abilities and learning styles, and be willing to share their skills and knowledge with others • show increasing confidence and self-assurance in directing their own learning • demonstrate dispositions like curiosity, persistence and respect for others. • experience learning opportunities that are based on personal interests, and linked to their home, community and culture • be motivated, and to think about and recognise their own progress and achievements.
Cultural Inclusion	**Shared Aim:** Upholding children's rights articles 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 23, 30. **Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories. In partnership with the adult, children will:** • build respectful relationships with others • appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday) • understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities • have a sense of 'who they are' and be able to describe their backgrounds, strengths and abilities • feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment • express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency. **Cultural Inclusion Aim** **(upholding children's rights articles 2, 14, 15, 20, 29, 31) Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended. In partnership with the adult, children will** • feel that they have a place and a right to belong to the group • know that members of their family and community are positively acknowledged and welcomed • be able to share personal experiences about their own families and cultures, and come to know that there is a diversity of family structures, cultures and backgrounds • understand and take part in routines, customs, festivals, and celebrations

	• see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people 6. understand the different roles of people in the community.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is the right thing to do, and it also makes good economic sense. Left unaddressed, the exclusion of disadvantaged groups can be costly. At the individual level, the most commonly measured impacts include the loss of wages, lifetime earnings, poor education, and employment outcomes.

Background

- The attainment gap is largest for children and young people eligible for free school meals (the best available proxy measure of economic disadvantage) and those assessed with special educational needs
- Regarding the attainment gap for SEND learners my understanding is that Ofsted are focussing on the progress of SEND learners in school inspections and are no longer comparing SEND attainment with national data sets.

• The gap begins in the early years and is already evident when children begin school aged 5.

• The gap grows wider at every following stage of education: it more than doubles by the end of primary school, and then more than doubles again by the end of secondary school. This shows the importance of intervening early and then of continuing to attend to the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

• A majority of 19 year-olds who have been eligible for free school meals leave education without a good standard of recognised qualifications in English and maths – without which, achieving their goals in the world of work or further study will be much harder.

• While the attainment gap has reduced over the past decade, it remains significant. The current slow progress in narrowing the gap means it will persist for decades.

 • Even small improvements in young people's GCSE qualifications yield significant increases in their lifetime productivity returns and in national wealth – highlighting the importance of continuing to focus on improving results for currently low-attaining pupils.

Socially inclusive schools

Value:

- Early Years education in preventing the attainment gap becoming entrenched before children start school.
- Learning character alongside attainment

Model:

- High quality teaching and learning for all
- Intervening at the earliest opportunity when an attainment gap is identified – very few learners are able to 'close the gap' once they transition to secondary school, the gap I however narrowed with appropriate interventions
- Share and seek out effective practice

Enact:

- Effective professional development for all staff
- Small group interventions that are evidence based to have impact – effective research led use of the pupil premium / SEND funding
- Evaluate intervention regularly and stop doing what isn't making a difference

School Inclusion

'Belonging' is that sense of being somewhere where you can be confident that you will fit in and feel safe in your identity. As schools are one of the few shared social institutions which can create a sense of belonging or exclusion, it's vital that they are places of welcome and belonging.

A school is just a building. What happens in any school is down to the people in and around it: the children, their families, the staff - and the leaders. How leaders think, decide, act and reflect, and draw on their knowledge to create a roadmap of possibilities is critical to the well-being of children and adults.

Kathryn Riley, Professor of Urban Education, UCL Institute of Education (IOE)

Every child deserves, and should receive, an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, needs or location in the duchy.

Background

- **School exclusion is a growing problem.** In Cornwall we have seen a short-term reduction in exclusions, but we need to ensure that this improvement is embedded into the future.

- **School exclusion is a social mobility failure.** Excluded pupils are more likely to live in poverty, to interact with social services, and ten times more likely to have recognised mental health needs, many of these did not have identified mental health needs prior to their exclusion.

- **School exclusion is costly for the individual and society.** Less than 2% of excluded learners get a good pass in English and maths; 1 in 2 is immediately unemployed and out of education at age 16; and there is a strong link with criminal involvement – half of the prison population are estimated to have been excluded at school. IPPR calculated the lifetime cost to the state: over £2.9bn for last year's cohort of officially excluded young people.

- **The schools serving excluded pupils need more support in teacher recruitment and training.** The majority of exclusions are of pupils close to sitting their GCSEs. Excluded pupils were twice as likely to be taught by an unqualified teacher, and twice as likely to have a supply teacher.

Schools who are inclusive

Value:

- Their students and their families and focus on relationships

- Listen to their students, show understanding and make students feel like they belong
- Strong links between pastoral, curriculum and SEND teams
- Early intervention
- Collaboration with the community and other agencies

Model:

Trauma informed responses
There is a shared understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and effective support for learners who may have experienced trauma

- ✓ Being happy – smile and welcome all their students – especially those whose behaviours are challenging
- ✓ Consistency – simple relationship based policies that are understood by staff, pupils and parents. The importance of relationships is understood by staff, pupils and parents and embedded in school policies
- ✓ Curiosity about why a behaviour has occurred
- ✓ Uses exclusion as a sanction sparingly so that the school community sees it as undesirable

Enact:

- Trauma informed approaches
- Flexible approaches to sanctions, based on their understanding of individual circumstances
- Teaching strategies to regulate behaviour

Cultural Inclusion

Background

Diverse schools feature differences in ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, reading level, athletic ability, background, gender, personality, and much more. Schools need to value the unique aspects of what makes each student different and helps them embrace those differences in the classroom.

Having different and divergent perspectives can create positive learning outcomes. Those outcomes, explored below, can have benefits that reflect well beyond students' graduation and can impact their lives going forward.

The presence of diversity in the classroom allows students to consider perspectives and opinions beyond those they've already formed or were shaped in early life by family and friends. By presenting students with viewpoints far different from their own, it gives them the opportunity to think critically about their own beliefs and examine the world in fresh ways. "Diversity jolts us into cognitive action in ways that homogeneity simply does not."

When students enter the adult world, they join a vast and diverse workforce. Interacting with people of all different backgrounds and mindsets can present a challenge without prior exposure to diversity, especially at a younger age

At its core, creativity is all about bringing together different ideas and transforming them to make something new, unique, and personal. The more ideas and experiences people are exposed to, the more creative they can be.

Culturally inclusive schools and learning environments

Value:

- all students, staff and community members equally valued and treated fairly

- all students promote respect of others and make positive steps to consider an individual's self esteem. For example, learn to pronounce unfamiliar names correctly

- the culture, language and beliefs of each student and family. For example, allow opportunities for students and families to share information about cultural and religious practices and events

- a range of perspectives and variety of educational experiences that students, parents and carers bring to learning.

Model:

- consistent, fair and high expectations for all students

- respectful relationships, for example, establish school and classroom rules and practices for respectful behaviour and communication which reflect an openness to differing attitudes, beliefs and world views

- collaboration, for example, staff work collaboratively as a model to students and the community

- supportive, prejudice-free, anti-discriminatory behaviour.

Enact:

- strategies which identify and act upon any barriers to student participation in leadership, sport, music, academic, social and other school activities - developing the skills of all students to ensure representation from diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds

- a range of communication strategies, including using interpreters and translations if needed, to ensure effective communication with parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds

- strategies that involve parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in all stages of the school planning cycle

- community harmony strategies which promote positive community relations and partnerships based on mutual responsibility, trust and respect.

Opportunities

Many of Cornwall's education settings are already working in ways that promote belonging in the wider sense of the term. They model inclusive and trauma-informed approaches to improve early intervention and prevent exclusions.