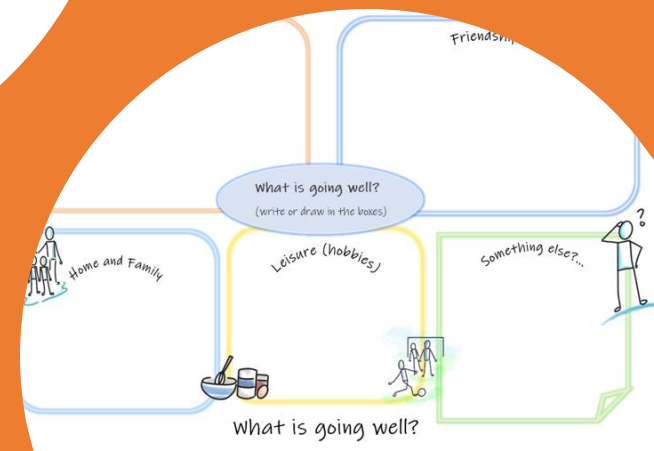
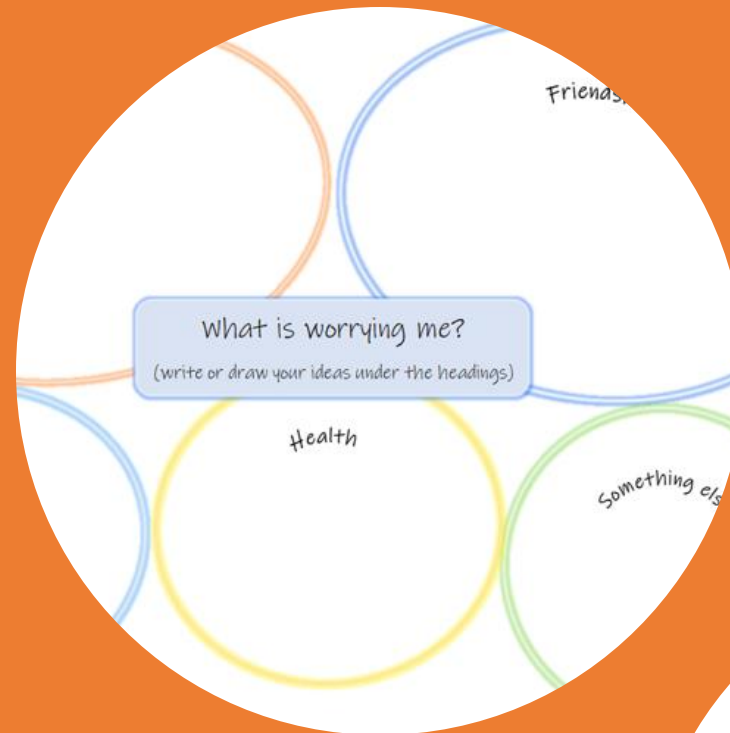


Gathering the views of children and young people



Gathering pupil views – an introduction:



If a child is going to feel willing and able to let others know what they think and feel in relation to school attendance, then they must feel able to trust the person they are sharing their views with, and to understand how their views are going to be captured, shared and used.

A child or young person may be very ready to speak whole-heartedly about what is worrying them, but more probable is that they will find this difficult. Sometimes they may share what they think people want to hear, or the response that they think is most likely to stop further difficult questions being asked. Sometimes they may simply not be able to put into words what they are thinking or feeling.

Gathering pupil views should be managed really carefully, and with a view to having the pupil feel valued, listened to and not judged.

Using questionnaires to gather views:

There are many questionnaires and check lists that are widely available that can be used to help gather information about what is going on for a pupil. However, the accuracy and value of a questionnaire is very much dependent on the mood and communication skill of both the person asking the questions as well as the person answering them, and we would suggest that often the best use of such questionnaires are as a background tool for adults to reference to give them some ideas before speaking with a pupil. If they simply become a way of progressing through a list of possible problems and worries in a very problem-focused way, then they cease to be helpful and may even undermine wellbeing rather than contribute to it. We are including some of the best evidence-based links here that will take you to a range of information gathering tools but would advocate care and consideration in their use:

[Outcome & Experience Measures \(corc.uk.net\)](http://corc.uk.net) is a website with links to a wide range of information gathering tools
[Wellbeing measurement framework for schools | Anna Freud](#) via this link you will find a range of possible questionnaires to use in primary and secondary schools and colleges to aid information gathering.



The importance of active listening

“Every interaction is an intervention” (Dr. Karen Treisman)

Gathering pupil views should ideally be conducted within the context of rapport building, and leave the child or young person feeling listened to, heard and valued.

The principles outlined below can help create a space for a rich conversation. These are based on some of the active listening principles explained by Dr. Jerrica Holder, outlined in her ‘School wellbeing cards’ resource

(<https://www.schoolwellbeingcards.co.uk/video-tutorial>).

The School Wellbeing Cards: **Introduction**
An introduction to the School Wellbeing Cards, which enables exploration of key risk factors that are likely to be driving the anxiety, unhappiness and/or school avoidance, as well as the strength and protective factors that underpin school attendance and wellbeing.

The School Wellbeing Cards: **Sorting Activity**
A step-by-step tutorial to completing the School Wellbeing Cards with a child, through use of a card sorting activity.

The School Wellbeing Cards: **A Model of Active and Collaborative Listening**
An introduction to a Model of Active and Collaborative Listening and key skills required to engage a child in discussions around their strengths and needs.

The School Wellbeing Cards: **Employing Active Listening Skills**
A guided example, employing the skills of active and collaborative listening, in the context of the School Wellbeing Cards.

- **Be self-aware** - try to notice your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours as the child or young person is speaking and be mindful of what they may convey or how they might shape and impact your listening.
- **Be judgement free** - try to leave judgements aside during your discussion as these will inevitably be felt even if they are not named.
- **Keep an open mind, be genuinely curious and ask open questions**
- **Validate the child or young person’s thoughts and feelings**
- **Paraphrase and Clarify to further check your understanding**
- **Reflect back** - check that what you think you’ve heard is in fact accurate and as intended (ideally using their own words).
- **Summarise** and prompt the child or young person to think about what they need.



Some suggested strategies and proformas for gaining pupil views

In Suffolk we aim to be strengths-based, solution focused and person centred in the work that we do, and truly believe that enabling a child to recognise their strengths, positive character traits and contributions are equally as important in terms of engagement, progress and wellbeing, as helping them to identify any areas of difficulty, if not more so.

With this in mind we are including here some suggested strategies and proformas for gaining pupil views:

- **Capturing concerns and worries** – an activity for children or young people to complete with the support of a family member/trusted adult or independently with the opportunity to share what is worrying them across their school and home contexts and other areas such as health and friendships ([see slide 5](#)).
- **What is going well** – with a similar format to the above activity, this resource gives the opportunity for child or young person to share with the support of family or independently what they feel is going well for them at the moment, which can then be useful to inform what can be built upon within further conversations about supporting them back into school ([see slide 6](#))
- **One page plan** - This document is designed to help plan next steps for a child or young person ([see slide 7](#)).
- **A person-centred plan** – this is another version of the one page plan which you might prefer ([see slide 8](#)).
- **What matters island** – this is an activity designed to help young people explore a conversation about themselves, focusing on what is important to them now and in the future. Please see the following link for more information:
<https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/what-matters-island>
- **Rating the school week example and activity** – when trying to explore what a child or young person may be finding difficult to manage in school, it may be helpful to plot out their timetable and ask them to rate each bit as ‘red’, ‘amber’ or ‘green’ depending on how each bit makes them feel. This can then be very useful for incorporating into conversation about potential areas where adjustments could be made.



School



Friendships

What is worrying me?
(write or draw your ideas under the headings)



Home and Family

Health

Something else?...





School

Friendships



What is going well?

(write or draw in the boxes)



Home and Family

Leisure (hobbies)

Something else?...

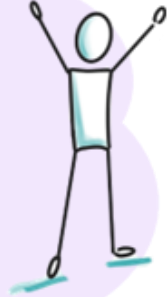


What is going well?

Let's think together...

What is happening now?

Goals + Hopes Where would I like to be?
How do I want to feel?



What are the little steps to get closer?
What has already changed?



Who?

Who can I talk to? Who is around me?

What do I need from them? What do I need them to know?



My name:

I amyears old

What is important to me...



What people like and admire about me...

When I am upset I...

Others say that when I am upset, I...

To help me feel better at school,
I can...

Others can help me feel better at school
by...

My family can support me to
attend school by...

Places in school I can go to feel safe
and supported...



Some *additional* example strategies and proformas for gaining pupil views

Here are some website links to other information gathering activities and proformas that you may be helpful for both gathering pupil views, but also potentially in terms of helping them to consider and plan next steps (please note there are many others freely available and those included here just represent a small sample):

[Inclusion Facilitators Free Resources - Suffolk County Council](#) Our Inclusion Facilitator team have produced a wide range of freely available resources to facilitate working with children and young people to gather their views, thoughts and feelings.

[Preparing for Adulthood: Person-centred Planning Tools – NDTi](#) Includes a wealth of view gathering ideas (many can also be edited and adapted to enable a more bespoke approach) such as ‘Good day / Bad day’ to help with understanding what is important to and for people to have the life that they want; ‘Perfect Week’ to help us to see what different aspects of living make up a really great week for a person; ‘Working / Not Working’ to help people to sort out what is working from different perspectives; ‘Coping strategies’ to help people to express their anxieties and concerns.

[Solution-focused practice toolkit: helping professionals use the approach when working with children and young people \(nspcc.org.uk\)](#) Includes activity ideas and printable proformas to use for gathering pupil views in a solution focused way.

[A Therapeutic Treasure Deck of Sentence Completion and Feelings Cards- Dr Karen Treisman \(youtube.com\)](#) for an explanation of how Dr. Karen Treisman uses her card deck to elicit views, feelings and strengths.

[School Wellbeing Risk and Resilience Card Set \(schoolwellbeingcards.co.uk\)](#) These cards (tutorial reference included also on slide 3) can be used to explore a child or young person’s views and some of the possible strength and resilience factors which might be impacting on their school attendance and engagement.

[“Ideal Classroom” with Personal Construct Psychology and Lego® - Prompt Sheet Faye Morgan-Rose \(wordpress.com\)](#) This approach can be used to gain an insight into which features of the school (people, environment, lessons etc.) the young people would like to change and why. This activity can be undertaken using Lego or play equipment, or for instructions on using it via drawing see here: [Ideal Safe School Complete 05.07.20 PDF.pdf - Google Drive](#)

This is a very simple proforma example to aid the start of conversation: [sentence-starters.pdf \(mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk\)](#)

Another simple questionnaire example that could be sampled to begin a conversation: [Me and My Feelings Questionnaire \(corc.uk.net\)](#)

[Emotional-Readiness-Scale.pdf \(elsanetwork.org\)](#) We would suggest being careful how this tool is used but do think it helpful as a checklist for consideration of pupil strengths and challenges, and of what type of social & emotional skill set is needed to manage school.

[student-resilience-survey-1.pdf \(corc.uk.net\)](#) is a helpful questionnaire to prompt consideration of resiliency factors that can then be developed with support.