

The School Mental Health Capability Framework

Six capability areas, built in three steps. Use it to see where your school is strong and where to start.

1 UNDERSTAND

Mental Health Literacy

2 RESPOND

Youth Mental Health Response

→ NOTICE · HOLD · LEAD

3 EMBED

Whole-School Capability

→ Audit · Strategy · Implementation

1 Shared language

Students, staff and parents use the same words for feelings, stress and mental health.

ASK YOURSELF

Would a student, a teacher and a parent describe “struggling” the same way?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐

3 First response

Staff and parents know what to say in the first ten minutes, using the ANCHOR steps.

ASK YOURSELF

Would your staff freeze, or follow a shared approach?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐

5 Leadership and policy

Mental health sits in the school plan, with clear roles, time and budget.

ASK YOURSELF

Who owns mental health on your leadership team?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐

2 Early recognition

Adults notice changes in mood, behaviour and attendance before they become a crisis.

ASK YOURSELF

How many of your staff could name three early signs today?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐

4 Referral and handover

Concerns move quickly and safely into the school's safeguarding structures.

ASK YOURSELF

Is your referral pathway used, or only written down?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐

6 Sustained practice

Training is refreshed for new staff and families, and impact is measured.

ASK YOURSELF

What happens when a third of your staff changes next year?

Not yet · Partly · Yes ☐ ☐ ☐