



Briefing Note: Mental Health Education guide development

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	30 July 2021	Priority:	Low
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Drafter:	Clare O'Connell	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Pauline Cleaver	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to note the progress to date on the development of our curriculum guidance on mental health education | te oranga ngākau.

Summary

- A new guide to support the delivery of mental health education aligned with the national curriculum is being developed to be released in 2022. The guide will be in two volumes that align with *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, and with the contexts of each setting.
- This has been developed in response to acknowledgement of recent challenging national and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Christchurch terror attacks, and their impacts on the mental wellbeing of our children and young people. It acknowledges the dramatic increase in the numbers of young people reporting mental health challenges, our high suicide rates, and our enduring rates of bullying.
- The guide will support schools and kura to take a holistic whole-school approach to mental health education, addressing supportive school policies and environments, quality teaching and learning, and strong reciprocal relationships with school communities.

Proactive Release

- **Agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree.



Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

30/07/2021



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

02/08/2021

Background

1. We are developing a curriculum guidance document to support the delivery of mental health education aligned with the national curriculum. Due to the unique requirements of English and Māori-medium settings, the guide will be in two volumes that align with *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, and with the contexts of each setting.
2. Funding for this project was provided through the Budget 2020 Education Wellbeing package, designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of our learners and educators. As part of the package, \$32.8 million has been invested over four years towards supporting high quality curriculum teaching on mental health, healthy relationships, and wellbeing issues in schools, kura and early learning services.
3. The development of this resource is also signaled in the Government Response to Report of Health Committee on Petition 2014/134 of Lucy McSweeney [METIS 1238303 refers]. The Health Committee concluded that mental wellbeing is an issue for all New Zealanders, and that mental health and wellbeing education should be a systemic and core part of Aotearoa New Zealand's national curriculum. The Health Committee recommended that:
 - a. The Government investigate how best to embed mental health education in the national curriculum in a systemic and meaningful way.
 - b. The Ministries of Health and Education should be heavily involved in this process.
4. In 2019, the Ministry of Education launched the resource *He Māpuna te Tamaiti: Supporting Social and Emotional Competence in Early Learning*.¹ Developed in collaboration with kaiako and others in the sector, the resource focuses on four key areas: creating a supportive environment; promoting emotional competence; promoting social competence; and supporting learning and engagement.

Evidence base and purpose

5. An extensive evidence base is informing the development of the guide, including sources such as Education Review Office reports on wellbeing for success in schools², He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction³, Te Oranga Hinengaro – Māori Mental Wellbeing⁴, and up-to date research in the academic field of mental health education.
6. The guide will consider and address:
 - a. the increasing diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand's population and the concurrent need for young people to learn to navigate multiple worlds
 - b. the cyclical relationship between family and whānau violence and mental health
 - c. the dramatic increase in the numbers of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand who report serious mental health challenges
 - d. Aotearoa New Zealand's high suicide rates

¹ <https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/assets/Uploads/files/He-Mapuna-te-Tamaiti-complete-book.pdf>

² Education Review Office (2015). *Wellbeing for Children's Success at Primary School*. Author. <https://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ERO-Wellbeing-Primary-Schools-WEB.pdf>
Education Review Office (2016). *Wellbeing for success: A resource for schools*. Author. <https://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Wellbeing-resource-WEB.pdf>

³ Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2018). *He Ara Oranga: Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction*. Author. <https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/assets/Summary-reports/He-Ara-Oranga.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Final-report-TeOrangaHinengaro-M%C4%81ori-Mental-Wellbeing-Oct2018.pdf>

- e. young people's increasing engagement with social media via digital communications and devices and the associated need for them to learn to use these safely, responsibly, and effectively
 - f. the high and enduring rates of bullying in Aotearoa New Zealand and the impact of this bullying on people's mental health and wellbeing.
7. The guide will acknowledge and reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's commitments to national and international legislation, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Human Rights Act (1993). It aligns with relevant Government and Ministry of Education strategies such as the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, Ka Hikitia, and the Action Plan for Pacific Education.
8. This is a new resource designed to give more clarity to mental health education as it stands in the national curriculum. It will describe a whole-school approach to mental health education, encompassing appropriate, up-to-date school and kura policies, active leadership, quality teaching, and strong reciprocal relationships between the school or kura and its community (including local whānau, mana whenua, and other relevant communities). It will also specify the key learning involved at each curriculum level, aligned with the relevant learning areas in each respective curriculum.

Development

9. To date we are nearing the end of the development of the English-medium volume, which will be aligned with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The development has been led by Associate Professor of Health Education, Dr Katie Fitzpatrick, and Associate Professor of Māori Education, Dr Melinda Webber, at the University of Auckland. Drs Fitzpatrick and Webber have previously been involved in mental health education content development aligned with the NZC and were able to lead the quick development of this resource as a result, incorporating significant consultation with established networks and groups.
10. Development of the Māori-medium volume, which will be aligned to *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and *He Tamaiti Hei Raukura*, is in the beginning stages. There are unique opportunities with the development of this volume including the exploration of specific Māori concepts relating to mental health in their source language, such as mate Māori and the infringements of tapu.
11. While we anticipate the evidence base of indigenous research in this area is comparatively small we are aware that authentic evidence is available and will help us to develop the guidelines for kura. We also know that the expertise required to develop this guidance is concentrated however will ensure diverse views help to inform the development of these guidelines. It is important that this volume is created in a thoughtful, respectful, and deliberate manner, encompassing consultation with Māori communities.
12. While ensuring these guidelines are available to kura and schools in a timely manner we are aware that as the redesign of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* progresses we may need to reconsider some of the key concepts within the guidelines. We will ensure this is done in a timely manner providing clarity to kura about what changes have occurred and why.

Release and implementation

13. The two volumes of this guide will be released together in the interests of equitable sector support. While the settings and systems are different across the two sectors, we are also aware that teachers and kaiako may use one or both volumes in their teaching programmes. For example, kaiako teaching in Māori-medium settings may choose to look to the resource in English for additional ideas and support. Further, a te reo Māori speaker delivering *The New Zealand Curriculum* may look to the resource in te reo Māori for the richness of mātauranga Māori that is necessitated by *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

14. Upon launch, the completed guide will be made available in digital PDF form on Ministry online channels. This will be closely followed by distribution of the printed guidelines to all state and state-integrated schools and kura.
15. The Curriculum Lead Service (wellbeing), part of a \$32.8 million four year programme of comprehensive wellbeing support, have commenced their roles this year and will play a key implementation role in supporting teachers and leaders to use the mental health education guide. The Curriculum Leads will have in-depth knowledge of the purpose and audience of this guide, along with associated resources, including those to assist schools with their obligatory health curriculum consultation activities. The Leads will be vital in feeding back information about the guide's implementation and any issues schools and kura are facing, along with any gaps in support or resources experienced.
16. A unique opportunity exists for the Ministry to gather information on the uptake of this guide, together with any issues or barriers faced by schools and kura, and feed this information into the refresh of the national curriculum.
17. The Ministry is aware of existing high-quality mental health education teaching resources in the sector, and the guide will contain clear information for schools about where to access these. In 2020, the teaching resource *Mental Health and Hauora: Teaching interpersonal skills, resilience, and wellbeing* (NZCER, 2018) was distributed to all English-medium schools with students in year 7 and up, and to any kura that requested it.⁵
18. We are currently exploring further mental health education resources in the sector, and investigating how best to make these available to all schools. This year, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, we will be undertaking an evaluation of the wellbeing resource Sparklers to investigate how alignment with the national curriculum can be enhanced.
19. The Ministry will also create accompanying content for teachers including video resources showing practical examples of the guidelines in practice, and other implementation resources. These will be developed following the release of the guide.

Key Risks and Benefits

20. The Ministry is aware that there is significant interest in the topic of mental health in the sector, given recent national and global events and the impact of these on the mental health of our children and young people. We expect there to be high interest in the release of this guide and related resources, including from the media. The Ministry has confidence that the evidence base, consultation process, and narrative surrounding the development will present a robust rationale for the work and its positive contribution to the wellbeing of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Communications material will reiterate the need for comprehensive mental health education at all year levels, evidenced by an array of sources.

21. 9(2)(f)(iv), 9(2)(g)(i)

⁵ Given the resource is written in English only, it was deemed inappropriate to proactively send to all kura.

Next Steps

22. We intend to release the guide in early 2022 and we will update you with more detailed information when the project is nearing completion.

Proactive Release

23. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Proactively Released