

# A Holistic Differentiated Response for Wellbeing and Mental Health, Resilience and Agency across Europe: Addressing Covid Pandemic Lockdown Impact on Education

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1. Beyond Slogans – “Resilience”, “Lockdown Impact”, “Wellbeing”
2. Bridging Health and Education – Public Health Model of Differentiated Need for Inclusive Systems
3. Covid Lockdown – Mental Health, Loneliness, Sleep, Family Conflict, Poverty Impact
4. Indicated Prevention Level – Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma
5. Universal Prevention Level – Social and Emotional Education
6. Selected and Universal Prevention Levels – Afterschool Supports – Meaningful Instrumental Activities, Arts, Sport, Nature
7. Agenda for Covid Related Holistic Differentiated Response for Wellbeing and Mental Health, Resilience and Agency across Europe

# Key Guiding Principles (Downes Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2017)

**Holistic** - Recognises the social, emotional and physical needs, and not simply the academic and cognitive ones, of both children/young people and their parents

**Systemic** - Beyond individual resilience to **inclusive systems**

**Differentiated** – not one size fits all



Inclusive systems - Beyond Rutter's (1987) resilience in adversity (poverty, early school leaving, bullying, trauma) as superman or wonderwoman ! (Downes 2017)

- Beyond Slogans – From Resilience to Resilient Systems
- Ungar (2008) broadens Rutter's individual resilience to a socio-ecological system model of resilience:

In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both **the capacity of the individual to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being**, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways

## Beyond Slogans – From Resilient Systems to Inclusive Systems

Ungar's broader environmental model of resilient systems does not include a focus on State systemic supports, as integrated services (Edwards & Downes 2013), in its role of developing inclusive systems of care.

Ungar's (2012) socio-ecological broadening of Rutter's resilience needs to go further in its systemic concerns:

- to include a systemic focus on **outreach to marginalised families** (Downes 2014a)
- a relational **space of assumed connection between individuals and system supports** (Downes 2020).

## Beyond Slogans –Lockdown Impact

**In addition, the physical environment of the home space may not be conducive to a healthy experience for individuals or families living in close contact during the pandemic. Home overcrowding, inadequate facilities and poor housing standards may add to feelings of distress (2020)**


Correlates of symptoms of anxiety and depression and mental wellbeing associated with COVID-19: a cross-sectional study of UK-based respondents

Lee Smith, Louis Jacob, Anita Yakkundi, Daragh McDermott, ... Mark A Tully. September 2020 *Psychiatry Research*. 291



# 1. Beyond Generic Slogans – Wellbeing, Lockdown Impact

**Trauma and adverse childhood experiences(ACEs)** manifest themselves in many different forms, such as any of the following experiences:

- \* Domestic violence, Substance abuse in family,
  - Neglect,
  - Mental illness in family,
  - Loss of parent through divorce, death or abandonment,
  - Abuse,
  - Incarcerated family member,
  - Consistent Poverty,
  - Experience of suicide,
  - Childhood homelessness,
  - Bullying in School, Placed in State Care.
- 
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Knipe D. Trends in suicide during the covid-19 pandemic. BMJ. 2020;371:m4352. doi:10.1136/bmj.m4352.

Tackling known risk factors that are likely to be exacerbated by the pandemic is crucial. These include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, hopelessness, feelings of entrapment and burdensomeness, substance misuse, loneliness, domestic violence, child neglect or abuse, unemployment, and other financial insecurity (2020)

### **Poverty Impact of Pandemic:**

**Hot meals in schools** need to be a routine, unremarkable part of school life, as they are in many European countries, such as Finland (Pellikka et al. 2019), France, UK, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Slovenia, Austria etc. (Polish Eurydice Unit 2016).

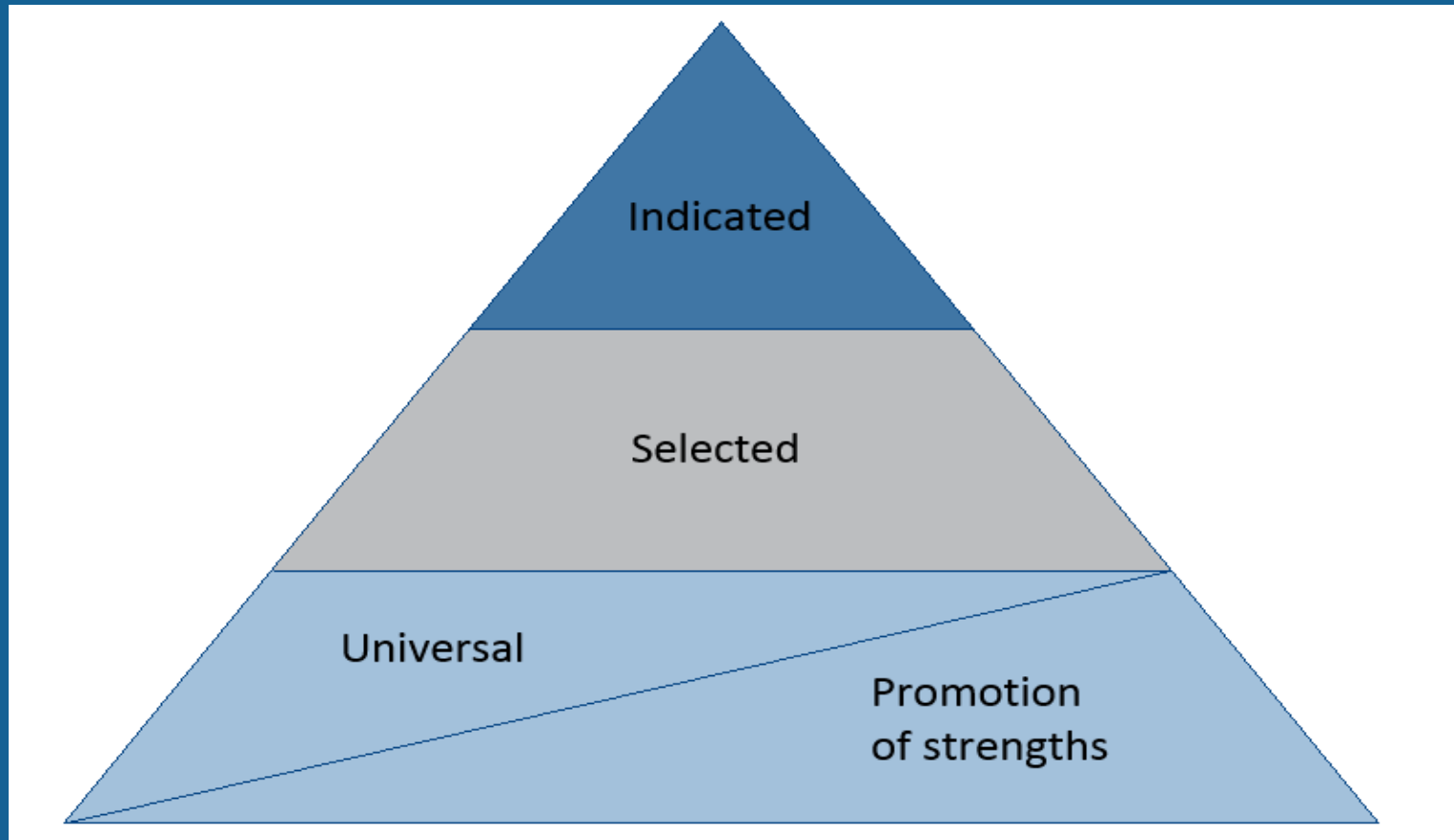


# Differentiated Strategies in Place - for Meeting Individual Needs at Different Levels of Need/Risk (Downes, Nairz-Wirth et al. 2017)

Universal – *All*

Selected – *Some, Groups, Moderate Risk*

Indicated – *Individual, Intensive, Chronic Need*



**Loades ME, Chatburn E, Higson-Sweeney N, et al. Rapid Systematic Review: The Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Context of COVID-19 *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2020;S0890-8567(20)30337-3**

63 studies reported on the impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of previously healthy children and adolescents (n = 51,576; mean age 15.3 years).

**Social isolation and loneliness increased the risk of depression, and possibly anxiety at the time at which loneliness was measured and between 0.25 and 9 years later.**

**Duration** of loneliness was more strongly correlated with mental health symptoms than **intensity** of loneliness (Loades et al 2020).

# Covid Lockdown Impact - Loneliness of Social Distancing

Loneliness impacting on Depression and Anxiety

**Orgilés M, Morales A, Delvecchio E, et al. Immediate psychological effects of the COVID-19 quarantine in youth from Italy and Spain. *PsyArXiv*. 2020**

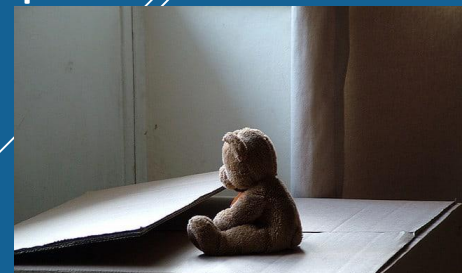
**Methods:** 1,143 parents of Italian and Spanish children aged 3 to 18 years completed a survey providing information about how the quarantine affects their children and themselves, compared to before the home confinement (2020)



**Findings:** 85.7% of the parents perceived changes in their children's emotional state and behaviors during the quarantine. The most frequent symptoms were **difficulty concentrating(76.6%), boredom(52%), irritability(39%), restlessness(38.8%), nervousness(38%), feelings of loneliness (31.3%), uneasiness (30.4%), and worries (30.1%),** and Spanish parents reported more symptoms than Italians.

children of both countries used monitors more frequently, spent less time doing physical activity, and slept more hours during the quarantine.

**\*when family coexistence during quarantine became more difficult, the situation was more serious, and the level of stress was higher,** parents tended to report more emotional problems in their children (Orgiles et al. 2020).



# The Emotional-Relational Turn for ESL and Inclusive Systems: Selected and Indicated Prevention



Even apart from poverty related depression,  
emotional distress contributes to early school leaving:  
**LONELINESS:** Frostad et al. 2015 – intention to drop out

Addressing negative thoughts about social encounters (eg, self-blame, self-devaluation) may be effective(Masi et al. 2011)

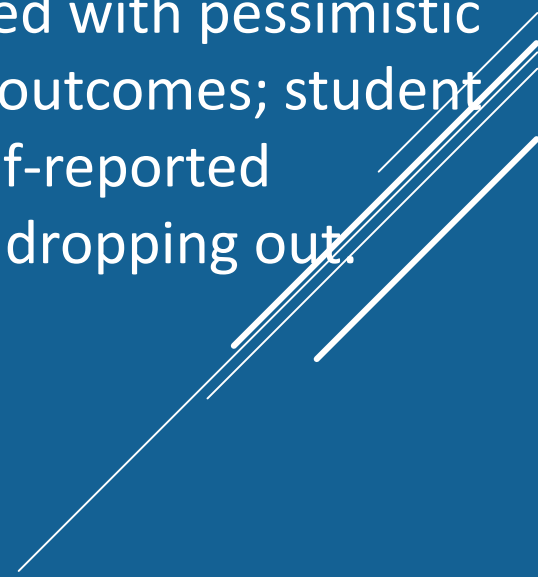
Quiroga et al. (2013) “interventions that target student mental health and negative self-perceptions are likely to improve dropout prevention”.

# Emotions for Inclusion – Addressing Trauma and Complex Needs

Range of international studies in past decade on mental health, trauma links with leaving education early (Esch et al. 2014; Quiroga et al. 2013), including bullying impact (Cornell et al. 2013; Downes & Cefai 2016) on mental health and ESL

Quiroga et al. (2013) 493 high-risk French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal

\*depression symptoms at the beginning of secondary school are related to higher dropout mainly by being associated with pessimistic views about the likelihood to reach desired school outcomes; student negative self-beliefs are in turn related to lower self-reported academic performance and predict a higher risk of dropping out.

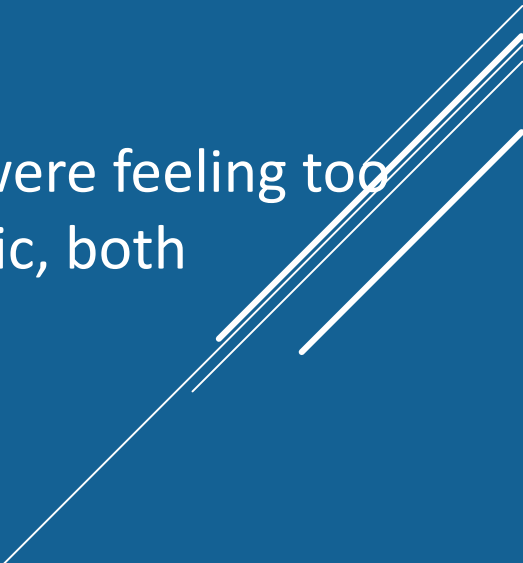
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Esch, P., Bocquet, V., Pull, C., Couffignal, S., Lehnert, T., Graas, M., Fond-Harmant, L and Marc Ansseau. The downward spiral of mental disorders and educational attainment: a systematic review on early school leaving. BMC Psychiatry 2014 14:237

When adjusted for socio-demographic factors, mood disorders (e.g. depression) were significantly related to school dropout

Among anxiety disorders, after controlling for potentially confounding factors, social phobia was a strong predictor of poor educational outcomes

...as indicated by early school leavers themselves, were feeling too nervous in class and being anxious to speak in public, both representing symptoms of social phobia

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## TRAUMA FOCUS Donlevy Day Andriescu & Downes(2019)

‘Emotional counselling and support is provided in a range of countries in order to help those suffering from serious emotional distress, including the Czech Republic, Belgium and Germany’ (2019, 63)



‘In some countries, emotional counselling is expressly backed by legislation. In Poland, legislation mandates for the existence of a system of support to students who are having significant difficulties at school, in the form of one-to-one academic tutoring and psychological support where required’ (2019, 64)

‘Croatia and Bulgaria also have legislation in place that provides for emotional counselling and psychological support’ (2019, 64).





# ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

MURPHY, MCKENNA & DOWNES 2019



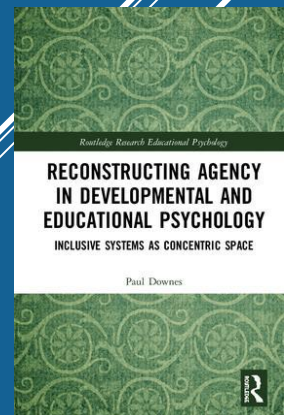
- ▶ 51 males : 29.6% of those in temporary/emergency accommodation in McVerry Trust
- ▶ 24.5% of homeless men in McVerry Trust Accomodation said that they had been temporarily excluded in the form of suspensions;
- ▶ 12.2% had experienced multiple or 'rolling' suspensions
- ▶ 18.4% reported having been permanently excluded or expelled from school
- ▶ 65.5% of permanent exclusions were due to non-violent behaviour; 37.9% were due to difficult relationships with teachers; 27.6% were due to poor attendance
- ▶ 34 of 51 questionnaire participants indicated that they had experienced 'traumatic childhood events'

— *Beyond diametric structures of exclusion (Downes 2020):  
Alternatives to Strategies of Suspension/Expulsion through  
Multidisciplinary Teams*

American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement (2013):

‘The adverse effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion can be profound’ (2013, e1001).

Such students are as much as 10 times more likely to leave school early, are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system and ‘there may be no one at home during the day to supervise the student’s activity if the parents are working (2013, e1002).

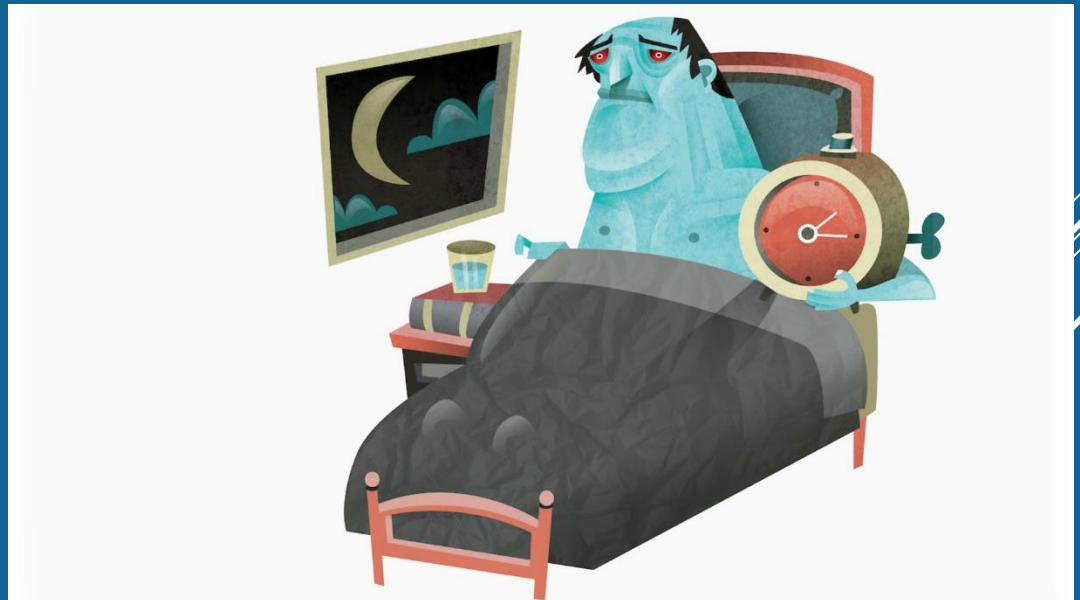


## Covid Lockdown Impact – Sleep and Depression

Simon Evans, Erkan Alkan, Jazmin K. Bhangoo, Harriet Tenenbaum, Terry Ng-Knight. Effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on mental health, wellbeing, sleep and alcohol use in a UK student sample. *Psychiatry Research* 298 (2021) 113819 .

**Sleep quality was not affected across the sample as a whole. The increase in depression symptoms was highly correlated with worsened sleep quality.** A reduction in alcohol use, and a significant shift towards an 'evening' diurnal preference, were also observed. Levels of worry surrounding contracting COVID-19 were high. Results highlight the urgent need for strategies to support young people's mental health: alleviating worries around contracting COVID, and **supporting good sleep quality**, could benefit young adults' mental health as the COVID-19 crisis unfolds (2021, 1).

Cross-sectional studies have pointed to high sleep disorder prevalence post-pandemic. In Greece, Voitsidis et al. (2020) found that nearly 40% of participants scored above the cut-off score for insomnia: this was associated with loneliness and depressive symptoms with younger age groups and females at higher risk (Evans et al 2021).



# BEYOND DIAMETRIC SPLITS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND HEALTH (DOWNES 2020) PROMOTING ADEQUATE SLEEP FOR STUDENTS



- Most children need at least 9 hours of restful sleep each night (Taras and Potts-Datema, 2005).
- Impact on the wide spectrum of cognitive functioning, including **attention, reasoning and memory**, moreover during prolonged periods of sleep restriction, the negative effects accumulate (de Bruin et al, 2016).
- Sleep deficiency is interwoven in complex ways with **substance abuse** (Loureiro et al., 2014), **aggressive behaviours** (Lemola et al., 2012)

## Sleep Loss –

Quick win

Hargadon & Downes 2019: Curricular intervention, 6<sup>th</sup> class DEIS Band 2 primary school – 24 pupils

- awareness-raising through reflective diaries by children on their sleep patterns, as well as information, dialogue sessions for parents on the importance of sleep.
- Changes were achieved even on a brief five-week classroom active learning programme, with just one hour in class per week.
- Before intervention 75% going to bed before 23:00, post-intervention bedtime before 23:00 rose to 95.8%.
- Before intervention, over half (63%) reported 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' going to school feeling that they needed more sleep. Post-intervention, this figure was reduced to 32%.

## PRIORITISING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION (CEFAI, BARTOLO, CAVIONI & DOWNES 2018)

- A study of more than 213 programmes found that if a school implements a quality SEE curriculum, they can expect better student behaviour and an 11-point increase in test scores (Durlak et al., 2011).
- Durlak et al. (2011) highlight SEE benefits for outcomes on SEL skills: **attitudes to education, positive social behaviour, conduct problems, emotional distress and academic performance.**
- **New EU Key Competence for Lifelong Learning: Personal, Social and Learning to Learn 2018**
- **Integrate Personal, Social Competence with both Arts and Outdoor Education**



‘While in some MS, SEE is a statutory component of the curriculum, in many MS it is not a taught subject. It is often instead embedded in the curriculum, usually as part of broader areas or other subjects such as citizenship, health education/promotion, and prevention of violence and bullying. While such areas may share and overlap with the goals of SEE, **there does need to be a distinct emphasis on SEE as a core content area of the curriculum, with a focus on both intra- and interpersonal competences, and it must be granted sufficient time for effective delivery**’ (2018, 89).

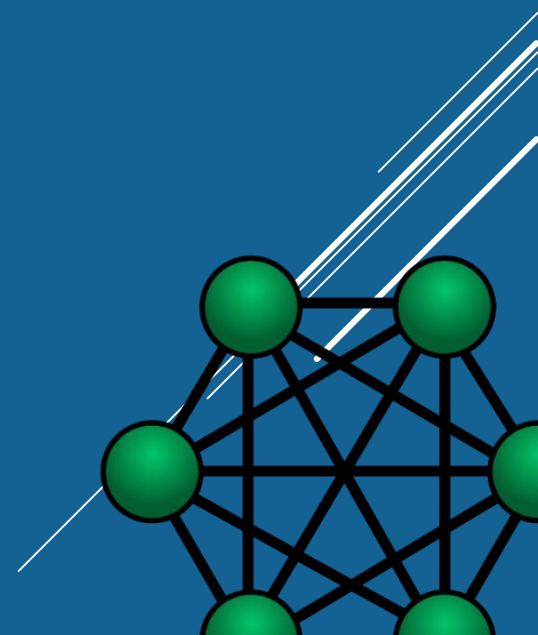
Cefai, C., Bartolo P. A., Cavioni. V., Downes, P. (2018). *Strengthening Social and Emotional Education as a core curricular area across the EU: A review of the international evidence*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union/EU bookshop.



# Universal and Selected Prevention Levels Meaningful Instrumental Activities – Arts, Sports, Nature/Outdoor Education Fosters Agency & Social and Emotional Development

Reducing the impact of enforced physical distancing by maintaining the structure, quality, and quantity of social networks, and helping children and adolescents to experience social rewards, to feel part of a group, and to know that there are others to whom they can look for support is likely to be important (Wang et al. 2017)

**Clear benefits for personal and social development from participating in a music group** (Ros-Morente et al 2019).



Strong research evidence, mainly from outside the EU, showing multidimensional benefits of outdoor education, which among others include increased social connection and leadership skills (Richmond et al 2018).

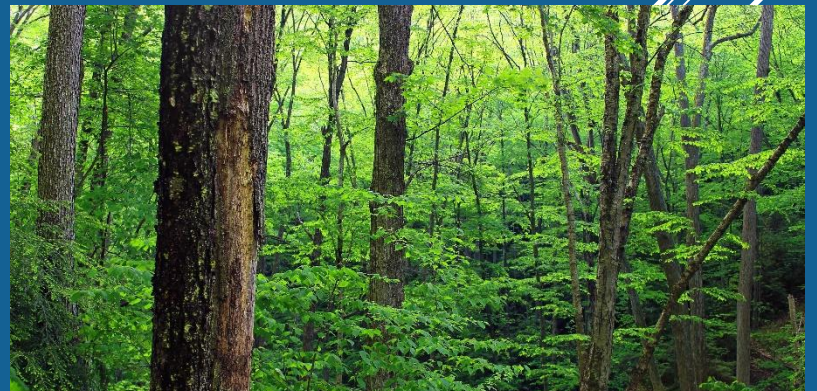
\*children's participation in dinghy sailing confirms benefits of outdoor education in enhancing social and emotional skills, in particular in developing problem solving and communication, providing social support, and awareness of emotions and personal feelings (Cotterill & Brown, 2018).

Outdoor programmes can help address the problem of the negative health impacts from young people's excessive screen time



Participation in forest schools could also play a role in promotion of resilience, independence and wellbeing (Murphy 2018). Another study reveals that outdoor education contributed to promotion of resilience and a growth mindset (O'Brien & Lomas 2017).

Activities such as canoeing, rock climbing and hiking could improve mental health and wellbeing, including personal development and team building skills (Mutz et al 2019). Moreover, outdoor activities such as backpacking, canoeing and kayaking could help reduce psychological stress (Chang et al 2019)



# Agenda for Covid Related Holistic Differentiated Response for Wellbeing and Mental Health, Resilience and Agency across Europe: Priority Themes

Indicated Prevention – Emotional Counsellors/Therapists in and around Schools

- Multidisciplinary Team Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion

Selected Prevention – Afterschool Funds for Arts, Sports, Nature/Outdoor Education for Meaningful Instrumental Activities, Agency and to Address Loneliness/Social Needs

Universal Prevention – Curricular time and presence of Social and Emotional Education, including Sleep Awareness (Part of Personal, Social Key Competence Feedback Processes)

Poverty Impact Prevention - Hot Meals in Schools



# Agenda for Covid Related Holistic Differentiated Response for Wellbeing and Mental Health, Resilience and Agency across Europe: Key Research Questions on Priority Themes

Ministry providing funding on a given priority theme+ Amount

History of Investment and Strategy

Current and Future National Strategy or ad hoc practices: Primary and Postprimary

School Site Implementation Details (e.g., consent and referrals for counselling, vouchers to avoid stigma for hot meals, locations of afterschool activities and time allocations)

Areas /Schools of High Poverty Targeting for these Inclusive System Supports ?

National Strategy for Bullying Prevention in Schools

National Strategy for Bullying Prevention in Schools Integrated with Early School Leaving Prevention Strategy

Structured Committee Dialogue Across Health and Education, Social Services and Education at National Level ?

Reframing the problem through a focus on solutions:

- Issues previously treated separately, such as early school leaving and bullying prevention, can be addressed through common system responses for inclusive systems. (Downes & Cefai 2016)



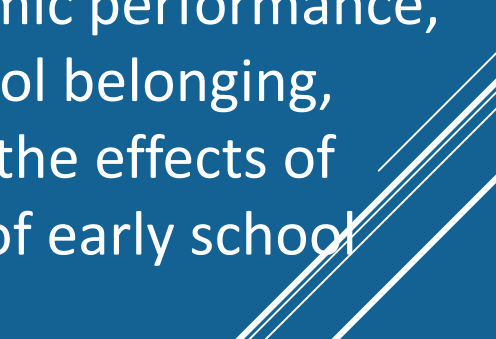
## School Climate, Teasing, Bullying

In a sample of 276 high schools, Cornell et al. (2013) found that risk of early school leaving increases if a student experiences an atmosphere of teasing and bullying even if s/he is not personally bullied.

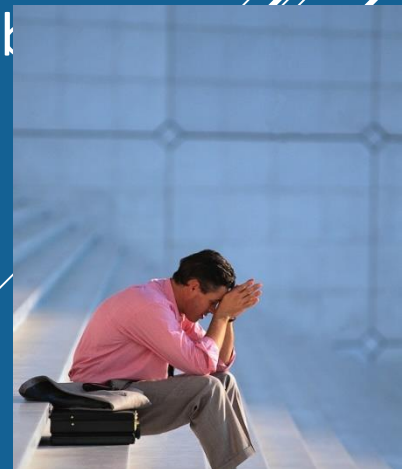
Cornell et al. (2013) 'Notably, the increased dropout count that was associated with Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying was quite similar to the increases that were associated with FRPM [i.e., poverty] and academic failure'.

## COMMON SYSTEM SUPPORTS NEEDED FOR BULLYING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING PREVENTION (DOWNES & CEFAL 2016)

A striking commonality of interests with regard to strategic approaches for bullying prevention in schools and early school leaving prevention:

- Direct and indirect effects of bullying on early school leaving relevant to perpetrators, victims
    - school absence,
    - negative interpersonal relations with peers and conflict with teachers,
    - low concentration in school, decreased academic performance,
    - negative school climate influences, lower school belonging, satisfaction, and pedagogical well-being, with the effects of bullying exacerbated for those already at risk of early school leaving.
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- Common systems of supports (transition focus from primary to post-primary, multiprofessional teams for complex needs, language support needs, family support services and education of parents regarding their approaches to communication and supportive discipline with their children, outreach to families to provide supports, addressing academic difficulties).
- Common issues requiring an integrated strategic response, including the prevention of displacement effects of a problem from one domain to another, such as in suspension/expulsion which may make a bullying problem become an early school leaving problem.
- Common causal antecedents (negative school climate, difficulties, trauma)






- Teacher professional development and pre-service preparation focusing on developing teachers' relational competences for a promoting a positive school and classroom climate, including a focus on teachers' conflict resolution and diversity awareness competences
- Early warning systems.



The following three slides are of **TABLE 9.** Cross Government Cooperation on ELET (Early Leaving from Education and Training): Policy Areas Working with Education at Central/Top-Level, 2013/2014



**The following three slides show the existence of  
*National Bullying Prevention Strategy* in School  
in European Countries  
Downes and Cefai 2016**

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## The existence of *National Bullying Prevention Strategy* in School in European Countries

Is there a national strategy for bullying prevention in schools in your country?	
Austria	Yes
Belgium (Flanders)	No
Bulgaria	Yes
Cyprus	No
Czech Republic	Yes
England	No
Estonia	No
Finland	No official national strategy but bullying is in the National Core Curriculum and Government Programme and national rollout of KiVa programme
France	Yes (as Harcèlement)
Source: Combined responses from three sources: Commission ET2020 School Policy Working Group of Senior Education Officials from National Ministries/ENSEC/NGOs surveys	

# The existence of *National Bullying Prevention Strategy* in School in European Countries

Is there a national strategy for bullying prevention in schools in your country?	
Greece	Yes
Hungary	No
Ireland	Yes
Italy	Yes
Latvia	No
Lithuania	Yes
Malta	Yes
Netherlands	No, but new laws on social safety
Norway	Yes, through national strategy of better-learning environment
Poland	Yes
Source: Combined responses from three sources: Commission ET2020 School Policy Working Group of Senior Education Officials from National Ministries/ENSEC/NGOs surveys	

## The existence of *National Bullying Prevention Strategy* in School in European Countries

Is there a national strategy for bullying prevention in schools in your country?	
Portugal	Yes, through health promoting education and violence prevention programmes
Romania	Yes (as violence)
Scotland	Yes
Serbia	No
Slovakia	No
Spain	Yes, (Master plan for co-existence and the improvement of safety at school and their environment)
Sweden	Yes, (Law stipulates that each school must have its own policy)
Turkey	Yes
Source: Combined responses from three sources: Commission ET2020 School Policy Working Group of Senior Education Officials from National Ministries/ENSEC/NGOs surveys	

The following two slides show the existence of  
*Integrated National Strategic Response* to  
Bullying and Early School Leaving Prevention in  
European Countries  
Downes and Cefai 2016

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## The existence of *Integrated National Strategic Response to Bullying and Early School Leaving Prevention* in European Countries

<b>Austria</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	<b>No, but in Lifelong Education Strategy and Estonian Government Action Programme 2015-19</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>No, not directly but there is a focus on school climate</b>
<b>Greece</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>No, not explicitly, only indirectly through aspects of School Completion Programme</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Somewhat in National Education Strategy 2013-22</b>




## The existence of *Integrated National Strategic Response* to Bullying and Early School Leaving Prevention in European Countries

Malta	No, not directly, although the National Strategy for Bullying is referred to in all other Education Ministry strategies
Netherlands	No
Norway	N/A
Poland	Yes
Portugal	Somewhat indirectly
Romania	No
Scotland	No
Serbia	No
Slovakia	No
Spain	No
Sweden	No
Turkey	No
<u>Source:</u>	Combined responses from three sources: Commission ET2020 School Policy Working Group of Senior Education Officials from National Ministries/ENSEC/NGOs surveys.

Table on the following slide is from Cefai, C. Downes, P. Cavioni.,V. (2021). *A formative, inclusive, whole school approach to the assessment of social and emotional education in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union/EU bookshop.

This survey was conducted with National Ministry representatives from the EU Commission's School Policy Working Group and ECEC Working Group.

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Country	At Primary level::Is there a strong consistent focus on positive school climate in your Education Ministry external inspections of schools?	At Post Primary level::Is there a strong consistent focus on positive school climate in your Education Ministry external inspections of schools?	At Primary level::Is there a strong consistent focus on positive school climate in self-evaluation processes in schools in your country?	At Post Primary level: Is there a strong consistent focus on positive school climate in self-evaluation processes in schools in your country?
	U	V	W	X
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2013). Policy Statement: Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion, *Pediatrics*, 131, 1000-1007.

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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT. Accompanying the document. Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning {COM(2018) 24 final} Brussels, 17.1.2018. SWD(2018) 14 final

Cornell, F., Gregory, A., Huang, F & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Predicts High School Dropout Rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105, No. 1, 138–149

Cotterill, S.T & Brown, H. (2018). An exploration of the perceived health, life skill and academic benefits of dinghy sailing for 9–13-yearold school children, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 18:3, 227-241

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