

Birmingham's Wellbeing Census for Schools - Explanatory Guide

Thank you for considering taking part in Birmingham's Wellbeing Census for Schools. This document will explain a little bit more about what the census is, who is behind it, and what your school will need to do to take part.

What is the wellbeing census?

The wellbeing census is a proposed annual survey aimed at capturing wellbeing data in Birmingham schools; this done via a digital survey supplied to your school that pupils fill out every year. The census has been devised by Birmingham Educational Psychology Service and is supported by the University of Warwick's Department of Mental Health and Wellbeing. We hope to use the data collected in the census to better understand the on-going emotional wellbeing of children and young people in schools in Birmingham. We can then use this data to inform future policies and help schools and services to better provide support to young people in the city. We can also use this data to evaluate current and future interventions that support young people in the city and try find out what works and what is useful regarding wellbeing.

What are the benefits for your school?

By taking part in the census your school will be given access to digital software that can be used to carry out the survey. Once the survey closes at the end of July we will be able to perform the necessary calculations of scores for our region and provide your school with its own individual dashboard so you can see the aggregated wellbeing profile for your school. We'll make these dashboards available hopefully in July (we sometimes extend the survey to help some schools complete). You can use this report for your own purposes and/or to work alongside SEMH professionals and training providers. You will also be invited to a session around November 2024 to talk through your dashboards, school wellbeing and how to interpret your data.

You will also be able to see how your schools scores compare to other schools in the region by going to our website www.breathe-edu.co.uk/census.

Taking part also will expose your teachers to carrying out wellbeing research which can serve to upskill and improve knowledge in the area. We also have an online shared space for educationalists to engage more efficiently and creatively in the area of youth mental health. You can access this resource at www.breathe-edu.co.uk

What is the nature of the collaboration between Birmingham Educational Psychology Service and the University of Warwick?

The census is being led by Birmingham Educational Psychology Service who have been working with the University of Warwick's Department of Mental Health and Wellbeing to utilise their academic expertise in the area. The research team at the University of Warwick will be able to use the census advice on the creation of school dashboards, help promote further strategic and innovative approaches to wellbeing in the region and contribute to the academic literature in the field of youth mental health wellbeing. It should be noted that the data will be anonymous in the hands of the University of Warwick.

Who is the census for?

The census is for your all pupils in year 4 and above. You will also be able to collect data on the wellbeing of your staff also.

What data is being collected?

We have purposely chosen to collect wellbeing data as it is a positive and low risk way for young people to take part (you can see the actual questions that are asked from the links below). The survey collects wellbeing data; this data is collected using either the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (for primary age children) or the Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale (for secondary age children); both measures are easy to use, positively worded wellbeing questionnaires, that have been tested as safe to use with young people. You can find out more about these scales via the following links (you can ask your school also to provide copies also).

Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/using/faq/scwbs_children_report.pdf

Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs>

The survey also collects data from 4 questions on school connectedness, which seeks to find out how connected and safe a child feels at school (*please note some school will be given the option to opt into a new extended schedule – these schools will be contacted separately in regards to this*).

To register your pupils for the census your school will need to provide some basic information you already hold about your pupils. This data includes Unique Pupil Number (the survey uses Unique Pupil Numbers to link pupil data over years and not to personally identify them), school year, ethnicity, sex, year group, unauthorised and authorised absence, registered special educational needs and/or disability, and whether they receive free school meals or not. You will be required to small number suppress any data such as ethnicity and registered special educational needs that might be at risk of data matching (how to do this is explained in your tutorials on how to operate the www.breathe-schools.co.uk platform)

All the data collected from schools is anonymous in the hands of University of Warwick, securely saved on an encrypted server at the University of Warwick and only handled by trained researchers working for the University.

What are the requirements of schools taking part?

Setting up the survey is very simple; however, we want to give you biggest window possible to collect data so it is important that actions are taken early to account for some of the lead times involved setting things up.

Your school will need the following resources to take part;

- Return your signed schools data processing agreement and nominate a school champion to manage your schools survey.

- To have IT Staff (or admin) available to setup the measurement and manage disseminating participant information sheets.
- IT facilities i.e. computers/laptops/tablets that pupils can carry out the survey on (although pupils can also complete surveys on their smartphones if you choose to do so).

Who is suitable for the role of School Champion?

Your school champion will be someone that is responsible for managing the survey in your school; ideally in the past this has been school mental health leads or SENCOs however any teacher could do this. Nominated champions will be given access to the survey software and will be able to access a training pack containing all of the information your school will need to carry out the survey as well as video tutorials on how to operate the software.

Initial preparation and legal requirements

GDPR & Data Protection

The project has obtained ethical approval from the University of Warwick BSREC ethics committee BSREC 78/20-21 and has been subject to ongoing review by a panel of wellbeing experts from Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham Educational Psychology Service, Birmingham Children's Community Trust and Birmingham Department of Public Health. We have taken steps to ensure the data being collected is anonymous in the hands of University of Warwick. However DfE guidance states that schools should have a data processing agreement with third party processors (the University of Warwick in this case) to process UPNs. **Although the council has taken part in drafting this agreement you should read it carefully before signing.** We will need this signed and returned to us before we can give you access to our software.

Data is retained for 10 years in line with the University of Warwick data retention policy. We have worked with legal entities from Birmingham City Council and University of Warwick to ensure the project is operating to Information Governance requirements set out by the ICO and Department of Education.

Participant Information Sheets

We will provide you with **Participant Information Sheets for Pupils and Parents** it would be good practice for you to place them on your school's website or virtual notice board; if you have other forms of communication you use for dissemination of information to parents and pupils such as text services then please use them also.

The census is voluntary so letting parents and pupils know this allows them to not take part if they don't want to. Teachers facilitating the survey should remind pupils of this, and should use the pupil information sheet to explain the survey prior to its facilitation. Pupils are also reminded digitally that the census is voluntary at the beginning of the survey. If pupils do not wish to take part, then they can simply close their browser at any time prior to submitting their answers.

Information for pupils and parents can be accessed and downloaded from www.breathe-schools.co.uk/documents

Setting up and facilitating the survey



It is expected that new school champions will receive their logins early January 2024 you will have from this date to end of June to collect your data.

In the guidelines document you will find explicit instructions of how to operate the software and the software itself will have video tutorials that will show IT staff exactly what they need to do to setup the survey (it is very straight forward) and carry out tasks such as small number suppression. If you are using CAPITA SIMS or BROMCOM school management systems, you can make use of automated import feature (explained in the guideline document).

You will need to carry out this process every year just upload all of your pupils and the system automatically will link pupils up with their previous census or add new pupils if this is their first time completing the survey.

Every pupil that is entered into the software will have unique hyperlink and a simple password that can be used to access their individual survey. All that is then required is that pupils are directed to the link to their survey (which can be done via their school email or via a register used by the teacher facilitating the survey on the day). After a pupil has used their link and password to access the survey they will be prompted to complete the questionnaire; once finished their data is collected and securely stored (the link will then no longer be accessible). You can carry this out in whichever way is convenient for your school; in sets; forms, however pupils must sit and complete the survey in one sitting so they will need usually about 10-15 mins to work through the 19 questions in the survey.

We have to wait for the census to close in July to carry out the necessary calculation but shortly after you will receive access to your school's dashboard containing your schools aggregated data (we aim to get your dashboards live prior to the start academic year).

What support is available to my school that might assist with the survey?

Whilst the survey is quite straightforward to administer and we will provide clear instructions on how to carry it out; this year we have limited resources but try and will operate in a helpdesk fashion to support you if need be we can set up zoom/ms team meetings and correct any problems you might have.

If you feel your school will require extra support please let us know as early as possible so we can try and accommodate. This being said we have tried to make everything as simple and easy to carry out as possible.

Who are some key contacts I can speak to in the meantime?

Dr Deborah Benjamin
Senior Educational Psychologist
Education & Skills Directorate
Birmingham City Council

Tel. - 0121 303 0100
Mob. - 07702 338337
Email: deborah.j.benjamin@birmingham.gov.uk

Colin Palmer
Senior Research Coordinator/Hon Research Fellow
Birmingham Children's Hospital/University of
Warwick

Mob – 07788 834012
Email: c.palmer@warwick.ac.uk

We look forward to working with your schools and improving the wellbeing of young people in our region.

Best wishes,

