

School health

Supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in schools.

School health programmes

The Public Health Agency delivers and supports a range of school-based programmes and initiatives that promote health, wellbeing and development of children and young people.

Explore our programmes and resources:

Children's nursing (CCN) service

[Children's nursing \(CCN\) service | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

Healthy lifestyle

[Healthy eating | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

[Oral health | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

[Give every child the best start in life | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

[Smoking, vaping, drugs and alcohol | HSC Public Health Agency](#) (smoking prevention, alcohol awareness, drugs education)

Mental health and wellbeing

- [Minding your head](#)
- [Lifeline | Lifeline Helpline](#)
- Suicide prevention
- Mental health first aid training?

RISE NI programme

RISE NI a multi-professional early intervention team available in each Trust area have developed a comprehensive online resource for teachers to address a range of needs

that are impacting on a child's ability to develop, learn and achieve.

These teams work directly in the school environment delivering universal training, targeted support, and specialist intervention to address barriers to learning supporting children and young people, educational staff and the child's parents/carers.

Roots of Empathy

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom programme that has been shown to reduce levels of aggression among school children, while also improving social and emotional competence and increasing empathy.

What is a Roots of Empathy programme?



Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom programme that has been shown to reduce levels of aggression among school children, while also improving social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. Significantly, it provides an effective approach to reducing the risk factors that cause violence.

Roots of Empathy launched programmes in Northern Ireland in 2010-2011, as a result of an invitation from the Public Health Agency to Roots of Empathy Founder/President, Mary Gordon, to deliver a keynote address.

Actions

At the heart of the programme are a baby and parent from the local community, who visit the classroom on a monthly basis throughout the year. A trained instructor coaches students to observe the baby's development and label the baby's feelings. This 'emotional literacy' lays the foundations for more safe and caring classrooms.

Children become more competent in understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others (empathy) and are therefore less likely to physically, psychologically and emotionally hurt each other through bullying.

Outcomes

A number of randomised controlled trials have found that children already identified as having bullying and aggressive behaviours, and who participated in Roots of Empathy, had a reduction in these behaviours of 88% compared to those identified children who did not receive the programme. The latter group had an increase in aggression and bullying behaviour of 50%. The observed reduction in aggression among the former group continues for at least three years after completion of the programme.

Find out more about the programme at [Northern Ireland - Roots of Empathy](#)

School vaccination programmes

[School vaccination programmes | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

School nursing

School Nursing Service is available to all children and young people of school age in Northern Ireland. Parents, carers, schools and young people can seek advice and support when needed.

Find out more about [School nursing | HSC Public Health Agency](#).

Download our leaflets



Last reviewed
05 October 2026