

The Cambridge Wellbeing Check Handbook for Teachers



Tel: +44 (0)1223 790 122
Email: insight@cambridge.org

cambridge.org/insight/wellbeing

Contents

Welcome to the Cambridge Wellbeing Check	3
What is included in the Cambridge Wellbeing Check package?.....	4
How can I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check within my school?.....	4
How was the Cambridge Wellbeing Check developed?	6
What does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check measure?	6
How does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check measure students' wellbeing?	8
Has the Cambridge Wellbeing Check been approved in any way?.....	8
Which students can use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?	8
When in the school year can I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?.....	9
How often should I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?	10
How should I implement the Cambridge Wellbeing Check in my school?	10
How long does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check take?.....	11
How are students' responses reported?	11
How do I interpret the reports?	12
Stage One – Review your class/group reports	13
Stage Two – Review the reports for individual students	14
Stage Three – Discuss and reflect on the wellbeing reports with students	17
Mean scores for schools in England	18
Stage Four – Compare the scores of different groups.....	20
Stage Five – Tracking wellbeing over time	22
What should I do if a report indicates a student has low wellbeing?.....	23
A student has asked to see their responses to the Check. What should I do?	24
Should I share my group's responses with students after they have taken the Check?.....	24
What are the lesson plans and how do I use them with the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?	24
How can school leaders find out the reasons that underly their students' responses to the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?	25
We already undertake our own evaluation of students' wellbeing; how would we benefit from the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?	26
Can I download the data from the Cambridge Wellbeing Check for my management information system?	26
Acknowledgements	26

Welcome to the Cambridge Wellbeing Check

At Cambridge Insight, we believe in taking a holistic approach to understanding and supporting students. Appreciating each student as a whole person can really help to understand how well they are doing in school, and why. There are several different areas of insight that every teacher can gain, to build up a profile of each child. One of these areas is wellbeing.

Put simply, mental wellbeing is a combination of both *feeling* well and *functioning* well. This can relate to any domain of life, and in our context, this means feeling and functioning well in school. Wellbeing is a transient psychological *state* rather than a fixed *trait*. This means it can change from month to month, week to week, or even day to day. It is worth monitoring over time. Many schools strive to create a culture of care, where everyone looks out for one another. Understanding and tracking wellbeing can be a key contributor to a positive school ethos.

The last few years have been a time of great upheaval. The dynamics among teachers, schools and students have changed. We know that students have been affected by these changes, some in a minor way, some in a more profound way. As a result, concern around students' wellbeing has risen in many schools.

To this end we have decided to offer schools an online check, first developed by the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education, that enables students to focus upon their own personal wellbeing. Students will understand more about what wellbeing is, and potentially become more confident to express their feelings to others. The Cambridge Wellbeing Check also provides teachers with information about their students. This could help with tracking wellbeing, and in identifying individuals with lower levels of wellbeing who need more support. It could also help with evaluating interventions to improve the wellbeing of groups and individuals. We hope that the Check will support a caring culture in your school.

What is included in the Cambridge Wellbeing Check package?

The Cambridge Wellbeing Check package includes:

- the Cambridge Wellbeing Check – a digital assessment comprising 22 questions
- this *Handbook for Teachers*, which:
 - provides an overview of the Cambridge Wellbeing Check
 - explains what it is measuring
- a *Quick Guide for Teachers*
- a user guide which explains how to access and administer the Cambridge Wellbeing Check
- lesson plans on wellbeing for:
 - lower primary students
 - upper primary students
 - lower secondary students
 - upper secondary students
- individual reports on each student who completes the Check
- group reports for all students in a class or defined group
- a *Meaning of key words* information sheet and set of slides to use with students, to ensure they understand the key words included within the Check
- a *Factsheet* to share with parents.

How can I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check within my school?

There are three main ways to use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check:

1. As a whole-group or whole-school evaluation tool for teachers and senior school leaders

You can use the Check to:

- Measure students' wellbeing at school during key windows throughout the academic year and to monitor their overall experience of school.
- Create a cumulative evidence-base for school leaders and governors. This could be used to evaluate which aspects of school life could better support students' wellbeing, and to understand the needs of specific groups of students in the school community.
- Help to build a picture of how a school might be contributing to students' wellbeing over time. This could be at both a whole-school level (to improve school policies or implement targeted interventions) or at an individual-student level (as a means of monitoring a student's school trajectory).
- Evaluate the success of interventions or school policies to improve wellbeing that have been enacted since the Cambridge Wellbeing Check was last used. This could be at the level of the student, the class, the year-group, or the school.

2. As a pedagogic tool embedded within lesson content for teachers and teaching assistants

You can use the Check together with our lesson plans to:

- educate your students about what wellbeing is
- create a classroom culture that is emotionally literate, sensitive, and aware of the emotions of others
- provide students with a sense of interpersonal connectedness and intrapersonal understanding.

If your school is new to wellbeing, then you could work with your students to develop a school wellbeing policy.

In England, you can use the Wellbeing Check to help to meet regulatory (Ofsted) requirements for the provision of Personal Development and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education in the following areas:

- Provision 243. Personal development, which evaluates the extent to which schools are: *“developing learners’ confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy”*
- Provision 245. Spiritual development, which evaluates the extent to which learners have opportunities to develop their: *“sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them”* and *“willingness to reflect on their experiences”*.

Current primary and secondary school guidance on the teaching of mental wellbeing and emotional health include the following aims.

Key Stage 2

Health and wellbeing aims

By the end of primary school students should know...

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health
- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations
- how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others’ feelings.

Key Stages 3 and 4

Health and wellbeing aims

By the end of secondary school students should know...

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others’ mental health
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

3. As a tool for understanding individual students' levels of wellbeing

If your school is just starting out on its wellbeing journey and does not yet have an understanding of where students are with their wellbeing, then you can use the results of the Check as a springboard for individual consultations with your students, to find out why they responded in the way they did. You can then tailor pastoral support to your students' individual needs.

You can use the results of the Check to identify students who have indicated that their wellbeing is low in one or more areas. These students may need greater support from colleagues with pastoral expertise and responsibilities. To build a fuller picture of a student's wellbeing, you can compare the results of the Check with other sources of wellbeing information. These could include teacher observations and conversations with members of the school community who know the student well. This is particularly important when wellbeing is low.

You may also want to share the results of the Check with parents, to help them to better understand their child's experiences of school and support their child through an increased awareness of distinct aspects of wellbeing. Please seek agreement with students before you share any reports with parents.

It is important to note that the Check is **not** a diagnostic or clinical tool. It cannot be used to diagnose mental illness or mental health difficulties. Instead, specialist assessments conducted by appropriately qualified clinicians are needed.

How was the Cambridge Wellbeing Check developed?

The Check was originally developed as a research questionnaire by Dr Ros McLellan and her colleagues at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Following initial piloting, the questionnaire was validated for use with children and adolescents in schools in England in a large-scale research study. This study examined the role of creative initiatives in fostering wellbeing and was funded by the international creative learning foundation *Creativity, Culture and Education*.

In total, 5,170 students from a nationally representative sample of 20 primary schools and 20 secondary schools completed the questionnaire successfully. This research has been published in the *Cambridge Journal of Education*¹ which is a prestigious, peer-reviewed journal. The questionnaire has since been used by other researchers in published studies.

The research and development team at Cambridge Insight worked with Dr McLellan and her colleagues to refine the wording of the items in the questionnaire, to extend it slightly to improve its coverage of the principal areas of wellbeing, and to bring it to life as a digital Check. We then re-trialled the Check with a further 20 schools internationally, covering a wide range of ages and demographics, to confirm its suitability for use with our schools.

What does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check measure?

The Cambridge Wellbeing Check measures students' psychological or mental wellbeing. This is a combination of both feeling well and functioning well. This can relate to any domain of life, and in our context, this means feeling and functioning well in school.

How we *feel* is about how satisfied we are with life overall from our own, subjective point of view. It is about recognizing and managing positive and negative emotions. It is sometimes known as *hedonic* wellbeing.

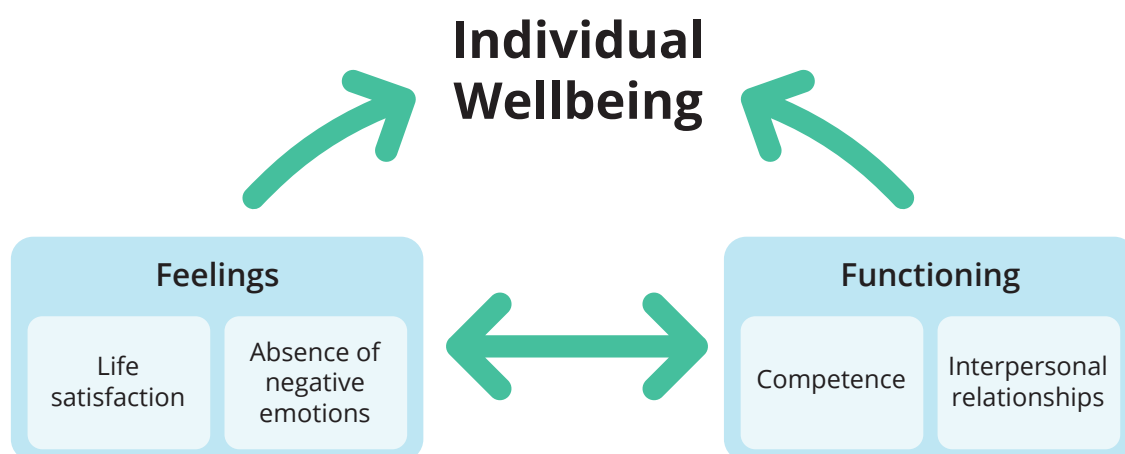
¹ McLellan, R., Stewart, S. (2015) Measuring children and young people's wellbeing in the school context. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 45 (3), p307-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2014.889659>

How we *function* is to do with our personal development. It is about how much we can engage in meaningful activities and interact with others and our context. It is about learning to accept who we are and what we could be, to be fulfilled. It is sometimes known as *eudaimonic* wellbeing.

Students with high levels of wellbeing feel they are enjoying their education, getting the most out of it, and reaching their potential. This can be academically, socially, and in other areas of school life such as sport and music. Psychological wellbeing is subjective. This means students in the same physical circumstances can experience different levels of wellbeing.

The Check measures students' wellbeing in four areas, which interact with one another:

- **Competence wellbeing** is the extent to which students experience competence, self-confidence, fulfilment, and purpose. Self-actualisation is a core psychological need. To feel truly well, students need to feel they are fulfilling their potential. This could be academically, socially, or in other areas of school life such as sport, music, drama, debating, and school community activities.
- **Interpersonal wellbeing** is about the extent to which students experience feeling connected to others in school, that those people care about them, and that they are valued. It matters because relatedness is a core psychological need. We are social beings and need a sense of belonging.
- **Life satisfaction** is the extent to which students experience contentment and overall life satisfaction. Feelings in this area of wellbeing relate to enjoyment, excitement, having lots of energy, and looking forward to the future. In school, students with high levels of life satisfaction wellbeing feel energised and excited about what they are learning, and about other activities and events such as clubs and school trips.
- **Negative emotions** are feelings such as anxiety, stress, and sadness. These emotions can distract students and prevent them from doing their best in school. This can be academically and in extra-curricular activities.



The Cambridge model of mental wellbeing

How does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check measure students' wellbeing?

The Check is a digital assessment comprising 22 questions. The students complete it themselves. They are asked to self-report the frequency with which they experience a range of feelings in school. These feelings are associated with the four areas of wellbeing. Students respond to each question using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always'.

At the start of the Check, students are informed that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions, that they can change their responses if they want to, and if they do not want to answer a question, they can move onto the next question instead.

Here is an example question:

When I am at school...
I feel people are friendly

never	not often	sometimes	often	always
-------	-----------	-----------	-------	--------

Has the Cambridge Wellbeing Check been approved in any way?

Yes. Within the Cambridge group we take our responsibilities very seriously. Before being used in schools, the Cambridge Wellbeing Check was approved by Cambridge University Press and Assessment's Research Ethics Committee, making sure that its basis is ethically sound, and by our Privacy team to ensure compliance with data protection law. The original research project at the Faculty of Education in the University of Cambridge, in which the Check was initially developed, also received full ethical approval.

Which students can use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

The Check is suitable for students in the school year in which they turn 8, up until the school year in which they turn 18. In schools in England and Wales, these are Years 3 to 13. Children entering Year 3 have usually completed three full years of formal schooling.

We provide a *Meanings of key words* information sheet and a set of slides for you to use with students prior to them completing the Check. This is to ensure they have a clear understanding of the key words included within the Check. The information sheet includes examples of each word being used in context. It is particularly useful for younger students, and for students with English as an Additional Language.

If a student is unable to read any words within the Check, then it is fine to read them out aloud to the student.

There is no time limit to complete the Check, so students can take as long as they need to. We suggest that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are provided with the opportunity to complete the Check alongside their classmates wherever possible. Special accommodations could involve the student completing the Check in a separate room, and a teaching assistant reading aloud each question and/or entering the student's responses into the device for them.

When in the school year can I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

You can use the Check at any point in the school year. The most useful times to use it are:

Early in the school year

You can get an understanding of how students are settling into a new class, year group, or school setting.

At stressful times in the school year

During exam time, or when illnesses such as Covid are having a significant impact on school life, you can identify students whose levels of wellbeing are low or have dropped. You can then offer these students extra support.

Before and after a class/school intervention or school policy change to improve wellbeing

You can evaluate the effects of your intervention or policy change.

At a time to fit in with your teaching of the curriculum on wellbeing

You can use the Check to teach students about wellbeing at the appropriate time within your planned curricula for Personal Development and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education.

Prior to a significant event or change

If your class is going on a long school trip, about to move to a new building, or soon to work with a new teacher, then you can use the Check to identify particular students to look out for, who may struggle more than others.

After an unexpected, traumatic event within school

In the sad case of a traumatic event occurring within the student population or teaching staff, such as a death or severe accident or illness, the Check could be used to identify students who are struggling with their emotions and require additional support.

Once each school term

You may decide that you wish to use the Check once a term to monitor any fluctuations in wellbeing. Through regular assessment, this may help you to notice changes in individual students' wellbeing and identify and support students who report low wellbeing at different points in time.

How often should I use the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

You can use the Check with students as often as you wish.

If you are using the Check as a whole-group or whole-school evaluation tool, then we recommend using it with the same students at least two or three times per year.

If you are using the Check as a pedagogic tool embedded within lesson content, then we recommend using it once or twice with your class. It can be used once together with our lesson plans. If the class then decides to try to improve its wellbeing, through particular activities or behaviours, then you can use the Check again a few weeks or months later, to see whether this has worked.

If you are using the Check to monitor individual students of concern, you may wish to use the Check more frequently with these students. However, if monitoring becomes too frequent, then the desired positive impact of measuring students' wellbeing could lead instead to students experiencing fatigue through over-testing. For students who report low wellbeing, we would advise regular pastoral catch-up conversations take place in between times of using the Check to continually support the student.

How should I implement the Cambridge Wellbeing Check in my school?

1. You should provide parents/guardians with information about the Check before the students participate. We have provided a *Factsheet* explaining the Check for you to use with the parents/guardians of your students. You may wish to share further information with them, for example, how the Check will contribute to supporting your school's wellbeing policy.
2. Before you administer the Check you firstly need to introduce the concept of wellbeing to your students. To help you do this we have provided a set of lesson plans appropriate for different age groups. (Further details can be found on page 24).
3. Your students can now complete the Cambridge Wellbeing Check. Students should feel that they have a safe, private space to answer the questions. They should not complete the Check at home unless they are being supervised by a teacher in a remote learning situation.

If you are concerned about any of your students not understanding some of the words in the Check, then you should allow time to work through our *Meanings of key words* information sheet and set of slides with them. This should be done prior to the students completing the Check. The information sheet is particularly useful for younger students, and for students with English as an Additional Language.
4. Once the Check is completed, you will then gain access to some reports based on the responses of the students. (For further details, please see page 12). Please review these reports and make yourself and appropriate pastoral colleagues familiar with the findings.
5. Having identified any students of potential concern due to low wellbeing, please ensure more in-depth follow-up discussions take place with the student. (For further advice, please see page 23).
6. You can organise follow-up sessions to share the individual student reports and class reports, as appropriate, with your students. Use our lesson plans to help guide discussions and activities with groups of students.

How long does the Cambridge Wellbeing Check take?

The Cambridge Wellbeing Check is a simple, student-led assessment that takes about 20 minutes of screen time to complete. In most schools, you can use it comfortably within a lesson. There is no time limit to complete the Check.

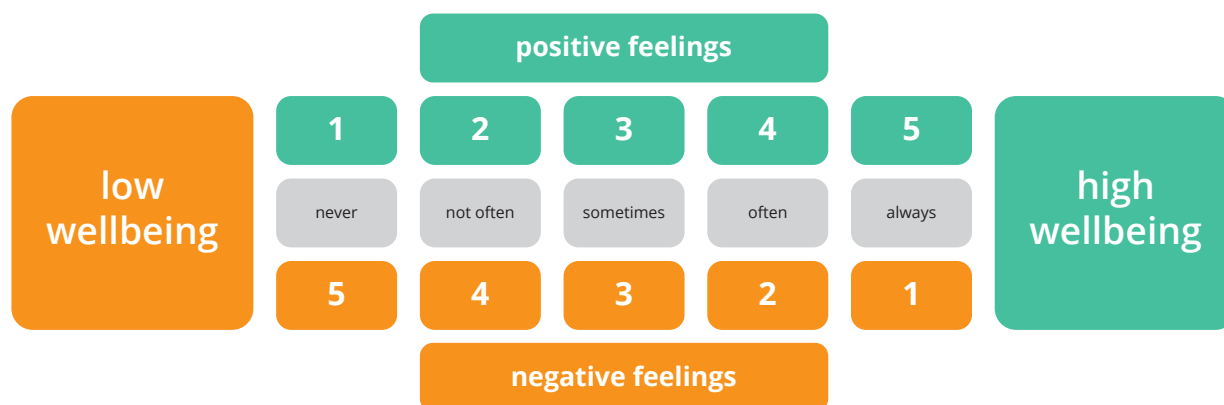
Some students, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can take as long as they need to complete the Check. When appropriate, special accommodations may be used, such as a teaching assistant reading aloud each question and/or entering the student's responses into the device for them.

Being a digital assessment, the Check works on mobile phones and on desktop and tablet computers. Please make sure your tablet software and browsers are up-to-date. You can review our technical requirements at <https://www.cambridge.org/insight/general-technical-requirements>.

You will need to allow time early in the lesson to explain the Check, answer any questions, and check that each student is set up correctly. You should also allow time to answer students' questions after they have taken the Check.

How are students' responses reported?

To create our reports, we code the students' responses numerically as below.



Please note:

- Most questions are worded positively and responses to them are coded as 1 = 'never', 2 = 'not often', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often' and 5 = 'always'.
- However, a few questions are worded negatively. Responses to them are reverse-coded. That is, 1 = 'always', 2 = 'often', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'not often', and 5 = 'never'.
- This means that *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing*.

We provide a series of reports, which have different uses:

Report	Content	Usage		
		Whole-group or whole-school evaluations	Use with lesson plans to teach students about wellbeing	Understand individual students & identify those with low levels of wellbeing
Confidential Group Overview for Teachers	Table of mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing for each student in your group.	✓		✓
Detailed Overview of Responses for Teachers	Stacked bar chart showing how your group responded to each question. It shows the percentage of students who chose each response option.	✓		
Individual Student Summary for Teachers	Bar chart showing an individual student's mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.			✓
Individual Student Response Report for Teachers	Table showing how an individual student responded to each question in the Check. Responses of most concern are highlighted.			✓
Group Report for Students	Bar chart showing your group's mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓	✓	
Individual Overview for Student	Descriptive statements based on the responses the student gave to each of the four areas of wellbeing. To be shared with the student to help them reflect on their feelings, without attaching a score to their responses.			✓
Class Gender Split Report for Teachers	Bar chart that displays class or group's average (mean) wellbeing scores split by gender, for each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓		
Year Group Gender Split Report for Teachers	Bar chart that displays year group's average (mean) wellbeing scores split by gender, for each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓		
Comparison report (classes or groups)	Bar chart that displays average (mean) scores of your selected classes or groups, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓		
Comparison report (year groups)	Bar chart that displays average (mean) scores of your selected year groups, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓		
Individual Student Tracking Report for Teachers	Bar chart that displays a student's wellbeing across different time periods, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.			✓
Year Group Tracking Report	Bar chart that displays year group's average (mean) scores over different time periods, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.	✓		

How do I interpret the reports?

The reports we provide are designed for different purposes and audiences.

Two of the reports have been designed to be shared with your students. These are the *Group Report for Students* and the *Individual Overview for Student*. The remaining reports should be shared with teachers, headteachers and appropriate pastoral experts, and not shared directly with students.

It may be helpful to explore your data and look at the reports in stages as we describe below but you do not have to do this. You may just want to use the Check for one particular purpose.

Stage One – Review your class/group reports


You may wish to start by reviewing the *Confidential Group Overview for Teachers* report to identify any students with low levels of wellbeing in one or more areas. The *Detailed Overview of Responses for Teachers* report can be used to see at a glance how many students responded with low levels of wellbeing in particular areas. Both reports are described below in more detail.

Confidential Group Overview for Teachers

(Available from the Overview button on the Classes tab.)

This confidential report shows the mean scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing, for each student in your group. You can use the report to evaluate and monitor the wellbeing of your group. You can quickly see how students' wellbeing levels compare with one another. Also, you can spot students with low wellbeing in one or more area. This report should **not** be shared with students.

The mean scores are presented like this:



Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring

Cambridge Wellbeing Check

Example School

Confidential Group Overview for Teachers

Y6	Class One	Date of Wellbeing Check: 09/09/2022	Number of students: 12		
Students rated their feelings on scales from 1 to 5. The data below show the average (mean) response for every student in each area of wellbeing. A high score indicates few experiences of negative emotions. The areas of concern are highlighted in red.					
Name	Gender	Competence Wellbeing	Interpersonal Wellbeing	Life Satisfaction	Negative Emotions
Abdul Apple	m	3.0	3.6	3.8	4.3
Harriet Honey	f	1.4	2.4	2.2	2.3
Lucy Lollipop	f	4.2	4.8	4.6	4.0
Ola Onion	f	2.0	3.3	2.8	3.8
Pat Pumpkin	m	4.0	4.0	4.6	4.3

For each of the four areas of wellbeing:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). The student is 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the student reports positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.
- A score of 1.5 to 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score below 1.5 indicates a very low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a very high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. These scores will be highlighted in red to show this is an area of concern. On average, the student is 'never' (a score of close to 1) experiencing positive wellbeing. They are 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

Remember, *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing.*

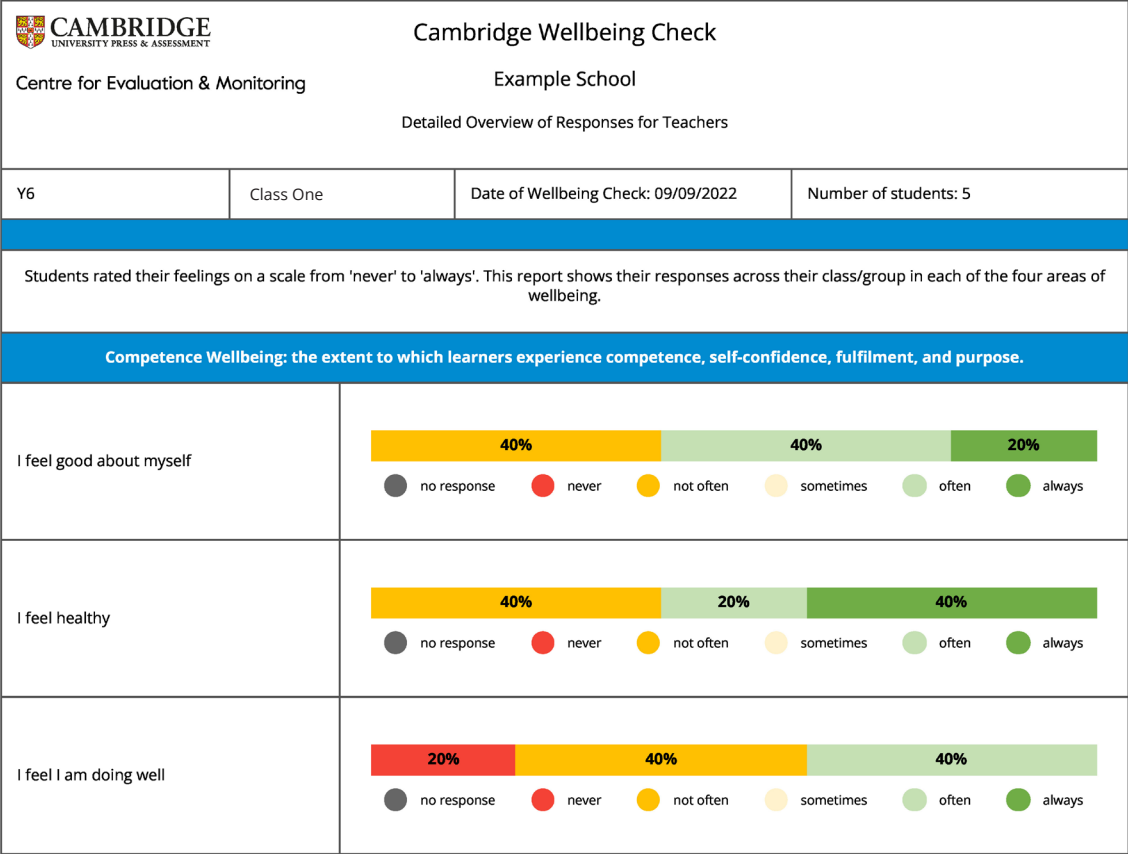
You will want to look closely at the *Individual Student Response Report for Teachers* to identify those students with scores below 3 in one or more areas. It is important to note that a very low score for one particular question can be masked by a higher average score. You will want to follow up very low scores with individual students to try to understand the problem in more detail and to decide how best to support the student.

Detailed Overview of Responses for Teachers

(Available from the Responses button on the Classes tab.)

This report shows how your group responded to each question in the Check. You can see the percentage of students who chose each response option. You can use the report to evaluate and monitor the wellbeing levels of your group.

The students’ responses are presented like this:



What ‘wellbeing’ means varies to some extent across environments, cultures and countries. For example, concepts such as feeling valued and feeling healthy will differ in importance to a student, depending on their heritage, the school environment and location, and their personal circumstances. They may also vary in relevance over time. When evaluating your group’s wellbeing levels, you can use this report to focus upon the questions that are particularly relevant to your group of students and your local context.

Stage Two – Review the reports for individual students






Once you have identified the students with low wellbeing in your class or group, we suggest you then review the *Individual Student Summary for Teachers* and *Individual Student Response Report for Teachers* to identify where these students are experiencing low wellbeing in more detail. Both reports are described below.

Individual Student Summary for Teachers

(Available from the Summary button on the Students tab.)

This report shows an individual student's mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing. You can use it to better understand how each student feels and compare their levels of wellbeing across the four areas.

Within the report, a student's mean scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing are presented like this:

		Cambridge Wellbeing Check		
Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring		Example School		
		Individual Student Summary for Teachers		
Martin Mushroom	10 April 2012	Y6	Class One	Date of Wellbeing Check: 09/09/2022
The bar graphs below show the student's average (mean) responses in the four areas of wellbeing. The areas of concern are highlighted in red .				
Area of wellbeing	What is this?	What the students thought about their wellbeing: average responses		
Competence Wellbeing	The extent to which learners experience competence, self-confidence, fulfilment, and purpose.			
Interpersonal Wellbeing	The extent to which learners feel connected to others, that people care about them, and are valued.			
Life Satisfaction	The extent to which learners experience contentment and overall life satisfaction.			
Negative Emotions	The absence of feelings of anxiety, stress and/or sadness. A high score indicates few experiences of negative emotions.			

The student's mean scores in the four wellbeing areas can be interpreted as follows:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). The student is 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the student reports positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.
- A score of 1.5 to 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score below 1.5 indicates a very low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a very high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. These scores will be highlighted in red to show this is an area of concern. On average, the student is 'never' (a score of close to 1) experiencing positive wellbeing. They are 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

Remember, *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing.*


You will want to look closely at the *Individual Student Response Report for Teachers* for those students with scores below 3 in one or more areas. It is important to note that a very low score for one particular question can be masked by a higher average score. You will want to follow up very low scores with individual students to try to understand the problem in more detail and to decide how best to support the student.

Individual Student Response Report for Teachers

(Available from the Responses button on the Students tab.)

This report shows you how an individual student responded to each question in the Check. It can be used to understand the student's personal wellbeing levels and identify any areas of concern.

The student's responses to each question are presented like this:

 Cambridge Wellbeing Check Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring Example School Individual Student Response Report for Teachers					
Isaac Icecream	17 March 2011	Y7	Class Two	Date of Wellbeing Check: 09/09/2022	
How the student answered the questions. The response to each question is shown by a ✓ Areas of concern are highlighted in red.					
	never	not often	sometimes	often	always
Competence Wellbeing: the extent to which learners experience competence, self-confidence, fulfilment, and purpose.					
I feel good about myself		✓			
I feel healthy			✓		
I feel I am doing well		✓			
I feel confident	✓				
I feel I can deal with problems			✓		

The report should **not** be shared directly with students. Instead, information from it should be used as a starting point to encourage conversations about wellbeing between students, teachers, and appropriate support staff. We encourage you to identify students with low wellbeing scores and to delve deeper into the reasons behind them. You can then work to ensure that these students are supported in the most appropriate manner. Every school will have a slightly different approach to pastoral support for students experiencing low levels of wellbeing, and teachers in different schools will have different resources available to them.

Wherever a student has responded that they 'never' experience a particular positive feeling, or that they 'always' experience a particular negative feeling, this is shown in red in the report. These responses will be of most concern to you and you will want to follow them up most urgently. It may be appropriate to involve a colleague with expertise in pastoral support.

You may also be concerned when a student responds that they do 'not often' experience a particular positive feeling, or when they 'often' experience a particular negative feeling. You may also want to follow up these responses.

It is important to remember that the Check is **not** a diagnostic or clinical tool. It cannot be used to diagnose mental illness or mental health difficulties. Instead, specialist assessments conducted by appropriately qualified clinicians are needed.

Stage Three – Discuss and reflect on the wellbeing reports with students

You can use the Check with students to teach them about wellbeing. Alongside the materials in our lesson plans, you can share the *Group Report for Students* with the corresponding class or group and discuss the findings together. The *Individual Overview for Student* reports can be confidentially shared with individual students to help them reflect on their individual wellbeing and to aid further conversations with teachers and colleagues with expertise in pastoral support.

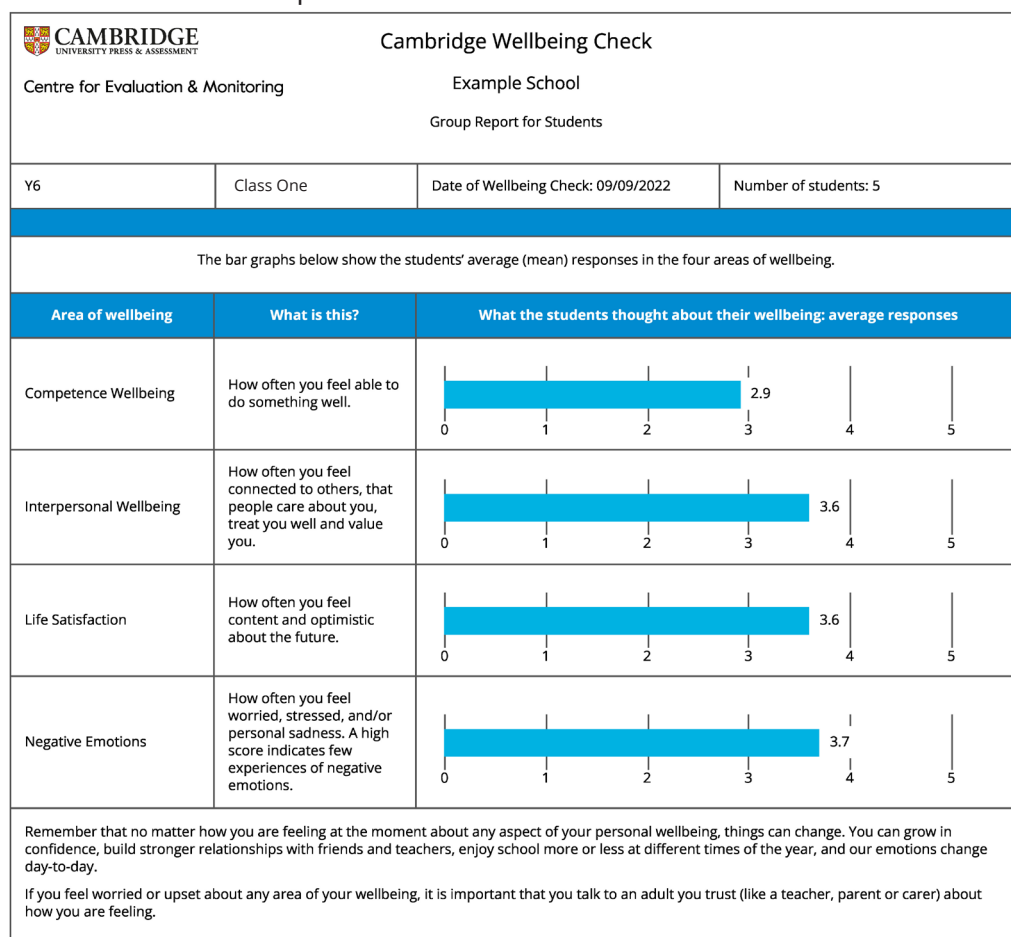
These are the **only** two reports that should be shared directly with students.

Group Report for Students

(Available from the Summary button on the Classes tab.)

This report shows your group's mean (average) scores for each of the four areas of wellbeing. You can use this report with our lesson plans to teach your students about wellbeing. You can also use the report to evaluate the wellbeing levels of the group. The mean scores can help you to better understand which area(s) of wellbeing you may wish to focus on with your group, and which to discuss further with other teachers and with senior leaders in your school.

The mean scores are presented like this:



For each of the four areas of wellbeing:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, students in the group are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). They are 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the student reports positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.
- A score of below 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, students in the group are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2) or 'never' (a score of close to 1). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) or 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

What 'wellbeing' means varies to some extent across environments, cultures and countries. In some East Asian cultures, for example, there has traditionally been an emphasis upon functioning well, whereas in some European cultures, there has been more emphasis on feeling well. You may wish to focus on the areas of wellbeing that are most relevant to your students' culture and environment.

Mean scores for schools in England

This table contains published average scores from a large nationally representative sample of English primary and secondary schools who used the original, research version of the Check. These mean scores were reported in 2015, prior to the pandemic. Almost all are between 3 and 4. The students' scores varied quite a lot, but two-thirds of them tended to be within one point of the average score.

Area of Wellbeing	Age			
	Year 3 (Ages 7 - 8)	Year 6 (Ages 10 - 11)	Key Stage 3 (Ages 11 - 14)	Key Stage 4 (Ages 14 - 16)
Competence	3.71	3.78	3.54	3.39
Interpersonal	3.76	3.91	3.56	3.42
Life satisfaction	3.98	3.73	3.06	2.85
Negative emotions	3.78	3.82	3.32	3.01

Table: Means scores of wellbeing sections from a pre-pandemic, nationally representative sample (England)^{2,3}.

The wordings of some of the questions in the Check have been refined a little since these figures were published, and two extra questions on negative emotions have been added, to improve the Check's coverage of this area of wellbeing. This means that your scores are not directly comparable to these scores in the strictest sense. Statistical calculations comparing your class's mean scores with these mean scores should not be attempted.

Instead, you can use these scores to get a *general* feel as to how your school might compare with others. If your mean scores are mostly between 3 and 4, then levels of wellbeing among your students are broadly similar to those in English schools before the pandemic.

Recently we have collected data from a range of schools who trialled the updated version of the Check with us. Over time we will build up a database of average scores for students in all year groups, who take the Cambridge Wellbeing Check during and after the pandemic. You will be able to compare your school's scores with these scores more confidently. We look forward to sharing this data with you.

² McLellan, R., Stewart, S. (2015) Measuring children and young people's wellbeing in the school context. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 45 (3), p307-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2014.889659>


³ Mean scores for negatively worded items have been adjusted from the originally published scores. This is to account for our reverse-scoring approach, which was not used in the original research.

Individual Overview for Student

(Available from the Overview button on the Students tab.)

This report should be confidentially shared with individual students. The report provides the student with a descriptive statement in each of the four areas of wellbeing. These are based on the student's responses to the individual questions in each wellbeing area. The report purposely does not include scores, as it is more meaningful for students to use the report to reflect on their feelings and the reasons for them. You should encourage students to discuss their feelings with supportive peers to a level that they are comfortable. We do not advise that students directly compare their individual reports. We advise that students are encouraged to disclose only what they feel comfortable discussing.

The reports are presented like this:

 Cambridge Wellbeing Check Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring Example School Individual Overview for Student				
Lucy Lollipop	19 June 2012	Y6	Class One	Date of Wellbeing Check: 09/09/2022
From the answers you provided, the comments below describe your wellbeing in four separate areas.				
Area of wellbeing	What is this?	What you thought about your wellbeing		
Competence Wellbeing	How often you feel able to do something well.	When you are at school you almost always feel good about yourself and you usually feel healthy. You often feel that you are doing well, you often feel confident and you sometimes feel that you can deal with problems.		
Interpersonal Wellbeing	How often you feel connected to others, that people care about you, treat you well and value you.	When you are at school you often feel happy, you feel people are always friendly, you often feel noticed and you nearly always feel valued. You mainly feel safe, you almost always feel you are treated fairly, you don't feel lonely and you feel people always care about you.		
Life Satisfaction	How often you feel content and optimistic about the future.	When you are at school it is not often that you feel bored and you always feel energetic. You enjoy things all the time, you always feel excited by lots of things and you often feel there is lots to look forward to.		
Negative Emotions	How often you feel worried, stressed, and/or personal sadness.	When you are at school you are not often worried, it is not often that you feel miserable, you don't often feel sad and you don't generally feel stressed.		
Remember that no matter how you are feeling at the moment about any aspect of your personal wellbeing, things can change. You can grow in confidence, build stronger relationships with friends and teachers, enjoy school more or less at different times of the year, and our emotions change day-to-day. If you feel worried or upset about any area of your wellbeing, it is important that you talk to an adult you trust (like a teacher, parent or carer) about how you are feeling.				

You may wish to encourage students to share the report with trusted, appropriate adults to explore their feelings further.

Stage Four – Compare the scores of different groups

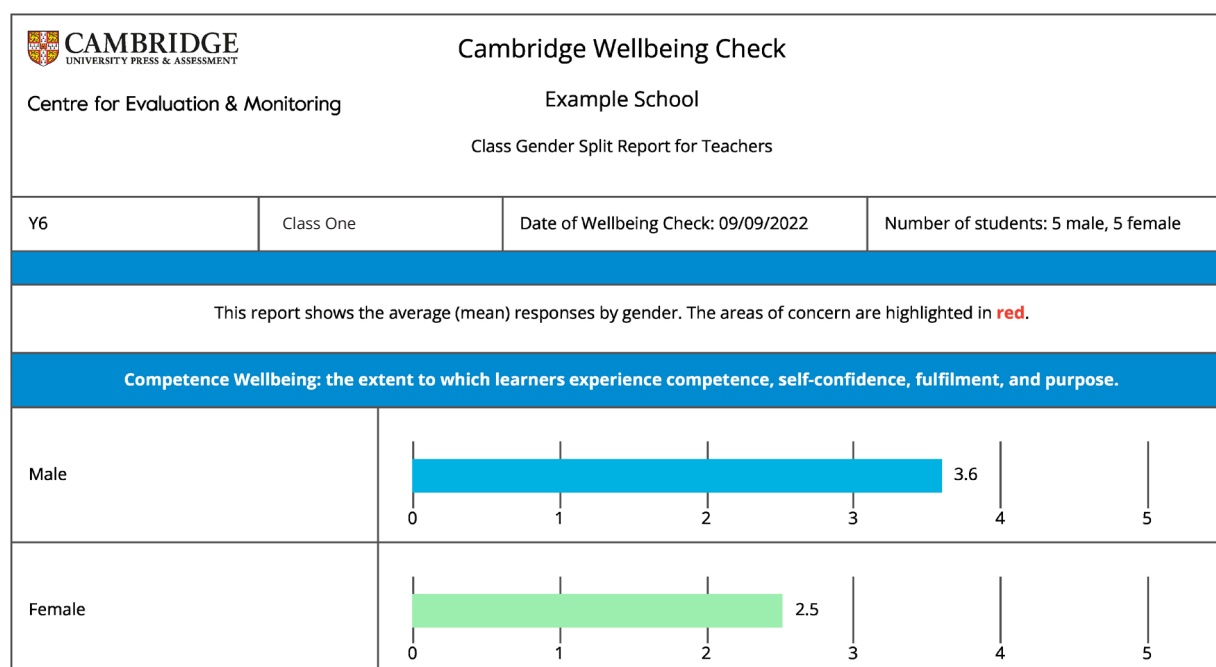
We provide reports so that you can easily compare the wellbeing levels of different groups of students. You can use the *Class Gender Split Report for Teachers* and *Year Group Gender Split Report for Teachers* to compare the average (mean) scores across the four areas of wellbeing. You can use the *Comparison report* (classes or groups) and *Comparison report* (year groups) to compare different groups of students throughout your school.

You may be able to identify particular groups who have low levels of wellbeing and then investigate further to see if there are any common factors contributing to these low levels amongst those particular students. You could then target these groups with interventions with the aim of boosting their wellbeing.

Class Gender Split Report for Teachers and Year Group Gender Split Report for Teachers (Available from the Gender button on the Classes and Year groups tabs.)

These reports show the chosen groups' mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing. You can use these reports to better understand how the students are feeling and compare their scores across genders in each of the four areas of wellbeing.

The gender split reports are presented like this:



The groups of student's average (mean) scores in the four wellbeing areas can be interpreted as follows:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, students are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). The students are 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the students report positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.
- A score of 1.5 to 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the students are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

- A score below 1.5 indicates a very low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a very high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. These scores will be highlighted in red to show this is an area of concern. On average, the students are 'never' (a score of close to 1) experiencing positive wellbeing. They are 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

Remember, *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing.*

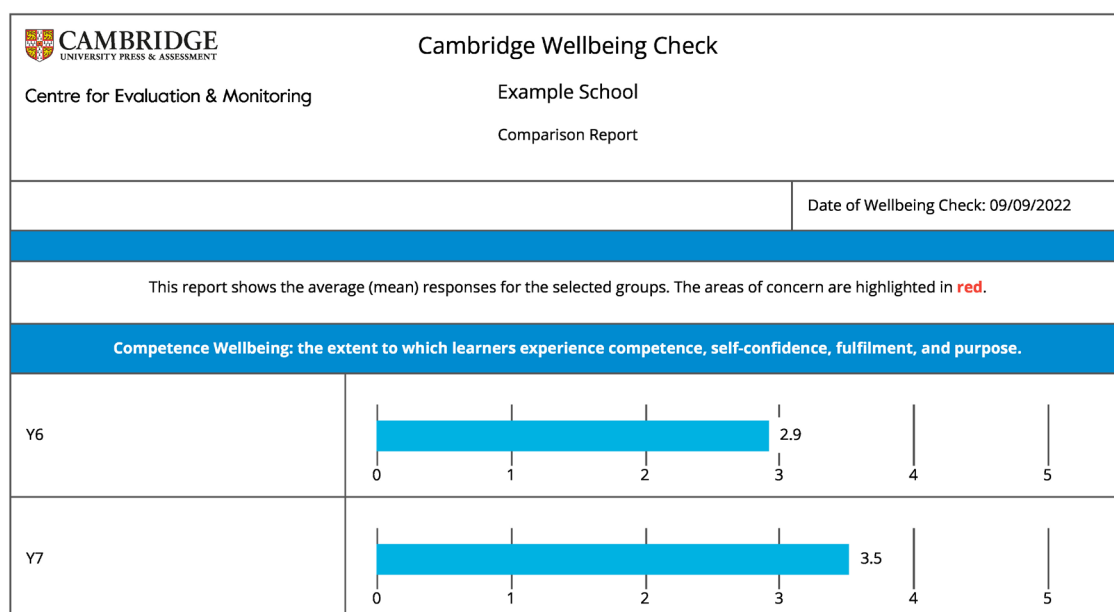
If differences occur between genders and low levels of wellbeing have been reported in a particular area, it is suggested that further conversations are needed to try to identify any common reasons for the low wellbeing and to ensure these student groups receive additional support.

Comparison reports for classes/groups and year groups

(Available by selecting the relevant groups and clicking the Compare button.)

These reports allow you to compare the average (mean) scores of your different year groups across the four areas of wellbeing. You can use these reports to better understand how your students are feeling across your school and compare levels of wellbeing across different classes/groups and year groups.

The comparison reports are presented like this:



Similarly to the gender split reports, the groups' average (mean) scores in the four wellbeing areas can be interpreted as follows:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the students in the year group are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). The students are 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the students in the group report positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.
- A score of 1.5 to 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the students in the group are experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

- A score below 1.5 indicates a very low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a very high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. These scores will be highlighted in red to show this is an area of concern. On average, the students in the group are 'never' (a score of close to 1) experiencing positive wellbeing. They are 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

Remember, *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing.*

If differences occur between classes/groups and year groups and low levels of wellbeing are shown in a particular area, it is suggested that further conversations are needed to try to identify any common reasons for the low wellbeing and to ensure these student groups receive additional support.

Stage Five – Tracking wellbeing over time

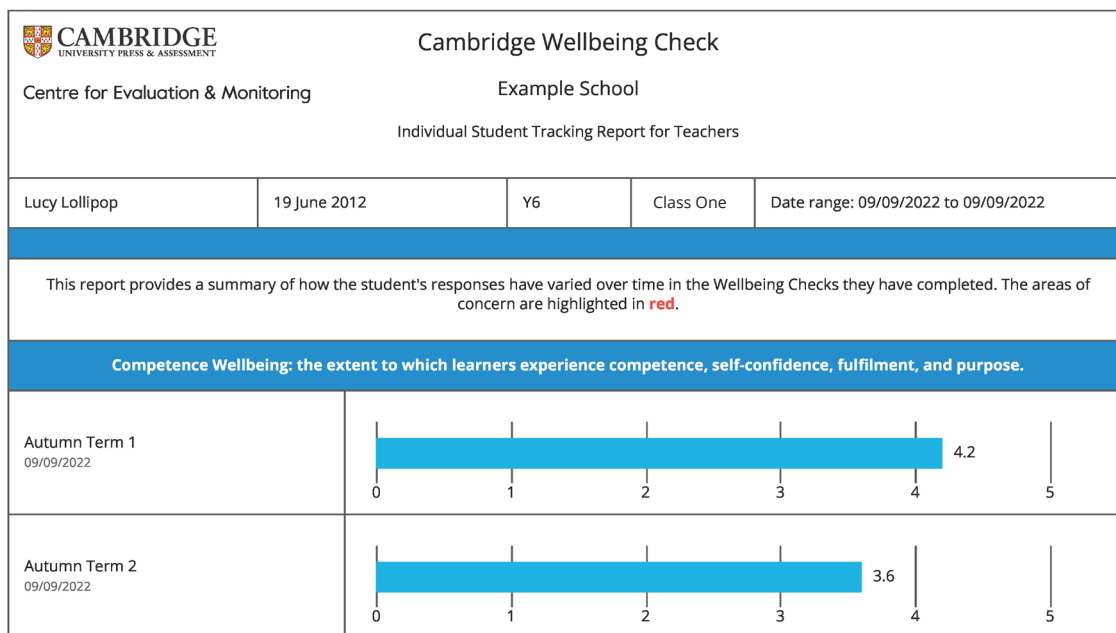
We provide reports that allow you to track the wellbeing of your students over time. We provide an *Individual Student Tracking Report for Teachers* and *Year Group Tracking Report*. Using these reports will allow fluctuations in wellbeing to be monitored and to see if any support or interventions put in place have improved the wellbeing of students.

Individual Student Tracking Report for Teachers and Year Group Tracking Report

(Available by selecting the relevant groups and clicking the Compare button.)

These reports enable you to compare over time the average (mean) scores of individual students or of your year groups across the four areas of wellbeing.

A tracking report will be presented like this:



The average (mean) scores in the four wellbeing areas can be interpreted as follows:

- A score of over 3.5 indicates a high frequency of positive wellbeing experiences (comfortable feelings), or a low frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'often' (a score of around 4) or 'always' (a score of close to 5). The student is 'not often' (a score of around 4) or 'never' (a score of close to 5) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score of 2.5 to 3.5 indicates that on average, the student reports positive and negative wellbeing experiences 'sometimes' in this area of wellbeing.

- A score of 1.5 to 2.5 indicates a low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. On average, the student is experiencing positive feelings in this area of wellbeing 'not often' (a score of around 2). They are 'often' (a score of around 2) experiencing negative feelings in this area.
- A score below 1.5 indicates a very low frequency of positive wellbeing experiences, or a very high frequency of negative wellbeing experiences. These scores will be highlighted in red to show this is an area of concern. On average, the student is 'never' (a score of close to 1) experiencing positive wellbeing. They are 'always' (a score of close to 1) experiencing negative feelings in this area.

Remember, *a higher score always means a higher level of wellbeing*.

If differences occur between time points, and particularly if wellbeing levels are decreasing for individual students, it is suggested that further conversations are needed to try to understand the issues the student is experiencing and to find ways to best support them.

What should I do if a report indicates a student has low wellbeing?

A student with low wellbeing in a particular area will be highlighted in the *Individual Student Response Report for Teachers*. Wherever a student has responded that they 'never' experience a particular positive feeling, or that they 'always' experience a particular negative feeling, this is shown in red. These responses will be of most concern to you and you will want to follow them up most urgently in discussions with the student.

The Check asks students to report the frequency with which they experience different feelings. A student's mood may be affected by current events within school, or by a temporary situation (e.g., a disagreement with a friend), and so it is important to understand if these feelings are based on fluctuations of feelings or if a feeling of low wellbeing is more long lasting. It is therefore useful to monitor students' wellbeing over time with the Check. When students consistently have low wellbeing scores, this could indicate an ongoing, underlying issue. In this instance it would be appropriate to involve a colleague with expertise in pastoral support to explore the issue(s) further.

If a student consistently reports low wellbeing, it would be useful to consider other sources of evidence that might shed light on how they are feeling. For instance, teachers might have noticed their behaviour has changed. Do they seem withdrawn in class? Perhaps they are getting into trouble more than usual. Perhaps they do not appear to be interacting with their usual friendship groups. Maybe a friend has flagged up a concern. Are they missing school? This may help to give a broader indication of how the student is feeling and coping in school. However, even if no further indicators are found, it is always advisable for an appropriate pastoral expert to follow up with the student who reports low wellbeing consistently.

In follow up conversations with students we advise that care is taken to allow the student some control in the conversation as they have chosen to express feelings which may be quite personal to them and that they find difficult to discuss. A sense of trust must be developed between the student and pastoral experts.

The Check provides the basis for a conversation to gain greater understanding of what is important for that student. It is also possible that a student may not be as well equipped to cope with a particular situation compared to their peers. It is important that they are made to feel that their feelings are valid, important and that they feel supported by appropriate pastoral experts.

A student has asked to see their responses to the Check.

What should I do?

According to data protection law, children and young people have a right to be given a copy of their personal data. It is therefore essential that any requests from students to view their individual responses to the Cambridge Wellbeing Check are fulfilled.

Should I share my group's responses with students after they have taken the Check?

We believe it is good to share your group's data with them, in an anonymised form. To get the most from the experience of the Cambridge Wellbeing Check from a pedagogical perspective, sharing the mean scores in the *Group Report for Students*, and discussing what they mean, can support students in understanding the different areas of mental wellbeing. This report does not contain individual, personalised data. Sharing it with the entire group may also foster a sense of connectedness with others (by highlighting that everyone has similar psychological needs) and transparency (by openly talking about mental wellbeing and reducing any stigma). Individual student reports should *not* be shared with the whole group, for confidentiality reasons.

What are the lesson plans and how do I use them with the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

Our package includes lesson plans to help you to teach your students about wellbeing. There are four lesson plans, each comprising a Part One lesson and a Part Two lesson:

Lesson plan	Approximate age suitability	Target year groups (England and Wales)	Target National Curriculum Key Stage (England)	Approximate length of Part One (including administration of the Check)	Approximate length of Part Two (including discussion of class data from the Check)
Lower primary	Students aged 7 to 10 years	Years 3, 4, 5	Key Stage 2	Main lesson: 40 minutes	Main lesson: 40 minutes
Upper primary	Students aged 9 to 12 years	Years 5, 6, (7)	Key Stage 2	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity: 15 minutes	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity: 15 minutes
Lower secondary	Students aged 11 to 14 years	Years 7, 8, 9	Key Stage 3	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity: 15 minutes	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity A: 10 minutes Extension activity B: 15 minutes
Upper secondary	Students aged 14 years and older	Year 10 and above	Key Stage 4 and beyond	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity: 15 minutes	Main lesson: 45 minutes Extension activity A: 15 minutes Extension activity B: 15 minutes

The age suitabilities and exact lengths of the Part One and Part Two lessons will vary depending upon group dynamics, student ability, familiarity with talking about wellbeing, English language levels of students, and other factors.

The content of the lesson plans is designed to be flexible. You do not need to teach all activities in a lesson plan, and you may wish to tailor activities to the needs and local context of your class or group.

For each of the four lesson plans:

- The Part One lesson is about what mental wellbeing is. It includes administering the Wellbeing Check with your students. (Alternatively, you could rearrange the activities a little and your students could take the Wellbeing Check in a separate session in between the Part One and Part Two lessons.)
- The Part Two lesson is about looking after mental wellbeing. You should teach this after students have taken the Wellbeing Check.

For primary students, the aims of the Part One lesson are to introduce students to the concept of mental wellbeing, to explain that different experiences can affect wellbeing, and to help students to develop their awareness of a range of feelings. Part Two aims to deepen understanding of different areas of mental wellbeing and to introduce activities and self-care techniques that can be used to support wellbeing.

For secondary students, the Part One lesson aims to help the students understand a range of different emotions and experiences that contribute to mental wellbeing, and to help students identify and discuss emotions, recognising them in others. The Part Two lesson aims to deepen understanding of different experiences and their impact on mental wellbeing, to introduce activities and self-care techniques that can be used to support wellbeing, and to be able to evaluate the benefits of different activities and techniques.

If your students take the Wellbeing Check during the Part One lesson, then you need to ensure they have some privacy and enough time to consider each question. Once your students have completed the Check, the reports do *not* appear automatically on their screens. Only teachers can log in and review the reports.

We recommend that you review all reports privately, and not during lessons. In particular, we advise you to review the *Group Report for Students*, and to think through how your students might interpret it, prior to sharing it with them in the Part Two lesson. If you are concerned that the contents of the *Group Report for Students* could upset your students (for example, if wellbeing levels are very low), then do not share it with them. If you decide to skip this activity, then you can still teach the other activities in the Part Two lesson.

How can school leaders find out the reasons that underly their students' responses to the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

In many ways, it is the follow-up consultation undertaken with students after their completion of the Check that is the most valuable part of any school leader's use of it. A small group of students from across the school could be brought together and general questions posed to them about their experiences of school life, such as, *'What changes could be made at school to make you feel more... connected to others / cared for / confident/ safe?'* (The choice of questions could depend on which wellbeing areas the findings suggest should be the school's key priorities.) Alternatively, a post box at the school reception could be created which invites students to share their thoughts on specific aspects of school life and their ideas for changes to be made.

We already undertake our own evaluation of students' wellbeing; how would we benefit from the Cambridge Wellbeing Check?

Many schools already have their own questionnaires which they have developed 'in-house' and rolled out over several years. While such questionnaires may be beneficial for getting an overall impression of how students are feeling at school, psychological wellbeing is a complex, multifaceted state of being that requires a fully validated psychometric tool to be measured reliably. The Cambridge Wellbeing Check has been validated by researchers of children's wellbeing at the University of Cambridge with over 5,100 students (aged 7-16) in the UK population, and its psychometric properties have been analysed statistically for robustness and validity. Researchers at Cambridge Insight have conducted additional trials of the Check on an even more varied sample of schools internationally. They plan to conduct further research in the future.

Can I download the data from the Cambridge Wellbeing Check for my management information system?

Yes, we provide a csv export of your data (available from the Export button under the Reports -> Students tab). The Export button allows you to download a data file of the students who have completed the Cambridge Insight Wellbeing Check in the Sitting you have selected. You can use this file to import your data into your schools' management information system.

Within the file you are presented with your students' details, their average (mean) section scores for each of the four areas of wellbeing, and their individual responses to each of the questions. If a student did not answer a question, the cell in the Export file will be empty. Questions which are negatively worded have been reversed scored for you, so that a higher score always indicates a higher level of wellbeing.

If a student has a section score of below 1.5, this is of urgent concern, and you should follow-up with a discussion with the student to find a way to support them. Any score below the mid-point of 2.5 is of concern and we suggest that you follow-up with the student.

Acknowledgements

The Cambridge Wellbeing Check was developed from a questionnaire developed by researchers Dr Ros McLellan, Maurice Galton, Susan Steward and Charlotte Page in the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education. The original questionnaire was created as part of a study examining the role of creative initiatives in fostering wellbeing, which was funded by the international creative learning foundation [Creativity, Culture and Education](#).

We would like to thank Dr Ros McLellan and Tania Clarke for their contributions to refining the Cambridge Wellbeing Check and in the development of associated materials.