



CAMBRIDGE

Wellbeing in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework



Cambridge
Life Competencies

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing in education goes beyond helping students feel good - it's about equipping them with skills to thrive academically, socially, and personally throughout their lives. Research from positive psychology suggests a number of ways we can improve Wellbeing. Two helpful frameworks are the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and the SEARCH framework (Waters & Loton, 2019). The SEARCH framework was developed for educational contexts, and outlines six pathways to improving Wellbeing:

- **Strengths:** Identifying and using character strengths
- **Emotional management:** Understanding and regulating emotions
- **Attention and awareness:** Paying attention and building awareness of internal and external states, including practising mindfulness
- **Relationships:** Building positive, inclusive relationships and feeling a sense of belonging
- **Coping:** Developing resilience to navigate challenges
- **Habits and goals:** Using positive habits and self-regulation to attain goals and create a sense of purpose and achievement

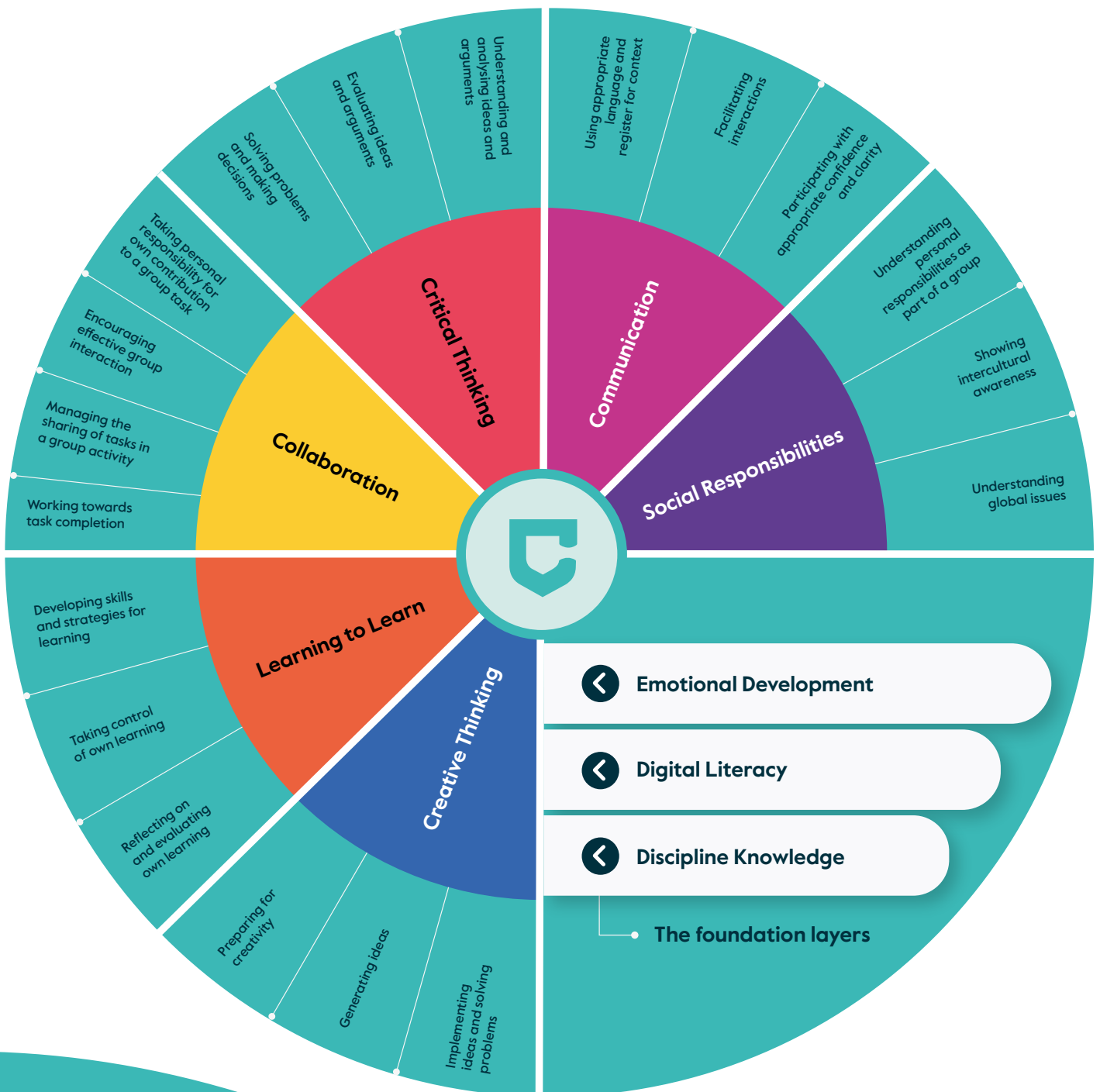
Where can Wellbeing be found in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The Wellbeing elements are most present in the **Emotional Development** foundation layer and **Learning to Learn** competency. Although the elements of Wellbeing could be mapped to multiple components within these competencies, the mapping below shows only the component to which each element is **most** strongly aligned.

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Elements of Wellbeing included |
|-----------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Attention and awareness |
| | | Regulating emotions | Emotional management |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Relationships |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Habits and goals |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Coping |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Strengths |

In addition, the other competencies of the framework are aligned to Wellbeing in the following ways:

- **Creative thinking:** Practising creativity can help express and regulate emotions and develop learners' creative strengths.
- **Critical thinking:** Using critical thinking while personal problem solving can support coping skills and emotional regulation.
- **Communication:** Strong communication competencies can support building and maintaining positive relationships as well as the expression of emotions.
- **Collaboration:** Enhancing collaboration skills is important for positive relationships and the building of social support networks which can support wellbeing.
- **Social responsibilities:** Deepening understanding of others helps build respectful and inclusive communities which are positive for wellbeing.
- **Digital literacy:** Interacting with digital devices and AI in appropriate ways can be helpful for wellbeing, whereas inappropriate use can be detrimental to wellbeing.



What does Wellbeing look like at each stage of learning?

The tables below include some example Can Do statements and language from the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework that could be used in materials to develop competencies around Wellbeing for each stage of learning. These are not intended to be comprehensive. For further ideas on how to develop Wellbeing competencies, please see the **Further resources** section at the end of this booklet.

Pre-primary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Verbalises what emotion they are currently experiencing. | I'm [happy/sad/excited]. |
| | | Regulating emotions | Uses simple calming strategies (e.g. taking deep breaths). | Breathe 1, 2, 3 ... |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Shows kindness towards classmates. | Are you OK? |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Participates in classroom routines. | Clean up time! |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Understands that mistakes are part of learning. | This is wrong. |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Says what they are good at. | I'm good at listening. |

Primary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Notices how physical sensations relate to their emotions. | I feel hot. I'm angry. |
| | | Regulating emotions | Uses a range of strategies to regulate emotions (e.g. breathing, mindfulness, physical movement). | I need [some quiet time]. |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Identifies ways of making friends and being a good friend (e.g. sharing, listening, helping, respecting other people's belongings etc.). | Do you want to [play] with me/us? |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Understands how habits can support the achievement of goals. | If I [practise for 5 minutes every day], I will [learn more words]. |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Identifies a range of learning-related problems and appropriate coping strategies. | When I [don't understand], I can [ask for help]. |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Recognises their own character strengths and how these can support their learning. | I'm [careful], I [check my work]. |

Secondary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Observes their emotions without judgement. | I'm feeling disappointed. |
| | | Regulating emotions | Manages emotions by using strategies such as re-evaluating or changing the situation. | I was really annoyed when she ... , but it probably wasn't on purpose. |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Works at maintaining healthy relationships. | How are you getting on? |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Establishes and adjusts study habits. | I used to [study when I felt motivated] but now I [study at the same time every day]. |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Establishes appropriate self-care practices to build resilience. | I [write in my journal] every day. |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Reflects on how they used their character strengths in a task. | I used my [bravery] to [give the presentation]. |

Higher education

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Recognises and explains their individual emotional triggers. | I've noticed I feel [defensive] when I [receive critical feedback]. |
| | | Regulating emotions | Uses strategies for dealing with areas that create stress, frustration or anger. | I try to [breathe deeply] when I'm nervous. |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Maintains appropriate social relations with peers and instructors. | How are you?/How are things? |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Plans their work focusing on the achievement of set goals. | In order to [pass this assignment], I need to [spend X days researching], ... |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Develops resilience around ambiguity and uncertainty. | I used to feel [overwhelmed] when [I had a very open-ended assignment], but now I ... |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Develops understanding of how to use strengths optimally without overusing them. | I can become overly [directive] if I overuse my [leadership] strength. |

At work

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Emotional Development | Managing own emotions | Monitoring and reflecting on own emotions | Notices their reactions to different situations and whether these are helpful or not. | It doesn't matter right now. |
| | | Regulating emotions | Uses strategies for managing negative emotions resulting from interactions with colleagues or managers. | I'm going to ask for some [help/training]. |
| | Empathy and relationship skills | Establishing and maintaining positive and inclusive relationships | Uses strategies for maintaining positive relationships with clients and/or customers (e.g. engaging in small talk or dealing with negative feedback). | Thank you for your feedback. |
| Learning to Learn | Taking control of own learning | Setting goals, creating habits and planning for learning | Sets achievable language learning goals (e.g. related to specific skills or field of business). | I'm aiming to/for ... |
| | | Managing attitudes and emotions and demonstrating resilience | Manages negative emotions (e.g. anxiety about presenting or disappointment after a meeting doesn't go to plan). | It's natural to feel [disappointed] but [it was also a valuable experience]. |
| | Reflecting on and evaluating own learning | Evaluating learning, progress and strengths | Evaluates new ways in which they could apply their strengths at work. | Next time I [create a presentation], I will use my strength of [curiosity] to [ask for feedback from someone with a very different perspective]. |

Further resources*

Cambridge Assessment International Education. (2021). Education brief: Learner wellbeing. <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/612684-learner-wellbeing.pdf>

Cambridge University Press & Assessment's pre-primary course, Ready, Steady, Grow! incorporates a wellbeing strand based on the Cambridge Wellbeing Check: <https://www.cambridge.org/gb/cambridgeenglish/catalog/primary/ready-steady-grow>

Cambridge Wellbeing Check: <https://www.cem.org/wellbeing-check>

Mercer, S., Puchta, H. (2023) 101 Psychological Tips. Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers. Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Flourish: A new understanding of happiness and well-being—And how to achieve them. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

VIA Institute on Character website: <https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>

Waters, L., Loton, D. (2019). SEARCH: A Meta-Framework and Review of the Field of Positive Education. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, (4), 1–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-019-00017-4>

* Please note, these resources are current at the time of publishing – January 2026. However, newer resources may be available at the time of reading and/or some of the links included may no longer work.

Suggested search terms: 'positive education' 'science of wellbeing'



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