Resource 4: Ideas on policy development

(From 'Promoting Emotional Literacy: Guidelines for schools, local authorities and health services', SELIG).

'How a school, or indeed an LEA, develops a policy statement on Emotional Literacy is perhaps an indicator of how emotionally literate they are! An organisation or institution that is emotionally literate will be characterised by openness, good communication, well-developed consultation mechanisms that people value, and a spirit of collegiality. Below are some points to ponder when you are developing a policy:

- Begin with the end in mind (and maintain some openness as to how that may evolve differently)
- Involve as many people in producing the policy (wider stakeholder participation promotes ownership of any document, and increases the likelihood of implementation)
- Implement the policy in a sustainable way (initial enthusiasm quickly falls away if the demands are too great on staff or children)
- Make the policy reflect what people actually *want* to do
- Remember that this is a long-term initiative, so develop a three year plan.'

(From 'The Antidote Manifesto', 2001)

'Educational organisations have the potential to help all learners develop into well-rounded individuals who can express themselves, form enduring relationships, contribute usefully in the world and achieve their learning potential.

Emotional literacy inspires learners by enabling them to sustain their curiosity and creativity in seeking solutions to problems. It also strengthens their ability to respond to the challenges they will face at work and in their lives.

Some educational organisations see academic learning as distinct from emotional and social development. They are not educating their pupils for a world where the ability to communicate, work collaboratively with others and continue learning are the keys to success and fulfilment.

Schools and colleges can promote emotional literacy by:

- supporting staff to develop the emotional resources they require to help young people develop their potential;
- creating opportunities for students to learn from and with each other through collaborative work that addresses both the emotional and intellectual aspects of learning;
- motivating staff, teachers, pupils and parents by exploring with them what they should be studying, how learning is best encouraged and how schools might be managed.'

(Richard Wilkinson, University of Sussex) (www.antidote.org.uk/html/towardsemotionalliteracy.htm)

'I think there's a whole side which I would call 'emotional numeracy'. If you're going to convince people who are into competitive modelling and so on to think this area is important, you have to take outcomes that they think are important, and then show that emotional literacy does make a difference. I was glad that the Emotional and Social Index takes into account things like productivity and sickness absence. If you looked at the social environment in schools, I would be very surprised if you couldn't show relationships with GCSE passes. And although we are interested in these things in terms of a much broader idea of human functioning, welfare and well-being, I think that the way to get institutions, governments, schools and firms to take it up and push it themselves, is by showing that it makes a difference to the outcomes that they care about.'

(From our own course, 'Developing policies')

'Remember that a policy is a set of guidelines providing a framework for action. The operative words are:
- guidelines – ie, not detailed procedures
- framework – there are limits within which the guidelines operate – these limits will be set by external pressures such as the law, and by the school's values and priorities
- action – the most important word. A policy outlines what's going to happen.'