

Project Iris – Growing Hope

Referral criteria and Programme outline

September 2025



Criteria to apply

The Project Iris programme is delivered over a 6 week period, during school hours, with young people attending a green therapies in Basingstoke or equine site (tbc).

Each session will consist of 30 minutes of learning and discussion on a particular aspect of mental health and well-being, followed by green therapy (using natural materials creatively) or equine assisted learning linked to what they have learned.

The programme is offered to young people between 11 – 25 with each group containing between 4-6 young people.

Please note, this is a support and prevention programme seeking to support young people and combat the stigma surrounding suicide. **It is not treatment, intervention or crisis support.**

Placement is subject to risk assessment.

Placement Criteria

The project is designed to offer support and knowledge around mental health support and suicide prevention. The criteria for attendance reflect the overall aims and objectives of the project. Those eligible for attendance include:

- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Concern raised from others that they may be at risk of suicide ideation
- Self-harm – (please note, there must be no self-harming behaviours on site)

A young person does not need to be acting on suicidal thoughts to be considered for Project Iris, we offer the sessions in the hope to prevent such actions. Where a young person has expressed some thoughts of hopelessness, feeling a burden, not wanting to carry on or are self-harming, these young people are in distress and meet criteria for our support. We want to provide young people with coping strategies that they need now. We are not an 'instead of other support services or support within education', we are to be considered as well as, an alternative provision offering a psycho education support alongside green therapy activities.

- Due to the need for everyone to be safe, we can not accept anyone who is likely to actively attempt any injurious behaviour during sessions. If we feel level of risk has escalated then attendance to the project may be re-assessed
- We strictly prohibit the use or consumption of drugs or alcohol whilst on site or anyone under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol whilst attending the programme. Any attendee contravening this may be asked to leave the project.
- Schools or referring agencies must seek parental permission and consent to share student information.

Please complete our online application form linked below, for any enquiries please email to ProjectIris@inclusioneducation.org.uk

[Online form here](#)

The referrer will be contacted to confirm application success. Session dates and time will be provided closer to the start date once groups are determined.

We offer a protected space outside of normal daily routine where a young person can utilise the space to decide how they would like to be or share what they would like to share. Therefore, adults are not invited to stay on site to accompany young people. Our assisting adults are DBS checked, site and activities are risk assessed, these are available on request to projectiris@inclusioneducation.org.uk. Any safeguarding concerns which arise would be handled by the project DSL, and reported appropriately.

Project Iris – Programme Outline

Week 1 – Understanding mental health and suicide

- **Introduction to the programme and establishing group norms.**
- **Overview of mental health facts and myths, risk factors, and warning signs.**
- **Understanding the stigma surrounding suicide.**
- **Exploring personal attitudes and beliefs about suicide.**
- **Understanding the stigma surrounding suicide.**
- **Providing resources for immediate support.**

Week 2 – Building Resilience

- **Understanding resilience and its role in promoting mental wellbeing and suicide prevention.**
- **Identifying personal strengths and coping strategies**
- **Exploring healthy ways of managing difficult emotions**
- **Stress management techniques**
- **Introduction to mindfulness and relaxation techniques**

Project Iris – Programme Outline

Week 3 – Communication and Support

- Effective communication skills in supporting someone at risk.
- Active listening techniques.
- How to ask directly about suicidal thoughts.
- Discussing boundaries and self-care when supporting others

Week 4 – Mental Health and Help Seeking

- Overview of common mental health disorders linked to suicide risk.
- Recognising signs of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
- Navigating the mental health care system.
- Normalising help-seeking behavior.
- Exploring barriers to seeking help and strategies to overcome them.

Week 5 – Safety Planning and Crisis Intervention

- Introduction to safety planning for individuals at risk of suicide.
- Collaboratively developing personalised safety plans.
- Identifying local crisis resources and hotlines.
- Crisis intervention strategies for supporting someone in immediate danger.
- Crisis scenarios and practicing appropriate responses.

Week 6 – Community Support and Wrap Up

- Reviewing key learnings from the program.
- Identifying community resources and support networks.
- Discussing strategies for ongoing self-care and support.
- Creating a plan for staying connected and continuing personal growth.
- Closing ceremony and reflection on the journey through the program.

As the programme evolves, we aim to introduce a peer mentor into the programme where possible.

Please note, the activities may change or evolve

About sessions

Sessions will run throughout the year, usually in line with the school half term. Times are either a morning group from 10am – 12pm or an afternoon group from 1pm– 3pm. Young people attending Project Iris will be allocated to a group and will attend with the same cohort at the same time and place each week – one 2-hour session each week for 6 consecutive weeks. Groups will be divided into age-appropriate cohorts, with content material and activities tailored to the age range.

Once a place has been agreed, you will be contacted with details of the session dates and times, if you are aware of any restrictions to attendance at times or days please let us know on your application and we will endeavor to allocate accordingly.

Where do I go?

Autumn1. Weeks Commencing : 15/9, 22/9, 29/9, 6/10, 13/10, 20/10

Autumn2. Weeks Commencing: 3/11, 10/11, 17/11, 24/11, 1/12, 8/12

Spring1. Weeks Commencing: 5/1, 12/1, 19/1, 26/1, 2/2, 9/2

Spring 2. Weeks Commencing: 23/2, 2/3, 9/3, 16/3, 23/3 (Spring 2. groups are 5 weeks only)

Summer 1. Week Commencing: 13/4, 20/4, 27/4, 4/5, 11/5, 18/5 –
(Monday groups in Summer 1. will be 5 week courses due to bank holiday 4/5)

Please specify preference for Green Therapy or Equine in your application.

Please note that project Iris are unable to provide transport. Participants, referrers and families will need to organise transport to and from site to ensure a prompt start and finish times.

The sessions addresses:

Creative Green Theapy:

**Greenfingers
Basingstoke Mencap
Elizabeth Road
Basingstoke
RG22 6AX**

Equine:

**Danny's Place
Watley Farm
Locks Lane
Sparsholt
SO21 2LU**