

# Mental Health Strategy & Learner Support Policy

## Inclusion School



**Approved by:** Governing board

**Date:** June 2022

**Signed by:**

**Position:**

**Last reviewed:** June 2022

**Next review due:** June 2023

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years, but may be reviewed earlier if deemed appropriate by the Headteacher and Governing board.

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## 1. Introduction

“Mental wellbeing is not simply the absence of mental illness but is a broader indicator of social, emotional and physical wellness. This is influenced by the wider contexts within which a child or young person lives.

We define mental wellbeing as children and young people’s happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning.”

*Public Health England, Measuring and monitoring children and young people’s mental wellbeing: a toolkit for schools and colleges*

Public Health England, working with the Department for Education published the following report in 2021: Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing a whole school or college approach (This document was first published in 2015. It has been updated to reflect new policy and data).

It’s summary of findings were:

- Good mental health is important for helping children and young people to develop and thrive. The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey (2020) found 16% (1 in 6) of children aged 5 to 16 years to have a probable mental health disorder, an increase from 1 in 9 in 2017 (11).
- The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in fundamental changes to the lives of children and young people. The Public Health England COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance report suggests that whilst some evidence shows that children and young people have generally coped well during the pandemic (March to September 2020), other evidence suggests that some children and young people, especially those with certain characteristics, such as those who are disadvantaged economically, females, and those with pre-existing mental health needs, appear to have experienced greater negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.
- Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils and students, by developing approaches tailored to the particular needs of their pupils and students. Taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges can also help foster readiness to learn.

## 2. Risk and protective factors

Risk and protective factors for child and adolescent mental health

	<b>Risk factors</b>	<b>Protective factors</b>
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Low IQ and learning disabilities</li> <li>• Specific development delay or neuro-diversity</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Difficult temperament</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being female (in younger children)</li> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humour</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
In the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Deviant peer influences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> </ul>

	Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships	• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging Positive peer influences
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

### 3. Difficult events that may have an effect on learners

Staff see their learners day in, day out. They know them well and are well placed to spot changes in behaviour that might indicate a problem. The balance between the risk and protective factors set out above is most likely to be disrupted when difficult events happen in their lives. These include:

- Loss or separation – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships (especially in adolescence), family conflict or breakdown that results in the child having to live elsewhere, being taken into care or adopted;
- Life changes – such as the birth of a sibling, moving house or changing schools or during transition from primary to secondary school, or secondary school to sixth form; and
- Traumatic events such as abuse, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents, injuries or natural disaster.

### 4. Inclusion School responses and strategies

- A committed team that sets a culture within the organisation that values all learners; allows them to feel a sense of belonging; and makes it possible to talk about problems in a non-stigmatising way;
- An ethos of setting high expectations of attainment for all learners with consistently applied support. This includes clear policies on behaviour and bullying that set out the responsibilities of everyone in the organisation and the

range of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for learners. These are available and understood clearly by all, and consistently applied by staff

- Working with parents and carers as well as with the learners themselves, ensuring their opinions and wishes are taken into account and that they are kept fully informed so they can participate in decisions taken about them;
- Continuous professional development for staff that makes it clear that promoting good mental health is the responsibility of all members of organisation, informs them about the early signs of mental health problems, what is and isn't a cause for concern, and what to do if they think they have spotted a developing problem;
- Clear systems and processes to help staff who identify young people with possible mental health problems

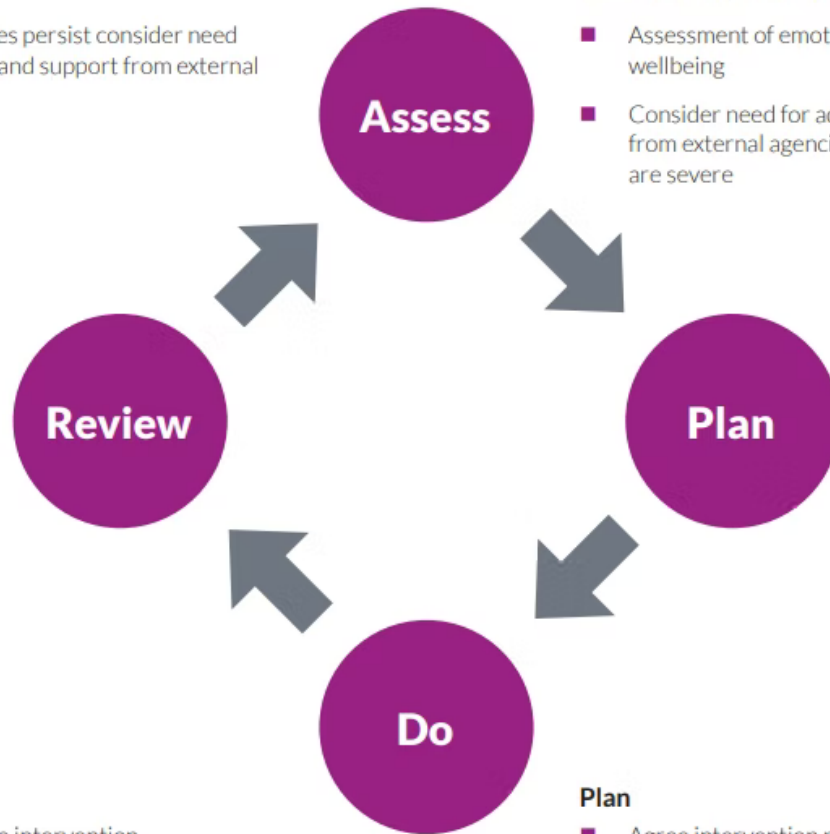
## 4.1 Processes and support

### Review

- Review effectiveness of intervention
- If appropriate increase amount or intensity
- If difficulties persist consider need for advice and support from external agencies

### Assess

- Early identification of signs and symptoms of difficulties
- Pupil and parental perspectives
- Assessment of emotional health and wellbeing
- Consider need for advice and support from external agencies if difficulties are severe



### Do

- Put in place intervention

### Plan

- Agree intervention required
- Record using a provision plan/ pastoral support plan/ emotional health and wellbeing plan or similar

## 4.2. Identifying mental health needs

Inclusion Hampshire operates a detailed referral process that includes input from schools, professionals, parents and families and the learners. This ensures we have as much information as possible. Initial assessments by Inclusion Hampshire and introductory Listening Post appointments further contribute to the background and information gathering process in order for support needs and strategies and an individual learning plan to be set for all learners individually. On-going evaluation and reporting by all staff monitors progress. All learner's progress is monitored and evaluated, both academic and behavioural and emotional through session evaluations, case reviews and progress monitoring including SEMH and Growth Mindset.

### 4.3 Comprehensive and updated PSHE curriculum

A detailed and comprehensive Life Skills and Wellbeing curriculum is in place, in line with Gov.UK guidance and PSHE association 2020, including statutory changes to RSE curriculum, [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers](#). This information is also published on our website.

For a PSHE education programme to support its learners to thrive in a time of rapid change, with new and unpredictable opportunities and challenges constantly emerging, it should take the 'learning opportunities' outlined within the three core themes of the PSHE Association Programme of Study. It is not enough to simply teach learners *about* the issues covered in the suggested subject content. It is vital they have the opportunity to explore their attitudes, values and beliefs about them and to develop the skills, language and strategies necessary to *manage* these issues should they encounter them in their lives.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing should not be viewed as a 'topic' to be delivered in isolation. The knowledge, skills, language and attributes needed to promote positive mental health should be developed throughout the entire PSHE education programme, with additional discrete lessons focusing specifically on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Inclusion Hampshire curriculum and resources are planned in accordance with [Teacher guidance: teaching about mental health and Updated 2021 PSHE Association guidance](#)

Topics covered:

- 1. Identity** (their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes and achievements and what influences these; understanding and maintaining boundaries around their personal privacy, including online)
- 2. Relationships** (including different types and in different settings, including online)
- 3. A healthy** (including physically, emotionally and socially), **balanced lifestyle** (including within relationships, work-life, exercise and rest, spending and saving and lifestyle choices)
- 4. Risk** (identification, assessment and how to manage risk, rather than simply the avoidance of risk for self and others) and **safety** (including behaviour and strategies to employ in different settings, including online in an increasingly connected world)
- 5. Diversity and equality** (in all its forms, with due regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010)



**6. Rights** (including the notion of universal human rights), **responsibilities** (including fairness and justice) and **consent** (in different contexts)

**7. Change** (as something to be managed) and **resilience** (the skills, strategies and 'inner resources' we can draw on when faced with challenging change or circumstance)

**8. Power** (how it is used and encountered in a variety of contexts including online; how it manifests through behaviours including bullying, persuasion, coercion and how it can be challenged or managed through negotiation and 'win-win' outcomes)

**9. Career** (including enterprise, employability and economic understanding)

#### **4.4 Counselling, ELSA and FEIPS support**

Evidence shows that children and young people evaluating in-house counselling services are positive about counselling, viewing it as an effective way of bringing about improvements in mental health and well-being, and helping children and young people to engage with studying and learning. It is an accessible service, increasing the range of options available to children and young people who need to talk to a professional about problems in their lives. Our qualified Counsellors have significant experience in working with young people from a range of differing backgrounds and environments.

They are able to support and work with our young people experiencing issues which may include anxiety, bereavement, depression, self-harm, trauma and gender or sexuality. Our counsellors have developed a learner led approach which is adapted to best suit the needs of the individual they are working with, be that one on one sessions, group chat or more informal sessions and ad hoc crisis counselling.

The team listen and support in a confidential and non-judgemental way. Learners have the opportunity to have an informal chat during the day, crisis support or have timetabled sessions. In addition, we have a bespoke programme, offering a unique approach at Inclusion College which offers 1-1 support to learners, combining counselling skills with expert SEN knowledge.

The programme enables our learners to gain a greater understanding of their own diagnosis and needs, the barriers this can create, and then work towards strategies to support this. All of which is centred around a work based, employability focus.

#### **4.5 Music**

Our therapeutic music sessions play an incredibly important part in the learners' experience with Inclusion Hampshire. Our young people are able to access our unique combination of studio technology to create music without needing them to learn an instrument immediately. This means it can be used by anyone, regardless of their ability or special educational needs. It reduces anxieties in young people, works to

raise mood and lift symptoms of depression. Music can help develop learners' understanding of emotion and provide an opportunity for self expression and an emotional outlet.

#### **4.6 Arts and crafts**

Arts and crafts can be used as an intervention, as a strategy for de escalation or as an outlet. Art is also used as a strategy for settling into a session, reducing anxiety and developing emotional expression.

#### **4.7 Therapy dog**

Casper, our trained therapy dog is on site at least 2 days a week to offer support for learners. This can be time with him, walks or more structured therapeutic activities.

#### **4.8 Positive group management including use of quiet spaces**

Evidence has shown that an effective approach to promote positive behaviour, social development and self-esteem is to couple positive classroom management techniques with one to one or small group sessions to help pupils identify coping strategies.

Each Inclusion Hampshire site makes use of small, quiet and calm rooms and spaces where staff can take individual learners and small groups to get ready for the day, talk about concerns and worries or to calm down if something has upset or angered them.

#### **4.9 Awareness Days and campaigns**

Involvement in Awareness Days and campaigns allows opportunities to teach skills, knowledge and strategies and embed within the curriculum including English, Life skills, art, drama and music. It also develops learners' understanding and engagement with the wider world and communities, and builds their self esteem and confidence.

These include:

- Black History Month
- GRT History Month
- LGBTQ+ History Month
- White Ribbon Day
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- National Storytelling week
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- World Sleep Day
- School Diversity week
- Plastic free month

## **5. Individualised strategies**

All staff are trained in supporting mental health and there is an emphasis in our work of ensuring learners feel heard. Daily session evaluations allow information and updates to be shared securely with all team members. This ensures consistency of approach and increases the learner's feelings of being listened to and feeling safe.

Staff have a strong understanding of de-escalation techniques, trauma support and other strategies to manage mental health needs such as grounding. This is underpinned by our ethos of providing long term support and strategies for their mental health, that is embedded and transferable to their futures.

We are passionate about helping learners feel safe and that they belong, each day is started with a warm greeting and steps to help them settle and get into the right frame of mind for learning. Every learner has a bespoke curriculum and support strategies developed to meet their individual needs and requirements. This helps us to create the best possible learning environment for each individual.

Our robust referral process (see above), along with initial assessment, information from previous education provision, support services, any LEA involvement and of course learners and families ensures that we are able to devise comprehensive support strategies to facilitate learner needs.

This can include agreed procedures for welcoming learners, activities to settle or create a 'work' mood, support to develop social interactions, informing of any potential change or deviation from the usual routine or staff member and agreed methods of de-escalation. We work with the learner to find the best process for them. These methods are regularly reviewed with staff and learners to ensure the most effective approach.

Following 'Trust Me' training with Anna Freud Centre, we have implemented a check in system for learners to let us know how they are feeling each day, with the option of requesting a 1-1 with staff to talk.

### **5.1 Supporting learners with complex problems**

For learners with more complex problems, additional interventions include:

- Support to the learner's tutor, to help them manage the learner's behaviour within the sessions.
- Additional educational one to one support for the learner to help them cope better.
- One to one therapeutic work with the learner.
- Pastoral Manager support
- External referrals

Evidence shows that if parents/carers can be supported to better manage their children's behaviour, alongside work being carried out with the child, there is a much greater likelihood of success in reducing the child's problems, and in supporting their academic and emotional development. Inclusion Hampshire works to support the family as well as the child that has been referred.

**Note:** Whilst it is good practice to involve parents/carers and families wherever possible, in some circumstances the child or young person may wish not to have their parents/carers involved with any interventions or therapies they are receiving. In these cases organisations should be aware that those aged 16 or over are entitled to consent to their own treatment, and their parents/carers cannot overrule this. Children under the age of 16 can consent to their own treatment if it is thought that they have enough intelligence, competence and understanding to fully appreciate what is involved in their treatment.

Our Pastoral Manager is also trained to provide sleep education and support, to learners and their families.

## **6. Learners support services**

Inclusion Hampshire uses a concern sheet which is available to staff on our system to identify learners who are experiencing problems. This includes: Attendance, Behaviour, Bullying, Hygiene, Medical, Mental health, Pastoral, Racist/extremist views, Safeguarding, Self harm, SEN, Sexual health, Social media/internet safety.

This ensures that a rounded picture of learners at risk of mental health problems is available to staff, which includes all the relevant information to give a complete picture. In addition DSL & DDSL, Pastoral staff and Managers meet regularly to discuss and identify individuals/groups of pupils who may be at risk.

Learner Support Service: Any member of staff, parent or learner can request additional learner support and ask to talk to a member of the Pastoral team. We can then implement varied interventions such as specialised programmes of activities, support for parents/carers, reward schemes and an amended curriculum.

### **6.1 External referrals**

It might be that a learner requires further support and a referral to an external agency or professional is appropriate. These can include:

- Youth Offending Team.
- Young Carers support.
- School Nurse.
- EMTAS
- Family Support Workers.
- Catch 22 Substance Misuse Service.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Adult Social Care.

- Educational Psychology.
- Counselling
- Family Practice nurses (maternity)
- Use of apps or other support such as Kooth & Launch (offering support with housing, homelessness, budgeting, family relationships, employment, sexual health, well-being and substance misuse recovery).

External referrals are overseen by the Head / Asst Head and Pastoral Team. Records for referrals are kept and all communications logged. We set a review meeting to work with the learner (possibly parent/ carer as well) to assess the intervention and make an action plan for further support as needed.

### **6.3 Triage**

An effective triage process is important and ensures we are making the most appropriate interventions and referrals to support our learners. We gather together as much information as possible including:

- Learner voice
- Parent/family voice
- Teacher/ staff feedback

This ensures that before we make any decision on who we refer to, we assess the need first. We ensure that when we are information collecting that we don't just focus on the negatives, we capture the positives as well, as these can be used in mentoring or intervention sessions. It is important to emphasise that this process is not a diagnosis – our staff are not equipped and do not make any diagnosis. It is a rather systematic tool or process used to determine the most appropriate service for a learner.

## **7. Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance is essential in monitoring our systems in order to identify any issues or areas of improvement. This is done on both an individual and whole organisation wide level, including a survey calendar covering all stakeholders.

### Learners

Feedback is sought by learners regularly about education and the support they receive. This is done by:

- feedback forms
- surveys - names and anonymous (min. 3 times a year)
- specific feedback on projects such as life skills week
- Feedback on curriculum and topics
- session evaluations

- variety of ways to request further support e.g, written, check in board, email, verbally
- mentoring relationships with staff and priority given to time and space to talk
- preparing for and attending review meetings

### Parents

As with learners, parent's feedback is regularly sought.

- surveys - names and anonymous (min, 3 times a year)
- specific feedback on projects such as life skills week
- preparing for and attending review meetings
- Home visits with pastoral team
- regular email, phone and face to face updates
- Holistic support, we can offer and signpost parents/ carers for support themselves attendance at meetings such Early Help Hub, CIN, CP
- Parent events

### Staff

Staff feedback is essential in assuring quality both for working with individual learners, and for the support overall. Staff wellbeing is also of high priority to Inclusion Hampshire.

- Surveys monitor staff wellbeing, success of provisions and also check staff knowledge and understanding of areas such as safeguarding and peer on peer abuse
- Additional knowledge checks and quizzes on essential knowledge (safeguarding)
- Regular review meetings and case reviews
- Support strategy meetings covering individual learners
- Daily briefings and debriefings
- Open door policy by SLT
- Fortnightly staff supervisions
- Termly PSHE support
- Termly curriculum review meetings
- Termly staff and peer observations
- Annual appraisals
- Consultations with staff on strategy and organisational updates
- 3 x a year team away days
- ongoing CPD and personal development
- Staff wellbeing policy

### Governance

Our Trustee board and governor board provide quality assurance, challenge to Heads and a 'critical friend'. Reports are submitted quarterly by Heads for scrutiny and questions ahead of face to face board meetings.

### External

Feedback is also sought from external stakeholders:

- Voluntary organisations and projects
- Providers, such as Job Centre Plus
- Businesses offering work experience opportunities