

# Mental Health Policy



Reviewed: February 2024  
Next review: February 2025

## The Christian Ethos of Immanuel College

Immanuel means 'God with us'.

At Immanuel College, we believe that we are 'All God's Children' and this drives us in our aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

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### Introduction:

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

'Schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing. It is important that schools promote good mental wellbeing for all pupils. Schools should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for early intervention and identification, referral to experienced skilled professionals, and clear accountability systems.'

'All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils, which includes: preventing impairment of children's health or development, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.'

'Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. The school role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

- Prevention: creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely;
- Identification: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;
- Early support: helping pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions; and
- Access to specialist support: working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.'

*'Schools should also have in place arrangements which reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their pupils. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.'*

[Quotes from Key Points & Principles and Chapter 1 in 'Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools' Nov 2018 DfE]

**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023** states that 'schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.' [para 179] Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined (amongst other things) as 'preventing the impairment of children's mental health or development.'

As a result, **KCSIE 2023** says that, 'All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation' Though 'only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem...staff however, are well placed to observe

children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.' Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences [ACEs], this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.'

## **Aims**

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## **Staff Mental Health**

The school has a Chaplain and Lay Chaplain who are available for staff who feel they are struggling with their mental health.

Staff may also go to the Business Manager if they are having issues with their mental health and may request to be referred to Occupational Health or counselling.

## **Lead Members of Staff for Students' Mental Health**

KCSIE 2023 states that: 'The senior mental health lead role is not mandatory and different senior leads will inevitably have different levels of knowledge and skills to promote wellbeing and mental health, and different responsibilities, as roles are locally defined to fit in with other relevant roles and responsibilities. However, we expect a senior mental health lead in a school/college will be a member of, or supported by the senior leadership team, and could be the pastoral lead, SENCO, or designated safeguarding lead. We are aware most schools and colleges already have a senior mental health lead in place'

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Nic Wilkins - Mental Health Champion and Mental Health First Aider
- Jonathan Patterson – SLT, Pastoral Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Stuart Hacking – SLT, Chaplain and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Andrea Whittle – SENCO and Safeguarding Team
- Rachel Pickles – Deputy SENDCo
- Nick Box – Pastoral Asst. Strategic Lead and Safeguarding Team
- Zoe Pearson – Head of House & Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Marc Steele –Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Sarah Swales – P16 lead and Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Tom Rooks – Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Fran Bailey – Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Michelle Sutton – Mental Health First Aid Trained Team member
- Louise Mellor – Mental Health First Aid Trained for children and adults

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- Darren Riley – Learning Mentor and trained in ‘Understanding Children and Young People’s Mental Health’
- Emily Trotter – Salvation Army Youth worker and Safeguarding Team
- Samra Mirza - Head of PSHE/Inclusion and Safeguarding Team
- Mental health team volunteers also trained in LGBTQ+ mental health and wellbeing (Stonewall): Mathew Philips, Olivia Tyrell, Zoe Pearson, Emily Trotter, Sue Barraclough, Michelle Sutton, Nusrat Ali,
- Mental Health volunteers: Fran Baxter, Ben Middleton, Trisha Stringer, Peter Wilson, Sharone Buckle, Helen Connor, Colette Reid, Richard Lingard, Shahnaz Khan, Donna Stockdill, Jason Lundie.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to one of the mental health leads in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal Child Protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (via CPOMS). KCSIE 2023 says that, ‘If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.’

If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the First Aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENDCO, Designated Safeguarding Leads or Mental Health Champion.

## **Individual Care Plans**

The SENDCO, in conjunction with the First Aider, will need to be involved in any ongoing care plans for students with mental or emotional health problems. These plans should include:

- Details of a pupil’s condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum (see Appendix 1). Mental health and emotional wellbeing run through all the core themes, especially Health and Wellbeing and Relationships.

The aim of sessions is to promote responsible attitudes towards the maintenance of good physical and mental health, supported by a safe and healthy lifestyle. The skills, language and understanding needed to promote positive mental health underpins much of what we teach in PSHE.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we’re teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills,

knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Within school, the Sanctuary, Mentors' room and First Aid room are known to the students as places where they can find help and support.

The school works very closely alongside the School Nursing Team as well as with Families First, who signposts student and parents/carers to other agencies within the community and acts as a link between local GPs and the school. The School Nurse sees students in our consulting rooms situated within our Mentors' room. The School Nurse takes annual mental wellbeing assemblies for the new Year 7 students. In addition to the School Nurse, the school employs a school psychotherapist and school counsellor weekly who also work from the consulting rooms in the Mentors' room. These rooms are also used by a number of outside agencies who support our students with their emotional and mental health when our children are referred to them.

The school displays posters from Childline in communal and support areas as well as information and signposting relating to direct sources of support accessible to students, both internally and externally.

## **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns through CPOMS to our Safeguarding and Mental Health team.

Possible warning signs might include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## **Managing disclosures**

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and their first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS. This written record should include:

- Main points from the conversation
- Any marks or injuries

This information should be shared as soon as possible with the Safeguarding and Mental Health team, who will offer support and advice about next steps. This is in response to our Christian Ethos as well as KCSIE 2022 para 180 that states 'governing bodies should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.'

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we believe it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Ideally we should receive the student's consent, though there are certain situations when information must be shared with the Safeguarding and Mental Health leads and / or a parent/carer regardless. If a child is under 16 and is in danger of serious harm, then the student's consent must not be a barrier to passing on information.

Even if a child is over 16, it is always advisable to share any disclosures (however minor) with the Mental Health team, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student. It also ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if the student is under 16 though in some less serious cases some students may be allowed to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should also give students the option of the school informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues involving parents/carers then parents/carers should not be informed in the first instance, but the Designated Safeguarding Leads must be informed immediately.

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Should the contact be made face to face or is an immediate phone call the most appropriate way forward?
- If a meeting is planned, who should be present? Consider parents, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

## **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and through the MindEd website: <https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- The three main PHSE termly themes can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

## **Supporting Peers**

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told

- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **Training**

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. Go to <https://www.minded.org.uk/Catalogue/TileView> and then choose Secondary School Presentations for a general overview or use the search facility for specific issues.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Ellen Doherty, our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

The Department for Education has published advice and guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (which may also be useful for colleges). It sets out how schools and colleges can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school/college approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of their pupils. In addition,

Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See Rise Above for links to all materials and lesson plans. The Department has also published, 'Every interaction matters', a pre-recorded webinar which provides staff with a simple framework for promoting wellbeing, resilience, and mental health. This sits alongside our Wellbeing for education recovery program content, which covers issues such as bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma. [KCSIE 2023



## **Appendix 1 PSHE Termly Themes**

### **1. Autumn term: Relationships**

Students focus on how to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts (starting with transition) and to develop parenting skills as they progress through the key stages. Further to this, there is a focus on how to recognise and manage emotions within a range of relationships including friendships and intimate relationships and risky or negative relationships including all forms of bullying (including the distinct challenges posed by online bullying) and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters. Alongside this, age appropriate consent is visited in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships). Students are also taught about loss and managing loss including bereavement, separation and divorce.

Development of the theme looks at respect, equality and becoming a productive member of a diverse community. Throughout, there is a focus on how to identify and access appropriate advice and support within school and externally.

### **2. Spring term: Health and well being**

In the spring term, years 7-11 develop awareness on how to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. This covers how to assess and manage risks to their own and others' health and safety. A key element of the curriculum is ensuring students know how to identify and access help, advice and support within and outside of school. Students are challenged to make informed choices about health and wellbeing matters including drugs, alcohol and tobacco. They also discuss diet and what a balanced diet looks like. As part of physical activity, students explore the benefits of exercise and the role of sleep. As students work up through the curriculum, they explore mental and emotional health and wellbeing. As they develop through KS4, they develop their knowledge and understanding of sexual health. Students explore how to respond in an emergency including administering first aid alongside analysing the misuse of emergency services. Finally, students evaluate the influence of the media on lifestyle which has become a key influence in an age with rapid technical advances readily available at a young age. Year 11 end with a focus on preparing for life beyond year 11, including CV writing and the role of trade unions.

### **3. Summer term: Living in the wider world (includes economic wellbeing)**

In the summer terms, years 7-10 learn about about rights and responsibilities as members of diverse communities and as active citizens and participants in the local and national economy. Students further evaluate how to make informed life choices and develop an understanding of what it means to be enterprising and ambitious. Students develop their growth mind-sets with a focal point on resilience in the face of challenges. They discuss how to develop employability skills and the role of team working at different levels. They also examine what leadership skills are and how these can be nurtured and developed. Students learn about the changing economic and business environment. They look at jobs of the future and the changing landscape of Bradford as an employer. Finally, students examine how personal financial choices can affect them and others, including gambling/addiction and about rights and responsibilities as consumers.