



## **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

April 2023



## **Contents:**

1. College Mission Statement
2. Rationale
3. Policy Aims
4. Key Staff Members
5. Individual Care Plans
6. Teaching about Mental Health
7. Signposting
8. Sources of support at school and in the local community
9. Warning signs
10. Targeted support
11. Managing disclosures
12. Confidentiality
13. Whole School Approach
  1. Working with Parents/Carers
  2. Supporting Parents/Carers
14. Support Peers
15. Training
16. Policy Review



## 1.0 College Mission Statement

We prepare our students for life in a diverse world by intentionally integrating students of all abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, from all faiths and none.

We provide a caring and inclusive environment to help our students achieve excellence within a culture of acceptance and understanding.

High quality education changes the world, one child at a time.



## 2.0 Rationale

At Integrated College Glengormley, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing within our whole school community. Our open culture allows pupils' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

We are committed to ensuring staff are comprehensively and regularly trained within the area of Mental Health and Wellbeing and we ensure that all staff are aware of how to signpost parents/guardians to support services for the pupils and their wider family circle.

This policy is a guide to all parents/guardians and staff – including non-teaching staff, teaching staff and governors – outlining our whole school approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies. It is aligned to the Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework (February 2021); which states that:

“A Mentally Healthy School/Education Setting” is one that adopts a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, helping children to flourish, learn and succeed by providing opportunities for them, and the adults around them, to develop the strengths and coping skills that underpin resilience. The school considers positive mental health and wellbeing as fundamental to its values, mission and culture, where child, staff and parent wellbeing is seen as “everybody's business”.



Effective Practice includes:

- ✓ Commitment to whole school/setting and universal wellbeing from the Principal/leadership teams, including the importance of staff wellbeing.
- ✓ Promoting a caring, supportive culture and ethos embedded throughout the whole school/setting community involving children, young people, staff, parents and carers.
- ✓ Promoting a sense of belonging and respect for all, and providing an emotionally secure and safe environment that encourages and instils a sense of self-esteem, self-regulation, skill development and overall resilience.
- ✓ Integrating emotional health and wellbeing in all policies and practice, and throughout all areas of the curriculum.
- ✓ Ensuring the culture and ethos impacts on teacher wellbeing and pedagogy, including the teacher-pupil relationship, the culture within individual classrooms and classroom management strategies, all of which mediate a range of pupil wellbeing and academic outcomes.
- ✓ Giving children & young people a voice - ensuring they have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that may impact on emotional wellbeing. This can be achieved through our pupil Council and Pupil Wellbeing Champion groups.
- ✓ Reviewing pastoral structures regularly to identify and meet children & young people's need.
- ✓ Delivering universal evidence informed programmes to promote resilience and wellbeing, including Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing.
- ✓ Show our support as a school for mental health charities by implementing fundraising events throughout the year as well as running activities to promote Mental Health week.
- ✓ Embedding an open and inclusive culture to ensure pupils and staff can feel comfortable to chat about mental health issues, without judgement.

## 3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all staff and pupils (incorporating the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing in order to promote a common/shared language throughout the Whole School Community).
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable the whole school community to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable the whole school community to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

## 4.0 Key staff members

While this policy aims to ensure that everyone within the school community has a role in the promotion of mental health and emotional well-being, key members of staff have specific responsibilities or roles to play, including:

- Principal, Vice-Principal and SLT;
  - Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher
- Pastoral Team
  - Mental Health First Aid Champion & Take Five Staff Champions
  - Learning Support Co-ordinator
  - Head of Learning for Life and Work
- Take 5 Pupil Champions

\*It should be remembered that teachers and members of school staff are not health professionals. They are not trained to diagnose mental health problems or to provide psychological interventions. They are, however, in a position to encourage positive mental health among young people and to be alert to signs and symptoms of possible.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to Mrs Dodds (Designated Teacher).

If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

## 5.0 Individual Care Plans

When a pupil who has been identified as having cause for concern; or has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue; or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation; it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parent/s/guardians, and relevant professionals.

(NB. This is not always necessary)

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role/school/name(s) of specific staff



## 6.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our LLW curriculum and further promoted as part of our pupil Wellbeing Champion programme.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

[https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional wellbeing](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing) (NB *There are new resources being developed by CCEA NI that you will be able to reference here*)

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations>

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupils' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting pupils to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

**See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

## 7.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, social media and websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. We will update and maintain this to ensure that the services remain available and accessible to all.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

## 8.0 Support at school and in the local community

### School Based Support

- Church Mentoring

Mentoring led by Carnmoney Presbyterian Church Mentors, suitable for group support exploring a range of issues specific to the individual or group, including friendship, transition, positive behaviour choices, self confidence, self esteem. A Head of Year will refer pupils through **Mrs Sames**. Weekly timetabled mentoring sessions are scheduled and form tutors announce this to pupils.

- EA Mentoring

Individual Mentoring, led by an EA Mentor. Suitable for pupils who are experiencing difficulty forming or maintaining friendships, low mood/mental health issues. A Head of Year will complete a Mentoring Referral form and submit to **Mrs N Clarke**. Weekly timetabled mentoring sessions are scheduled, and form tutors discreetly announce this to pupils.

- EA Counselling

Weekly counselling sessions with EA Counsellors. Suitable for pupils who are experiencing difficulties with low self confidence, self esteem, managing emotions and well being, low mood/mental health issues, anxiety, anxiety based school avoidance. A Head of Year or Senior Teacher will refer to Mrs Dodds, Designated Teacher. Pupils can also receive drop-in counselling sessions if it is a one-off session or it is short term support. Form Tutors discreetly inform pupils of the time of their counselling appointment.

## ■ Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing

We are a Take 5 school and we embed this wellbeing approach within our whole school ethos. The Take 5 approach seeks to promote positive health and wellbeing of individuals by “Taking 5” within the 5 areas:

- Connect
- Keep Learning
- Be Active
- Take Notice
- Give

The Take 5 model aims to empower individuals to understand how their brain and body responds to different feelings, emotions and to find ways through Take 5 to self-regulate and look after their health and wellbeing.

Pastorally there is a weekly wellness focus as part of a whole school pastoral programme delivered during registration on “Wellness Wednesday’s”. As a school community, we run various events during the academic year to promote a greater awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing issues within our school community. We strive as a school community to raise funds in order to be able to run and facilitate mental health events, initiatives and workshops. Wellbeing within ICG is led by Mrs N Clarke working closely with the Designated Teacher and Chris Lindsay, Education Authority. We have 2 wellbeing groups within our school: the Staff Wellbeing Champions and our Pupil Wellbeing Champions.

- Youth Services Youth Practitioner

Our Youth Practitioner is based within Integrated College Glengormley on a full-time basis and works with a range of young people from Year 8 to Year 11, based upon referrals made by a Head of Year to Mrs N Clarke. Our Youth Practitioner works with young people focusing on a range of issues which place individuals at increased risk of harm within School and the wider community including Risk Taking Behaviour, Self Esteem and Self Confidence, Healthy Relationships. This support can be delivered as 1:1 sessions, group sessions and whole class sessions as part of our Learning for Life and Work curriculum (LLW).

- Restorative Practices Facilitator

As a Restorative school we value the importance of positive relationships and recognise that when friendships or relationships between peers or staff break down, that this can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing. We seek to adopt a restorative approach to resolve conflict and repair any harm, to ensure all members of the school community feel valued and safe, in order to achieve their potential.

- Friendship Club

This club is led by a team of Teaching Assistants to help pupils develop friendships and the skills required to maintain effective friendships. This club is open to pupils from Year 8 to Year 14, meeting at breaktime on a weekly basis. The friendship club explore the different areas within the Take 5 approach and seek to encourage pupils to be able to express and recognise their feelings and emotions, within the Take 5 approach to Wellbeing.



## **Local Support**

There are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). CAMHS is a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation. Parents/guardians are advised to seek advice and guidance from their GP regarding a referral to CAMHS.

## **Family Support Hub**

The Family Support Hub is a group of organisations including community, voluntary and statutory who deliver services to children/young people (0-18 years) and their families. The Family Support Hub will work in partnership with families, listen to your needs and will help young people and their families access the support service best suited to a young person's needs. This can include behavioural support, emotional health and well-being, family support, housing support, debt and benefits support, drug and alcohol support, educational support, mentoring and advice and guidance. A Head of Year or Senior Teacher can make a referral to the Family Support hub with a parent/guardian's consent.



## **The Solihull Approach**

The Solihull Approach is a team of professionals within the National Health Service in the UK. They work with practitioners and parents to develop new resources to support emotional health and well-being in children, families, adults and older adults. They are a 'not for profit' organisation.

The sound and well-researched ideas that underpin the Solihull approach are embedded in every aspect of the training available for groups of parents and anytime online courses for parents. Further information can be found at:

<https://solihullapproachparenting.com/>

## **Aware NI**

Aware is the depression charity for Northern Ireland offering support and education for people living with a range of mental health needs. Support groups welcome people who suffer with mental health illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder as well as those who care for people with the illness.

## **Lifeline**

Lifeline is a crisis response helpline service operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If an individual is in distress or despair, they can call lifeline on 0808 808 8000. For more information



## **Action Mental Health**

Action Mental Health aims to enhance the quality of life and employability of people with mental health needs or a learning disability in Northern Ireland. They encourage individuals to adopt a healthier lifestyle, widen their social networks and provide opportunities to develop skills to build a better future, develop coping skills to help re-engage with society and become more employable.



## 9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 alert Head of Year/Senior Teacher Pastoral/Designated Teacher:

- 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

**The Pastoral Team where appropriate will liaise with the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher**

## 10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We as a school work closely with the School Nursing and their teams for some schools work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.



We ensure timely and effective identification of pupils who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with agreed assessment tool and criteria, children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an **Individual Care Plan** as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, based on the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and the identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

## 11.0 Managing disclosures

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the pupil's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher(s).

**If there are disclosures made to any member of the Pupil Wellbeing Champion team, any disclosures made should be reported to the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher and will also map with this process.**



## **12.0 Confidentiality**

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the pupil. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the pupil first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the pupil. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

## 13.0 Whole school approach

### 13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – pupils, staff, parent/guardian and external agencies as appropriate?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

**Ensure a Clear, Concise and Accurate Record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.**

## 13.2 Supporting parents/carers

We recognise that a family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents/guardians to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (social media, website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions that may be available; by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with other family support agencies.

## 14.0 Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil 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 supported
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs 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





## **15.0 Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to staff to ensure pupils feel and kept safe. The Senior Teacher Pastoral, Mrs N Clarke will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training.

We will host relevant information on our Social Media platforms and School website for the Whole School Community who wish to learn more about mental health. These platforms will provide access to supporting resources/free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

We will provide training opportunities for the Whole School Community as part of our preventative strategies and for those 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 pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host afterschool 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 the Senior Teacher Pastoral who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for the Whole School Community as well as for individuals as required.



## 16.0 Policy Review


This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **01/04/2025**.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Senior Teacher Pastoral/ Designated Teacher.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.



Achieving Excellence Together

 134 Ballyclare Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5HP

 [integratedcollegeglengormley.com](http://integratedcollegeglengormley.com)

 028 9083 7223