


Mental Health Policy



DfE no: 850/7900

Approved by:	LGB	Date:	October 2025
Signed:		Position:	Chair
Last review:	October 2025	Next review by:	September 2026



Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least annually in line with DfE, HSCP, HCC and any other relevant guidance.

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1. Aims

Inclusion College supports the mental health needs of vulnerable young people and is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders. Within this policy we aim to:

- Highlight the college's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students across the college.
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting students' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which students feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Identify the key roles and responsibilities related to mental health in the college.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Inform students and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from the college in respect of students' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources and signpost them to organisations.

2. Legislation and guidance

This Mental Health Policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years' statutory guidance (2015)
- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- Inclusion College's values and ethos

3. Our vision

At Inclusion College, we believe every young person deserves an education that values who they are, not just what they can achieve. Our students, aged 16–25 with an EHCP and mental health challenges, are at the heart of everything we do.

Through The Inclusion Way™, we create nurturing, person-centred learning environments where wellbeing is not an add-on, but the foundation of education. We bridge the gap between mainstream and specialist provision, offering personalised support for young people with complex needs that traditional settings are not built to meet. Too many young people with mental health conditions face exclusion — three times more likely than their peers — and we are breaking that cycle.

We are proud to embed the PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) in our practice, creating safe, trusting relationships that allow learners to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

For us, mental health is not separate from learning — it is central to it. When young people feel safe, supported and understood, they can engage, achieve and begin to shape positive futures for themselves.

At Inclusion College, our vision is simple but powerful: to redefine education so that no young person is left behind because of their mental health.

4. Our Wellbeing Team

The Wellbeing Team supports the student when they are struggling to access their learning, working with them to understand what the issues are and what their needs are in that moment. The ultimate objective is to get them back into the session with support, if necessary, or, alternatively, get the work from the classroom to do quietly in a separate place.

It might be that the student needs different input or support: for example, to go for a walk and then afterwards recommit to the learning environment. It is all about what the student needs in that moment and might be categorised as SEN, mental health, family or friendship issues.

There is a variety of staff from different departments who are on the Engagement team including SLT, teaching staff and the wellbeing team. The aim is to build the connections with the students and maintain the Whole College Approach.

4.1 PACE

PACE is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes, an American psychologist who works with traumatised children. PACE stands for:

- Playfulness
- Acceptance
- Curiosity
- Empathy

These principles help to promote the experience of safety in your interactions with young people and every Inclusion College member of staff should embody these values in their interactions and relationships with students. Staff are expected to embody this because young individuals need to feel that you have connected with the emotional part of their brain before they can engage the thoughtful, articulate, problem solving areas.

4.2 Empowering Personal Development

We aim to offer support and assistance to our students, increasing their confidence, identifying their interests, skills and personal qualities – enabling them to discover their own individual pathway. We can then assist them to develop and build on these skills – progressing to whatever next steps they wish to make moving forward.

As a specialist education centre, the mental health and well-being of our students and staff is at the heart of all that we do. We have developed a bespoke education programme of academic, pastoral and skill – enhancing work, tailored to the individual needs of every student, with an emphasis on emotional well-being and mental health support. This approach is extremely important to us as an organisation and is extended to students, their family and support networks and our own staff.

We aim to provide:

- A committed team that sets a culture within the organisation that values all students; 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 students 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 students. These are available and understood clearly by all, and consistently applied by staff.
- Collaboration with parents and carers as well as with the students 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.

5. Pathways

At Inclusion College we have established pathways for each of our students. We have three pathways:

- **The Gold Pathway:** a one-year course focusing on building mental health and resilience (Appendix A)
- **The Blue Pathway:** focuses more on Accessing Education and is typically a two-year course (Appendix B)

- **The Yellow Pathway:** which is our pathway to employment and is typically a one year course (Appendix C). This happens at our sister site, EB8.

All of these pathways are adaptable and can be bespoke ensuring the students needs are met.

The level of mental health input is highest on a Gold Pathway and the least on a Yellow Pathway. Details of what these interventions may look like for each pathway can be found below:

Pathway	Examples of required mental health and wellbeing input
Gold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced timetable • Accessing multiple 1:1 therapeutic sessions with different practitioners (see Section 6) • Additional therapeutic sessions such as music, art.
Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have 1:1 therapeutic input on particular topics, e.g. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) • Ad hoc support from our Engagement team
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in sessions • Ad hoc support

6. Our Interventions

Mental Health Practitioner

Our Mental health Practitioner delivers 1:1 sessions with students using evidenced based CBT strategies. Each student has a goal to work towards, and strategies are shared accordingly. The strategies are a part of the interventions of Worry Management, Cognitive Restructuring and Brief Behavioural Activation. Set topics are offered each session but can be adapted based on how student is presenting in the session and if they have other things they wish to discuss through to help their wellbeing. Support is offered outside of these set 1:1s and students know that if they are feeling anxious or low and need a check in that they can indicate this through the sign in app and a member of the wellbeing team will speak to them that day.

Yoga & Breathwork

Zoe's intervention focuses on the student regulating their nervous system and coming up with strategies for students to utilise in everyday life. This is typically done on a 1:1

basis, however small groups are also possible. Some of the activities include but are not limited to physical movement, yoga, breathwork, meditation and healthy living.

Therapeutic support

Our on-site qualified counsellor uses her SEN knowledge and experience to provide therapeutic support for any students who would benefit and wish to engage. A therapeutic relationship is fostered and maintained by working creatively with students. Once trust is built, it makes it easier for the students to share concerns as they arise. If ongoing formal counselling is required, referral to an external therapist will be suggested.

1:1 RSE intervention

As our learners are over 16 and often experience social isolation or have faced challenges in forming and maintaining friendships, we provide opportunities for them to access relationship, sex, and health support through one-to-one interventions. These sessions are offered reactively, based on individual circumstances, and focus on topics such as friendships, relationships, growing up in the modern world, and developing confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. By nurturing these key areas, we aim to strengthen our students' mental health and overall sense of purpose.

Attendance Support

Our Pastoral Lead is part of the Wellbeing Team. For more information about the link between attendance and mental health, and the support we put in place to promote this, please see our Attendance Policy.

Music

Our therapeutic music sessions play an incredibly important part in the students' experience with Inclusion College. Our young people are able to access 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 students' understanding of emotion and provide an opportunity for self-expression and an emotional outlet.

Art

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. This can be done through crafts & Lego to name a few. Projects are also a great way to engage students and allow them to focus on something when their feelings of anxiety are high.

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.

Inclusion College makes use of quiet and calm rooms and spaces where staff can take individual students 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. This allows the students to have an outlet before settling into their academic sessions.

Local Area Mapping (services)

It is important to have a list of local support for our students mental health. Appendix A is a list of Hampshire based services and Berkshire based services which can be found at ease either through this policy or in the student folder. Subsequently, SLT, SMHL or the Headteacher can refer or signpost students who need additional support.

Transitions

Transition plans are in place for students starting at the college and also for students moving on to work placements, further education or EB8. The transition plans keep the students mental health and wellbeing at the forefront and can be adapted to each individual.

7. Engagement Team

The Engagement Team plays a vital role in fostering a supportive, inclusive, and proactive learning environment. Some of the areas they focus on are:

Student Re-engagement

The team actively monitors student participation and steps in when engagement drops. Whether a student has stepped out of a session or is struggling to stay focused, the Engagement Team gently guides them back into learning spaces with empathy and encouragement.

Wellbeing Conversations

Recognising that emotional wellbeing is key to academic success, the team offers one-on-one chats for students who may be feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or disengaged. These conversations are confidential, compassionate, and aimed at helping students feel safe and supported, with the goal to reintegrate them back into their session.

By building trust with students and collaborating closely with staff, the engagement team help create a culture where every learner feels valued and empowered to succeed.

8. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a student's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- A change in mood or energy level.
- A change in eating or sleeping patterns.
- A change in attitude in lessons or academic attainment.
- A change in level of personal hygiene.
- Social isolation.
- Poor attendance or punctuality.
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure.
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Rapid weight loss or gain.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously.
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause.
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Family Risk Factors.
- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence.
- Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted).
- Hostile and rejecting relationships.
- Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse.
- Parental psychiatric illness.
- Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder.
- Death and loss – including loss of friendship.

9. Risk and protective factors

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genetic influences• Low IQ and learning disabilities• Specific development delay or neuro-diversity• Communication difficulties• Difficult temperament	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being female (in younger children)• Secure attachment experience• Outgoing temperament as an infant• Good communication skills, sociability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences Peer pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging <p>Positive peer influences</p>
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale college with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

10. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our college, for understanding risk factors and for reporting any safeguarding concerns (see Safeguarding policy).

If any members of staff are concerned about a student's mental health or wellbeing, they should record this on CPOMS or speak to one of the following members of the safeguarding team:

- Designated safeguarding lead Anna Moores (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Nerys Nabbs (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead)
- Amy Pontin (DDSL, Pastoral & Family Engagement Partner)
- Rosie Newport (DDSL, Mental Health Practitioner)

Senior Mental Health Lead responsibilities

- Developing a whole-college approach to support mental wellbeing
- Oversee targeted interventions to support the mental health and wellbeing of students
- Planning a curriculum to enable students on to positively manage their mental health and wellbeing

- Training staff to identify signs and symptoms of emerging mental health needs in Students.
- Have a clear process in which staff can report concerns.
- Have a clear process of managing all mental health concerns.
- Have systems in place for students to seek help if they need it.
- Have policies in place to support students through referrals to specialists.
- Know what local and national help and support is available out of college.
- Promoting good mental health and emotional wellbeing for staff and Students.

Mental Health Practitioner responsibilities

- Delivers targeted interventions with students
- Educating students on mental health and wellbeing in 1:1 therapeutic sessions
- Training staff to identify signs and symptoms of emerging mental health needs in Students.

Wellbeing Team responsibilities

- To deliver personalised and bespoke mental health and wellbeing interventions. See Section above for more details

Tutors

- To support the communication between home and college.
- Identify any mental health needs before they become severe.

All staff

- It is the responsibility of all staff to share any concerns about a student using the college's CPOMS system or to speak to a member of the safeguarding team.
- Embodying the Inclusion Way and a relational, PACE approach to student interactions
- To identify any warning signs of deteriorating mental health.

11. Managing disclosures

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring. Staff will focus on the students emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice. Staff will always follow our college's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL/ DDSL/Mental health lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored on the college's CPOMS platform.

12. Confidentiality

Staff will not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality. A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing.
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff being at college
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question.
- Staff should always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL/mental health lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.
- Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:
 - Who they will share the information with.
 - What information they will share.
 - Why they need to share that information.
- Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.
- Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

13. Monitoring

The Senior Mental Health Lead, the mental health practitioner, Pastoral Lead and the Safeguarding Team review, discuss and action any mental health or safeguarding concerns recorded on CPOMS.

These meetings will also involve discussing any further actions that may be required for those students. All students are discussed regarding their progress and mental health and placed into one of three categories after their wellbeing questionnaire is completed: Red, Amber or Green (RAG rating) creating a visual representation for measuring the students mental health.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Mental Health Lead and agreed by the Governors.

14. Training

It is the responsibility of everyone at Inclusion College to manage and monitor students mental health. Therefore, it is important that all staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help

15. Links to other policies

The additional policy documents support our approach and this should be read in conjunction with them:

- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Appendices

Appendix A – Local Area Mapping for Hampshire and Berkshire

Hampshire:

Project Iris – Basingstoke. An Inclusion programme designed to support those experiencing loneliness and isolation, feelings of hopelessness, suicidal ideation, thoughts and self-harm. projectiris@inclusioneducation.org.uk
Hampshire Specialist CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA). Tel: 02382 317 912.
The Bridge Centre. 02382 316300
Papyrus – prevention of young suicide. If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINE247 for confidential support and practical advice. Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 88247 Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org
Safe Haven. Aldershot Farnborough, Fleet, North and mid Hampshire, Southampton
Talking Therapies Hampshire is a service for people registered with a GP in the following areas of Hampshire: Alton, Andover, Basingstoke, Bordon, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest, Petersfield, Romsey and Winchester. You can self-refer online or by telephone 023 8038 3920.
TalkPlus is a service available to people who are registered with a GP in the following areas of Hampshire: Yateley, Fleet, Farnborough, Blackwater and Aldershot. You can self-refer online or telephone 01252 533355.
Mind runs wellbeing centres in Hampshire towns and cities to provide short-term, outcome-focused support. The centres provide workshops, courses and other support on many mental health issues. Contact your nearest centre to find out more about their programme: Aldershot, Andover, Basingstoke and Romsey – 01264 332297. Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, New Forest and Winchester – 023 8202 7810. East Hampshire and Havant – 02392 498916. connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/mentalhealth
Samaritans offer confidential emotional support. Call for free on 116 123 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, email jo@samaritans.org.uk or visit www.samaritans.org

<p>Stop Domestic Abuse If you are affected by domestic abuse then support is available: call 0330 016 5112 or email advice@stopdomesticabuse.uk</p>
<p>Let's Talk About It Access confidential information and support around contraception and sexual health: 0300 300 2016.</p>
<p>Hampshire Carers Support Service offers support to carers aged 18+ who look after an adult with a long-term health condition, including dementia, and those looking after someone with a physical or learning disability. They provide information and advice, direct one-to-one support where carers' needs are more complex, and contingency and emergency planning. Call 01264 311680 or carercentre.com</p>
<p>Cruse provides free bereavement support, no matter how long you have been grieving. Call your local branch on: 01256 862264 (North Hampshire) 0300 7904055 (South Hampshire, restricted hours only)</p>
<p>Winston's Wish a charity that helps children, teenagers and young adults (up to the age of 25) find their feet when their worlds are turned upside down by grief. They provide digital bereavement information, advice and support for young people across the UK who are grieving the death of someone important to them. They also help advise the adults who are caring for young grieving people including parents, school/college staff and healthcare professionals. Website: https://winstonswish.org/ Freephone Helpline on 08088 020 021 or resources on their website.</p>
<p>Headroom Charity supports Young People and their parents or carers. Anger Management Specialists. Monday to Thursday 10am – 6pm or Friday 10am – 2pm. Phone: 07464 507974, text: 07464 507974, email: info@headroomcharity.co.uk https://www.headroomcharity.co.uk/</p>
<p>Sasha's Project – Fleet. Sasha's Project is a charity which runs a drop-in centre in Fleet. It is a safe place for young people in and around Fleet, Hampshire, who are struggling with anxiety, depression, their mental health or who are having thoughts of suicide. The drop-in centre is based at: The Point Youth Centre, Harlington Way, Fleet GU51 4BP. It is open from 9pm to 6am every Friday and Saturday night for all young people age 13 to 25yrs. We are able to offer young people the opportunity to be heard in</p>

complete confidence, in a caring, non-clinical, safe environment. It is somewhere that young people can be supported through a crisis, with the aim of reducing their risk of self-harm and suicide. We can also equip them with basic self-help tools and support them to develop a future crisis plan, if appropriate.

<https://www.sashasproject.charity/> 07741 117 655

Berkshire:

West Berkshire Suicide Prevention Action Group. Help for people with suicidal thoughts in West Berkshire. **<https://westberkshiresuicideprevention.org/>**

Samaritans – Newbury. 116 123 free from any phone 0330 094 5717 local call charges apply. 58 West Street, Newbury, RG14 1BD. Email: **<https://www.samaritans.org/branches/newbury/>**

Recovery in Mind. Recovery in Mind is on a mission to improve the lives of adults living in West Berkshire with mental health challenges by delivering free of charge, inspiring and empowering courses. Email: **<https://recoveryinmind.org/>**

Eight Bells. We run a mental health drop-in centre that offers a safe, supportive and welcoming environment in Newbury Town. We provide support to about 100 members living across West Berkshire whose lives are affected by mental health issues.

We're committed to supporting members in enriching their lives, well-being, confidence, and self-esteem. Through peer support, personalised assistance from our coordinators, committed volunteers, training, and a diverse array of well-being activities, we're dedicated to creating positive change. **0300 102 4504.**

<https://eightbellsnewbury.co.uk/> Our drop-in sessions are held at:

Friends Meeting House, 1 Highfield Avenue, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5DS.
coordinator@eightbellsnewbury.co.uk.

Sport in Mind. Sport in Mind ® is an independent multi-award winning mental health charity (unaffiliated to Mind and not part of the local Mind network) that was formed in Reading, Berkshire in 2010 with a simple mission:

"To improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems through sport and physical activity". **01189479762.**

<https://www.sportinmind.org/pages/category/who-are-we>

Upper Lodge Farming Project. Upper Lodge Farming Project is a social enterprise offering a therapeutic care farming service to those wishing to gain experience working and learning on a small farm with animals and in horticulture. **info@upperlodgefarmingproject.org.uk. Matthew Randle - 07794 468841. Michelle Jenkins - 07976 821294.**

Emotional Health Triage service (EHT). A free service which accepts referrals for children and young people in West Berkshire. The Emotional Health Triage Service helps children and young people (under 19 years old) and their families in West Berkshire.

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/emotional-health-triage>

Time to Talk – West Berkshire. We are a charity that delivers an emotional and psychological support service for young people aged 11-25 and parents connected to West Berkshire. Email: **hello@t2twb.org. https://t2twb.org/#**

https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/55589/Online-mental-health-service-directory-June-2023/pdf/Z-CARD_Z06_Credit_300x234_insert-UK_WB_June_23_final.pdf?m=1723138017903