



# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy implemented: September 2020  
Last reviewed: September 2022  
Next review due: September 2023

## 1. Summary

*Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.*

*(World Health Organisation - 2022)*

At Ingfield Manor School, we are committed to promoting and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, young people, staff, parents and carers) as we recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and development. Poor mental health can negatively impact on young peoples' learning, achievements and future lives.

We recognise that everyone experiences different life challenges and that each of us may sometimes need help to cope with them. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support at some point in their lives.

Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage students to be open about their mental health and wellbeing needs and each student should have their 'voice' heard, including those who use alternative and

augmentative communication (AAC). We use both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

At Ingfield Manor School, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. Staff all have a role to play.

## 2. Aims

The aim of our policy is to describe the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

At Ingfield we will always support our students to:

- Understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Have the means to communicate their concerns and worries and feel comfortable to do so.
- Form and maintain relationships.
- Be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Develop resilience and positive coping strategies.
- Develop problem solving skills and ways of managing setbacks

We promote a healthy environment by:

- Encouraging positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Embedding mental health and wellbeing within the curriculum.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements through a 'can do' approach.
- Encouraging a sense of belonging and community by promoting both our school and British values.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our students' 'voices', empowering them to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.
- Putting in place a designated Mental Health Lead within the school.
- Having in place robust safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Signposting children and families to external support services.
- Providing internal support services such as the visiting counsellor.



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## 4. Key Staff

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead – member of school’s senior leadership team
- School Principal
- School Governor (link role where applicable) and / or Divisional director
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)
- Team Leaders, tutors/teachers and senior team members.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to one of the DSLs and/or the mental health lead. If a child presents with a medical emergency, then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

If a major incident occurs that is likely to impact on the mental health of others ie. death of a service user. The ‘business continuity plan’ should be referred to. The Principal will take the leading role in deciding upon the best person to liaise with the families/students/staff etc, taking into consideration the specific situation.

## 5. Teaching about mental health and wellbeing

- 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 developmental PSHE curriculum.
- 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.
- The specific content of lessons will be determined by the individual needs of the students we are 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.
- Our students will also learn the vocabulary they need to express their feelings and ask for help through their communication lessons and will be supported to develop access to both high and low tech AAC (where necessary) through dedicated lessons, as well as practicing their skills throughout the day.
- Opportunities throughout the school year will also be maximized to teach students about mental health and wellbeing, such as assemblies on World Mental Health Day and activities throughout Mental Health Awareness Week.

## 6. Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

At Ingfield Manor School, we recognise that our children and young people are at high risk of mental health disorders due to a number of biological, psychological and social factors associated with their conditions. Due to the nature of their disabilities, mental health disorders can often go undiagnosed and untreated so it is important for all staff to be aware of potential symptoms and warning signs.

Any member of staff may become aware that a student is experiencing mental health issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to one of the DSLs or Mental Health Lead immediately.

Possible warning signs include:

- Being clearly upset and emotional
- Becoming withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Changes in behaviour ie angry outbursts, being unkind to peers
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering of academic achievement and disengagement with learning
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Reluctance for help with personal care
- Expressing dislike of self and/or their body
- Lateness to or absence from school/an increase in lateness and absenteeism
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Abusing drugs or alcohol

## 7. Support at School and in the Local Community

**We have a range of support available in school for any students struggling, as listed below:**

- The school's ethos is that every child and young person is empowered to speak to any member of staff about any concerns or worries they may have, and that they know they will be respected and listened to
- All students attend weekly communication lessons, which teaches them vocabulary to enable them to talk about how they are feeling
- All students have an ICT lesson, which, for those reliant on technology for communication, helps them develop the skills needed to access their vocabulary independently
- All students attend weekly PSHE lessons
- All students have the option of having a regular chat session, which provides the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings with a person of their choosing in a quiet, safe space
- Each student has an Assigned Team Member, who works closely with them and is available on a daily basis to notice any signs, to be available to talk to the student and to raise concerns so more structured support can be put in place
- Each student can choose a staff member they feel comfortable talking to, to be their advocate. As well as being available to talk to the student, their advocate can act as a link with DSL and/or family
- When available, identified students will have the opportunity to speak to an external therapist/counsellor.

### **Physically comforting students:**

At Ingfield Manor School, we follow a whole school approach where staff do not offer or engage with hugs/cuddles with students. This is to facilitate students to understand the boundaries between support staff and friends/family, as well as appropriate and inappropriate touch. For students that are tactile sensory seekers and may request or initiate hugs, every effort is made to redirect students to other forms of greeting/comfort and are offered sensory support through more appropriate methods such as:

- soft toys
- weighted blankets
- ball pool
- other appropriate sensory resources.

Staff are not permitted to hold hands with students, unless deemed necessary for therapeutic activities, care or physical facilitation needs e.g to support a student to stand or to access resources in lessons. Again, alternative strategies should be used for students who seek to hold staff members hands, such as:

- fiddle toys
- soft toys
- vibrating cushions
- other appropriate sensory resources

However, at Ingfield Manor School we do recognise that for children's' mental health and wellbeing, there may be times where students require additional support and comforting from a member of staff. For example, if a student is upset, unwell or in pain, it may be deemed beneficial for a students' wellbeing to offer some physical comfort. In these circumstances, staff should follow the following guidelines:

- ensure you are in a public place with at least one other staff member present.
- speak to the student first and offer comforting words.
- ensure students have the opportunity to express their concerns either verbally or via AAC.
- place a hand or arm around the student's shoulders. Don't offer a full embrace where they are pressed against your body. The only exception to this would be for early years students who may benefit from comfort on a staff members lap (however they must be in a public space with at least one other staff member present).
- follow the students moving and handling plans at all times.

Kissing students in any form is not acceptable in any circumstance.

**There is also a lot of support networks available for children in the local community. This includes places such as:**

- YMCA Dialogue, face to face or online counselling with an experienced counsellor, Mon-Fri 9.00-17.00 ages 11-18, 07739 893 707, [community.counselling@ymcadlg.org](mailto:community.counselling@ymcadlg.org)
- Youth Emotional Service (YES) @ Find It Out Centres, 1-2-1 and group intervention, weekdays – 9am-5pm, ages 11-18, Youth Emotional Support (YES), | Referral guidance
- Youth Emotional Support (YES) | Referral form for young people under CAMHS threshold; aged 11-18 [emotionalwellbeing.yps@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:emotionalwellbeing.yps@westsussex.gov.uk)
- CAMHS, tier 3 multi-disciplinary teams offering therapeutic interventions, care co-ordination and medication, under 18s, [www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/CAMHS](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/CAMHS)
- Child Bereavement UK, Child Bereavement UK support children and young people (up to the age of 25). 0800 02 888 40, [helpline@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:helpline@childbereavementuk.org)
- Childline – online advice and support on mental health <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/mental-health/> . Support line: 0800 1111

## **8. Managing Referrals**

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The name and date of birth of the student
- The date of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.

## 9. Confidentiality

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a student, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the student. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the student's consent first, such as in the case of students who are at immediate risk. Protecting a student's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures if we judged a child to be at risk.

## 10. Whole School Approach

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students, overseen by our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

### **WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school.
- Signpost families to external support services.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

### **WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS**

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- The school nurse.
- Paediatricians.
- Psychologists
- CAMHS.
- Counselling services.
- Therapists.
- Family support workers.
- Behavioural support workers.
- Placing local authority

Ingfield Manor school has a visiting psychotherapist and access to this service is made via school referral. Pupils can either self-refer to this service, or staff can make a referral on the student's behalf. Appointments are always made in consultation with the student, and also with parents where appropriate.

## 11. Supporting Peers

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support.

We will provide support in a one-on-one or group setting. These sessions will be guided by the student, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

## 12. Training

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files and / or via electronic training database (Your Hippo). This is delivered via both face-to-face and online training.

We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

## 13. Useful Links

- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
- <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/back-to-school/childrens-well-being-and-mental-health>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/north/northern-england-clinical-networks/our-networks/mental-health-and-dementia/network-groups-and-workstreams/cyp-mh-wellbeing/>
- <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/children-s-mental-health/>
- <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/fact-sheet-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>