

Whole School Policy Promoting Positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Policy area: 8 – Safeguarding
Date last revised: 09/07/2019

Date established: May 26th 2017
Date of next revision: June 2020

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Head of School on an annual basis, or more frequently if there are changes in regulation or policy. It is due for review in June 2020.

Signed

Rose Threlfall
Head of School

Date: 11/07/19

1. Policy Statement

1.1

ICS is committed to promoting the positive mental, physical health and well-being of all students and recognises that students' emotional needs must be met in order for students to enjoy school and achieve at their highest potential. The three-fold connection between students' academic achievement and mental and physical health is well-documented and the school encourages a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, healthy eating, social emotional learning, and mindful practices.

1.2

The school believes that the protection and enhancement of emotional well-being is the responsibility of all staff and begins from the moment of admission to the school. A strong pastoral wellbeing program, small class sizes, and specialised supports for incoming students, ensure that students social-emotional needs are accounted for from the first day and also allow for

early identification of students who may need additional supports, before more serious mental health problems occur.

1.3

The school takes a proactive approach towards tackling the stigma associated with mental health that may impede students accessing support by educating students, staff, and parents. This is done through the PSHE curriculum, staff training, parent workshops and open and consistent communication amongst teachers-parents and students.

1.4

The school recognises that in order for staff to model and promote mental and physical well-being, staff members' own physical and emotional well-being must be prioritised and cared for. Staff members are trained to and encouraged to recognise and address signs of their own stress and to take care of their own mental and physical needs. School Psychologists are available for staff who may need additional support in doing so. While School Psychologists do not provide direct counselling to staff members themselves, they are able to advise and suggest appropriate community services that staff members may wish to access for support. Additionally, staff members who are feeling stressed, may consult with the Human Resources department, who will conduct a stress at work assessment with them. Finally, faculty meet regularly through different forums including SALT, PALT and the Work Rest and Play Team to discuss and formalise plans to encourage emotional well-being amongst the staff.

1.5

The school will follow its safeguarding policy and procedures in cases where the school suspects, believes, or discovers through a disclosure that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm whether self-inflicted or by another student or adult.

Aims and Objectives

This purpose of this policy is:

- To provide an overview of the ways in which ICS promotes mental health and emotional wellbeing for all students and staff
- To provide information, resources, and guidance for staff who have a concern about a student's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- To increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues so as to encourage early intervention with students exhibiting mental health concerns
- To provide support to students who suffer from mental health concerns, as well as support for their peers and family members (parents/carers and siblings at the school)

Rationale

Children and young people who are mentally healthy have the ability to: play and learn;

develop a sense of right and wrong; become aware of others and empathise with them; resolve problems and setbacks and learn from them; use and enjoy solitude; initiate, develop, and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships; and develop psychologically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and spiritually.

(Mental Health Foundation, 2002)

Recent findings by the Mental Health Foundation UK indicate that 1 in 5 adolescents may experience a mental health concern in any given year; 50% of all mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24; and 10% of children and young people have a clinically diagnosed mental disorder; yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a suitable age.

(Fundamental Facts about Mental Health, MHF, 2015)

Lead Members of the Team

Primary School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Elizabeth Burns

Primary School Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) – Katherine Tyler

Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and MYP Wellbeing Coordinator - Annalise Taylor

Secondary Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) - Evi Takopoulou

School counsellor- Evi Takopoulou

School Psychologist/SENCO – Elizabeth Burns

School Psychologist/SENCO – Evi Takopoulou

Head of School – Rod Jackson

Promoting Mental Health and Well-being

Mental health and emotional well-being are actively promoted and integrated into all aspects of the school. ICS aims to provide a school environment that fosters confidence and positive self-worth. Students are encouraged to voice their thoughts and feelings, as well as to take action to improve their school and community. Children are taught about the connection between physical and mental health from a young age. Students engage in daily physical activity and healthy snacks and lunches are provided by the catering team. Students are educated on mental health and emotional well-being through the PSHE curriculum and the use of research based curriculum programs, such as Second Step.

The Pastoral Wellbeing program at the secondary school (wellbeing team, form tutors, academic tutors, Co-Teachers) and the Positive Behaviour Intervention program at the primary school support the social-emotional needs of all students and pro-social behaviour is encouraged through recognition and praise.

School Psychologists and counsellors are available for all students. Students can access services through self-referral or be referred by a teacher or parent. Individual and group counselling are available, as well as walk-in support for students with an immediate concern.. Moreover, when it is needed, school psychologists/counsellor are in contact with external practitioners and care providers in order to ensure a multidisciplinary approach.

When it is discovered that a child self-harms or a child self-discloses as such, this information must be referred to the DSL who will treat it as per the School's Safeguarding policy. When it is known that a child self harms and is under the treatment of a doctor or external specialist, the child will be identified as a vulnerable child and a risk assessment will be put in place by a member of the Student Support team and shared with the DSL and relevant staff.

Signposting

At ICS, we recognise the importance of making information easily accessible to students, and as such, relevant sources of information regarding mental health and emotional well-being, including sources of support and community outreach, are displayed in communal areas, such as corridors and common areas. By highlighting sources of support, students are more likely to seek help because the information regarding what help is available, how to access it, and what will happen, is readily available.

Working with All Parents

In order to support the parents of all of our students, ICS strives to:

- Ensure that all parents are made aware of contact details for key staff members and are encouraged to talk to the School if they have concerns for their own child or for a friend of their child.
- Share ideas regarding how parents can promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in their child(ren) through workshops, informational meetings, and newsletters.
- If a child self-discloses, or it is discovered that they are self-harming and is without any medical or therapeutic support, the DSL must be informed. The DSL as with all safeguarding matters, is under no obligation to inform parents if they decide to refer the child as per the School's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff who have any concerns regarding a student's emotional well-being should share those concerns with the DSL or DDSL. The DSL or DDSL may then share the relevant information with appropriate staff members, caregivers, and/or professionals, which may include the School Psychologists, SENCO, counsellor, pastoral team members,, professionals in the community (i.e. the LADO, CAMHS, mental health professionals, and/or emergency medical services), parents or guardian, and teachers who work directly with the student.

If a staff member notices a student in distress, or if a student expresses mental health concerns to a staff member, the staff member should follow the procedures for managing student mental health concerns. (Appendix 1)

Warning Signs

We believe that all staff have the responsibility of safeguarding students and acknowledge that teachers are often the first individuals to notice warning signs which may indicate that a student is possibly experiencing a mental health concern. Staff who notice any warning signs should communicate their concerns to the DSL or DDSL immediately. Staff members have all been trained regarding warning signs related to mental health disorders, self-harm, suicide, and eating disorders.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Students may choose to confide in a member of staff and may, at times, share information concerning their own safety or that of their peers. If a student discloses concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, the member of staff's response should be calm, supportive, and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise, keeping in mind the child's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring the reasons behind the disclosure or the mental health concern.

Staff should never make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept. Students should be made aware that all staff members must tell someone if a student reveals that they are being harmed, that someone else is being harmed, or if they want to harm themselves or someone else. **Staff must immediately notify the DSL or DDSL if a student reveals that they or a peer are being harmed or considering harming themselves. In the extremely rare case that a DSL or DDSL is not available (i.e. during an after school club) the staff member should either call a parent to come to the school to discuss the concern and receive the child or, if the staff member feels the parent will not take the concern seriously or the child is an immediate risk, they should call 999. The staff member must then notify the DSL or DDSL of the incident as soon as possible.**

All disclosures about mental health concerns, regardless of severity, should be recorded in writing as soon as possible and shared with the DSL. As with all safeguarding concerns, staff should complete the ICS Cause for Concern Form.

The confidentiality of students who access school counselling services or psychotherapy will be maintained, **within the boundaries of safeguarding the students.**

Parents must be informed if a student reports that s/he is being harmed or if they are considering harming themselves. If a parent does need to be contacted, the student should be made aware of this, and the appropriate staff member (DSL, DDSL, school psychologist, SENCO, or principal) should speak with the child about what information will be revealed to the parent and why the parent needs to be notified. School should hold 2 contact numbers of parents/guardians to make sure that at least one close person will be reached as soon as needed.

Working with Parents of Students with Mental Health concerns

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents that the school believes their child may have a mental health concern, the DSL or DDSL will speak with the appropriate staff members (principal, pastoral team, SENCO, School Psychologist, Counsellor and/or

teacher) and consider the following questions (on a case by case basis) prior to contacting the parent(s)/carer(s):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable and all attempts for a face to face meeting should be made.
- Is there enough evidence suggesting that there is an underlying Mental Health Concern?
- Who should be present? Consider the number of people and keep in mind too many staff members may increase feelings of anxiety and discomfort for the student and parent.
- What are the aims and desired outcomes of the meeting?
- What kind of recommendations/referrals are going to be made?

It can be overwhelming and upsetting for a parent to learn of their child's mental health concern and many parents may react with anger, fear, upset, or denial during the first meeting. Further sources of information and support should be provided, when appropriate, so that parents can review the information after they have reflected on and processed the concerns shared during the meeting.

At School, we do not provide assessments and diagnoses, we only raise awareness and concerns. The best way of moving forward is to inform parents and guide them accordingly.

Any meeting should be followed by an email to the parents outlining the main points and that agreements made during the meeting, and encouraging the parents to contact the school with any questions or concerns that may arise as the parents process the information that was shared during the meeting.

Working with External Professionals when a student has an identified Mental Health diagnosis

Support is available for students who have therapy outside of the school. Counsellor/ Head of Student Support or the Wellbeing Co-ordinator should ask parents permission to contact them (at secondary school, students who are above 16 should be asked too). We strongly believe that working as a team and under the guidance of a therapist that supports a child outside the School, is the most effective way to promote their wellbeing. As soon as a student has therapy outside the school, they cannot have therapy in the school as well, but the counsellor/Head of student support/Well-being co-ordinator should have frequent check-ins with him/her.

Staff Wellbeing

Support is available for the staff in terms of reflective practice and supervision. The School Psychologist/Counsellor are also available to listen to all staff members who may need to share concerns in a non-judgmental, confidential space or who may need support in terms of their own emotional wellbeing. Again, while the School Psychologists and counsellors do not provide direct counselling, they can provide details of where and how staff can receive this support in the community.

Support will also be made available to staff members if an incident were to occur at school, or a crisis incident in the community, in order to allow for staff to debrief, process, and reflect on the incident.

References

- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE, March 2016](#)
- [Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future, DfE February 2016](#)
- [Education, Education, Mental Health, Craig Thorley, Institute for Public Policy Research May 2016](#)
- [Preparing to Teach About Mental Health and Emotional Well-being, PHSE Association, March 2015](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation, UK](#)

Appendix 1

Procedures for managing a student mental health con



The DSL will decide on the appropriate course of action and share action steps with relevant staff members. This may include, but is not limited to:

**Contacting Children's Services or the LADO
Contacting the police
Contacting parents/carers
Assisting with the arrangement of professional assistance and support outside
of the school
Arranging for in-school supports and interventions**



Do not speak about your conversation or concerns with another member of staff or with other students.

Access support for yourself if you need it via the School Psychologist, psychotherapist, or the DSL.

APPENDIX 2

Guidance supporting LGBTQ+ students and their wellbeing

We recognise the value that LGBTQ+ individuals bring to our global culture and landscape.

We understand that many people across the world still hold stigma towards people from the LGBTQ+ community and acknowledge the great challenges students can face when exploring their own identity in the face of such attitudes. These challenges can impact students in many ways and are likely to be detrimental to their mental health, overall wellbeing and learning. The following policy guidelines and guidance for teachers is written with this in mind.

ICS believes in compassion and strives to create a warm environment where all students feel they can be true to themselves and become successful world citizens. This includes all sexual orientations and gender identities and we do not discriminate on any of these characteristics for any of our school community in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

All students will be safeguarded to the highest levels if they choose to share their identity with the school.

If a student comes out at ICS we will:

- Respect the student's wishes. We recognise that this is a personal decision. The empowerment of students is central to these guidelines.
- Value the privacy of that student.
- Respect the autonomy of student choice in our support provision - the student may wish to tell others and they may also prefer not to. They may also feel that they do not need support. We will advise students, but never push.

- We will support the student as they feel they need - using preferred adults and the school mental health and pastoral team.
- Educate other students via guest speakers and charities via workshops or assemblies to promote a culture of acceptance
- Use to the full value the anti bullying policy to protect students for HBT phobic language and harassment.
- Make sure that ICS staff attend training on sexual orientation acceptance and best practice

Guidance supporting non-conforming, non-binary and Trans persons and their wellbeing

Under the equality act 2010 any young person has a right to be addressed as whichever gender they identify as regardless of any diagnosis or medical intervention and irrespective of age. Some young people may not have support in their home environment, we may be their trusted adults - keep this in mind.

If a student transitions at ICS we will:

- Respect the student's wishes. We recognise that sharing their transition is a personal decision.
- Listen to the young person at all times and consider their wishes.
- Inform staff of the student's preferred pronouns and name - reinforcing that these must be used for all interactions henceforth.
- Allow the student access to a non-gendered bathroom (life skills) in order to safeguard student from harassment.
- Support the student throughout their time at ICS - using preferred adults and the school mental health and pastoral team.
- Liaise in full with the young person's medical team / parents / guardians as needed.
- Educate other students via guest speakers and charities in workshops or assemblies to promote a culture of acceptance.
- Use to the full value the anti bullying policy to protect students for HBT+ phobic language and harassment.
- Ensure that ICS staff attend training on sexual orientation and gender diversity acceptance and best practice
- Point them in the direction of resources that may help -
Mermaids Gender: <https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>
Gendered Intelligence: <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/support/trans-youth/resources>

Guidelines for staff when a student confides in them regarding self-identity:

- Listen to the student.
- Thank the student for sharing something so personal. The student has seen you as a person they trust. It takes courage to share.
- Remind the student we are there for them and they are accepted as part of our community.

- Respect the student's wishes - ask what they want to happen next and what we can do for them.
- Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion. Some suggestions are:
 - *Have you been able to tell anyone else?*
 - *Has this been a secret you have had to keep from others or have you told other people?*
 - *Do you feel safe in school? Supported by the adults in your life?*
 - *Do you need any help of any kind? Resources or someone to listen?*
 - *Have I ever offended you unknowingly?*
- The student may be entirely comfortable with their sense of self and may not need support - keep this in mind.
- Avoid assumptions. Do not make suggestion that this is a 'phase' or say 'I knew it!'
- There is no one way to come out - everyone does differently - so avoid comparisons or comments on that student and their actions.
- For trans students - ask them how they would prefer to be known/addressed - pronouns matter.
- Point them in the direction of resources that may help -
 - Young Stonewall <https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/get-support>
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/> is helpful
 - For Trans / Gender non conforming students: <https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>
- **If the student shares something that needs referral to the DSL - always state that this will happen. Refer to the DSL if the student is considered a risk - states *they can't go on.***

Additional protections.

New legislation protects individuals who have association with LGBTQ+ persons. For instance, a student at ICS is adopted by gay parents - that student will have full protection via equality law and thus be protected through all relevant ICS policies.

Something to keep in mind too is that students who are straight can receive LGBTQ+ bullying and hate speech based on the perception of others.

It is important to challenge ALL instances of HBTphobic language and bullying regardless of orientation.

General Resources

<https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>
<https://www.diversityrolemodels.org/>