



## Introduction and School Context

New-Bridge Integrated College is an 11–18 Co-Educational Post-Primary Integrated College educating children aged 11 to 18 of all abilities, faiths and cultures in an inclusive educational setting. The College was established in 1995 and celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary last year. New-Bridge is in Loughbrickland with students attending from Rostrevor to Moira, Portadown, Newry, Banbridge, Scarva and Gilford. We are Laureate of the Evens Peace Education Prize and have received an Excellence in Integration award. This academic year we are working towards a Rights Respecting Schools award. The care and welfare of all the school community is at the centre of the school's ethos. The school population is made up of 640 pupils with 80 teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Twelve percent of the student population has a statement of Special Educational Needs and a further twenty-one percent of our students are on The Code of Practice for identified additional needs. Thirty-three percent of our students are entitled to Free School Meals and two percent of our students are Looked-After Children.

## Whole-School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing

At New-Bridge Integrated College we recognise that being nurtured in a positive and respectful way is crucial to the social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and personal development of our pupils.

Our whole-school approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing supports our pupils, helping them to develop as resilient and responsible young adults, who look after themselves and each other. Our whole-school strategy aims to enable our young people to fulfil their potential and play an active, caring role in our community. All members of staff share pastoral responsibility for our pupils by encouraging them to become self-reliant and resilient learners who respect themselves and others.

### Core Values

This work is further supported through our three Core Values: **Responsible, Ready and Respect**. These Core Values underpin all that we do. We work together to actively promote our integrated ethos by creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, which can be achieved through courtesy and concern for others.

As an Integrated College with a child-centred and inclusive ethos at the core of all school improvement, navigating restart has been a huge priority. Our College School Development Plan has care and welfare as its central aim. This academic year it remains at the heart of all that we do in the College. Our whole-school focus on Emotional Health and Wellbeing centres on **positive mental 'wealth'**.

Our specific focus areas are **developing self-confidence** and **self-respect** in all our pupils as well as developing their **mental resilience**, while further upskilling all staff in Trauma-Informed Practice. This ensures that we are equipped to manage the anxieties, worries and effects of trauma on our young people following lockdown and school closures.

Our Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy has three central aims:

1. **Raising awareness of positive mental health** as well as improving the mental health of our learners;
2. **Reducing the stigma of talking** about feelings and emotions – developing ability to discuss difficult issues in an open, inclusive and non-judgemental environment; and
3. Developing **self-reliant and resilient learners**.



## In What Ways are School Policies Related to and Supportive of Pupils' EHWB?

The whole-school focus on care and welfare is clearly signposted in all pastoral policies, including:

- Safeguarding;
- Inclusion;
- Pastoral Care;
- Positive Behaviour; and
- Anti-Bullying.

All pastoral policies are child-centred. Care and welfare is the guiding principle of the whole-School Development Plan. It is clearly visible in all policies and daily practice.

### Care and Welfare Focus

As part of our Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy, three **Care and Welfare tutors** have been employed to ensure an additional level of support for both pupils and staff. These Care and Welfare tutors take a leading role in this whole-school EHWB strategy in training teams of teachers and support staff as well as sixth form mentors as **mental health ambassadors** in a **buddy up** project. They also provide one-to-one, small and larger group intervention sessions for students who are experiencing difficulties managing their emotions. We have developed a newly-refurbished Wellness room in the College, which acts a hub for all students wishing to access support for their mental health. This service operates by referrals from the pastoral teams in the College. Attitudinal pupil focus groups have been conducted to assess the impact of the intervention work support. Care and Welfare tutors provide an additional layer of support for Emotional Health and Wellbeing. The mental health and wellbeing of our students is at the heart of our school ethos. The Care and Welfare tutors are based in the Wellness room in the school and play an active role in promoting healthy minds in our school community. Their work is also supported by the school counselling service Vice Principal for Learning, Care and Welfare who oversees all Pastoral Care in the College, in conjunction with the Principal who leads the whole-school focus on Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

Another aspect of the strategy has been informed by research and **training in Trauma-Informed Practice**. Bespoke training has been delivered at teaching, non-teaching and governor level as a central approach to our mentoring and intervention work and indeed in our daily practices. We developed whole-school training to enable staff and sixth form mentors to deliver mental health intervention sessions to those students in our school who require support and guidance with their mental health in a COVID-19 landscape. **Bespoke mental health first aid** training has been delivered to key pastoral staff within the College as an extension of this. Year co-ordinators evaluated the mental health first aid training as valuable and continue to assess the impact of this for those students in their year groups who have accessed such support.

**Induction sessions for each year group** focus on positive mental health and healthy minds. This became an even sharper focus as we reopened our school after lockdown. Following COVID closures, we gathered baseline data from feelings audits that were completed with all students on restart in August 2020. This data revealed increased levels of anxiety and stress surrounding school restart in a COVID-19 context, more significantly in Year 12. This baseline assessment tool is currently being used as a data-driven measure pre- and post-intervention for the young people.



**Our form tutors** play a pivotal role in the development of fostering healthy mindsets and resilience. They meet their form class each morning to begin their day positively, as well as delivering a weekly Learning for Life and Work programme, focusing on Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. A key aspect of their Learning for Life and Work programmes of work focuses on positive mental health and coping strategies based on the GIMME 5 Programme at Key Stages 4 and 5. Our Key Stage 3 Resilience programme is informed by the research of Edith Grotberg 'I Can, I Have, I Am'. This focuses on positive mindsets and develops self-reliance and resilience in our students. The role of the form tutor in our College is high profile. Tutors lead weekly year assemblies that include a strong focus on resilience and positively healthy minds. **Year Co-ordinators** further support the work of the Pastoral Teams in leading the LLW focus on Emotional Health and Wellbeing and are equipped with mental health first aid training to further support our students.

**Our Learning For Life and Work programme** further supports the whole-school focus on care and welfare. These specific modules have been particularly successful in developing coping strategies:

- Managing Influences and Making Decisions
- Resilience 'I can, I have, I am'
- Growth Mindset and the power of yet

Our Preventative Curriculum is also used to promote positive lifestyle choices impacting on mental health and wellbeing.

Events such as **World Mental Day** and **Anti-Bullying Week** also raise the profile of Emotional Health and Wellbeing for the entire school community.

**Promoting leadership roles for students** develops positive Emotional Health and Wellbeing and ensures the agenda is further promoted across the College. These roles include Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Mental Health Ambassadors, Learning Mentors and Peer Mentors.

Year 12 focus work has been a key intervention strategy for the College post lockdown. We have invested in **one-to-one individual** interviews from a pastoral leader in the College for all Year 12 students this academic year. The bespoke Year 12 sessions focus on mentally healthy attitudes and address pupil anxiety and coping strategies, which have been given high priority, as well as addressing academic achievement. Increasingly, Year 12 students have linked their academic performance to their Emotional Health and Wellbeing. This targeted intervention programme seeks to address both by developing coping strategies and stress-busting techniques.

## Resilience

### How do you develop pupil resilience?

Promoting resilience and positive mental health in our young people is central to our ethos. We strive to build self-reliant and resilient learners. The focus on this has increased this academic year in particular for those students who have been negatively impacted by lockdown and the pandemic.

### Child-centred provision

We have invested in further upskilling our staff to triage mental health concerns in our young people, as well as promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in our whole College community. Targeted support is also provided for more vulnerable students in our community



from Looked-After Children, young carers and those journeying through bereavement to students with social and emotional difficulties.

### **Child-centred provision – school ethos and culture and the physical environment**

Emotional health and wellbeing is reflected in the whole-school environment. Our Pastoral leaders and indeed all teachers adopt solution-focused approaches and model positivity.

We are currently in the process of applying for **UNICEF'S Rights Respecting School Award**, having previously gained an Excellence in Integration award as well as Laureate for Peace Education Evens award. We have also received a Silver Compassion award from Children in Crossfire.

As a rural College, we are fortunate to have access to **green spaces** so the use of open spaces and play zones is maximised to encourage healthy minds and exercise for young people as part of their daily routine. This includes our Walk a Mile strategy in school and can also be used as Take 5 strategy for those students who feel overwhelmed during lessons.

Another important aspect of developing self-esteem and confidence in our students is developed through roles of responsibility such as guiding visitors, acting as tour guides as well as voluntary work through reaching out to our local community and those in need.

### **High Quality Teaching and Learning**

The curriculum is designed to develop the whole pupil. We develop a holistic approach to learning – academically, emotionally and spiritually. Emotional Health and Wellbeing is mapped across the curriculum to ensure the competencies of self-management, self-awareness, relationship skills and decision-making skills are developed and progress from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.

The whole-school focus on thinking skills, problem solving, metacognition and growth mindset is signposted throughout all schemes of work and in lessons across the curriculum. School reports also contain progress statements on the above skills for students along with personalised statements about social interactions and personal achievements of each student from their form tutor and Year Co-ordinator.

### **Does the school use social and emotional learning strategies?**

Teaching and non-teaching staff model empathy, tolerance, respect and optimism. They are aware of the importance of teaching the social and emotional skills of self-awareness, managing feelings and relationships and the bearing this has on academic achievement as well as pupil Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

In the classroom we use positive behaviour strategies and restorative practices to model approaches of tolerance and understanding. We use thinking skills, metacognitive techniques and frames to encourage resilient learning and perseverance in our young people. Growth Mindset and Dedicated Reflection and Improvement Time is used cross the curriculum to encourage metacognitive skills.

Pastoral teams have been trained in teaching strategies to encourage resilience in personal development and Learning for Life and Work programmes.

All staff use Pivotal's 5 pillars of consistent practice in their daily routine, which develops a whole-school focus on creating a positive school culture.



## A School Connected to its Community

The whole-school focus on wellbeing extends into the local community, through voluntary work in care homes and for the vulnerable in the local community. Programmes such as The Prince's Trust develop community projects such as pen pal writing schemes with residents of local care homes.

We liaise with an extensive range of external agencies such as:

- Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS)
- Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS)
- Education Welfare Service (EWS), EA
- Education Psychology, EA
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Behaviour Support Team, Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS) – EA
- Outreach services

## Development Planning and Self-Evaluation

### Is EHWB part of your school development planning and self-evaluation process?

Care and welfare is at the heart of the School Development Plan and pastoral school action planning and priorities. The use of the Instructor Self-Evaluation Forms informs pastoral action plans at meetings, the self-evaluation questions used at review points for action plans at middle and senior leader and disseminated to staff during in service self-evaluative sessions and during meetings.

Governors are provided with regular updates from the Senior Leadership Team and middle leaders. Staff at all levels in the College, including classroom teachers and support staff, all contribute towards and are involved in the planning, development, monitoring and review processes surrounding the School Development Plan focused on care and welfare.

## Staff Training

Care and Welfare is also at the heart of continuing professional development and school improvement. The following sessions have been delivered in the College: Sessions include:

- Bespoke mental health first aid training for Year Co-ordinators
- Trauma-Informed Practice Training for teaching and non-teaching staff
- Mandatory Child Protection Training for the entire College community
- Positive Behaviour Training – Pivotal Practices
- Restorative Practices in schools
- Metacognition and Growth Mindset Training
- PIPS (Public Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide) resilience training for pastoral Leaders
- Supporting Recovery Curriculum research by Professor Barry Carpenter



## Staff Wellbeing

### How does the school support staff wellbeing?

The leadership of the College ensure that there is a whole-school focus, including the Emotional Health and Wellbeing of all staff. Staff have accessed guidance and wellness sessions facilitated by external agencies, including sessions that focus on strategies to manage emotions.

The Senior Leadership Team ensures that there are gratitude days for staff.

Staff have also been provided with sessions delivered by Mood Matters Mindfulness sessions.

Wellness sessions were delivered virtually to all teaching and non-teaching staff from Learn Spark.

Care and Welfare Tutors offer support to staff as an additional layer of support along with access to Inspire.

## Pupil Voice

### How do you promote pupil voice?

Our active pupil council is focused on the production of whole-school film based on positive mental health in collaboration with pupil councils in our area learning community. Opportunities for pupil leadership roles further encourage pupil voice, which informs our policy and practice. These include opportunities to become: Anti-Bullying ambassadors, Mental Health ambassadors, Learning Mentors, Peer Mentors and Pupil Councillors

## Engaging with Parents

### How do you engage parents?

Parental communication is a key aspect of the whole-school approach. We provide regular communication to parents about initiatives such as World Mental Health Day and voluntary opportunities in the community. We have also delivered parental information sessions (PIPS) focused on resilience and emotional wellness as well as parenting sessions from Parenting NI.

## Resources

What educational resources do you use to support pupils' EHWB?

- CCEA EHWB hub
- CCEA Insync
- Gimme 5
- Edith Grotberg
- Metacognition – visible learning – John Hattie
- Growth Mindset – Carol Dweck
- Anna Freud website and resources
- Toolkit for Happiness – Barry Carpenter – Recovery Curriculum
- Learnspark Emotional Health and wellbeing days – pupils and staff sessions
- PIPS resilience training
- Professor Barry Carpenter – Supporting Recovery Curriculum work