

## Case Study: Whole School Approach to Promoting Emotional Wellbeing

### **Framwellgate School Durham**

Framwellgate School Durham is an Academy school for students aged 11-18. The school is committed to developing the potential of its students, and believes in the academic excellence as well as the holistic development of students. Emotional wellbeing is seen as being a key factor in enabling students to achieve their full educational potential and to become responsible individuals well prepared for life beyond school.

The student experience at Framwellgate School Durham is about students:

- Developing themselves (and their skills and aptitudes)
- Working with others and
- Making a contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

The school believes in facilitating the moral and social development of students as well as promoting their academic progress. This moral and social growth is facilitated by promoting the conditions and environment as well as the planned opportunities for such development. Such opportunities are provided in a wide variety of ways through the curriculum, tutorial provision, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. In terms of the curriculum a significant contribution is made to social and moral development through PSHCE (Personal Social Health & Citizenship education) and Religious Education. In addition, other curriculum areas directly address emotional wellbeing. For example, English lessons tackle the issue of empathy and drama explicitly strives to develop empathy as well as collaborative working and respect for diversity.

### **Peer mentoring/Anti-bullying Ambassadors**

Students can become a peer mentor/anti-bullying ambassador. By doing so, they are engaging in active citizenship, promoting tolerance of diversity, providing guidance to others on relationships and e-safety as well as promoting better emotional health. They can also get involved in community outreach through training peer mentors in our partner primary schools and contributing to Parent/Carer forums on how those at home can help their children deal with issues such as stress and bullying.

### **Humanutopia Days**

The school hosted Humanutopia days for their year 10 students in December 2013 and volunteer Year 10 students led a day for Year 8 students in April 2014 and an afternoon for students in local primary schools. The events were very well received. Humanutopia are a social enterprise group who work with schools and run a range of inspirational workshops and courses for students that focus on personal, social development and employability skills - <http://www.humanutopia.com/> These workshops can help to build confidence, leadership skills, peer mentoring skills and help students overcome barriers to engaging in their own education.

A social impact analysis following the Humanutopia day, found that the year 10 students rated themselves as having a greater understanding of why they behave in the way they do; were more confident about talking to new people; they cared more about other people's problems and were more determined to succeed. The school found that the workshops,

even though they are a recent intervention, have had a significant impact on students' social and moral development; and had a positive effect on all students including those with SEN, vulnerable students, the very academic and those who had behavioural problems.

## **Support for Students who require Additional Support**

### **The Achievement Centre**

The Achievement Centre is based within the school and coordinates interventions that also contribute to the student experience. It enables students with Special Need, who may have emotional wellbeing problems, have experienced trauma at home, or are physically unwell, to access education in a way that works for them. Students can use the Achievement Centre for just a few lessons, or for larger chunks of time. They are very flexible in their approach and can help students, who have for instance been discharged from a psychiatric inpatient unit to have a phased return to education. Students who may have broken a leg for instance, can access the Achievement Centre when they can't physically access other classrooms. Enabling students to access education in this way, helps promote their emotional wellbeing by ensuring that they can stay in contact with their peers and keep up with their education.

Providing this support to students also requires working with staff, to help them understand why there is a need for this flexibility, and how promoting students' emotional wellbeing helps them attend school and enables them to reach their full potential.

### **Counselling Service**

The school counselling service was introduced 14 years ago as part of the school's overall strategy to further improve the wellbeing of children in the school, alongside the drive for academic excellence. The school sees the counselling service as part of the duty of care to their students.

Initially there was some reticence from school staff and governors about introducing the service. For instance, governors were concerned about whether the mental health of students was the responsibility of the school, and wondered if it was more appropriate that Social Services or the NHS should fund this provision. The school was able to demonstrate that the counselling service enhanced the motivation of students, impacted positively on their attendance and learning, and as such improved standards.

The school has 2 counsellors, who work 2 days a week, and provide support for any student who is experiencing personal difficulties. They are valued within the school, and are in high demand. Students can self-refer, or school staff can make a referral for them to the counselling service.

The current school counsellors are employed by the Local Authority and the school buys in their services under a service level agreement with the Local Authority. The school found the process of buying in a trained counsellor very easy, and they are very pleased with the results.

The pastoral care team are currently working on how they can help students who have lower level issues, which may not require the help of a Counsellor. This will help the school provide different levels of support to their students and ensure that those in most need can readily access the counselling service.

They are about to trial sessions where the counsellor and the Student Services Manager meet with groups of parents to discuss issues that affect students' well-being. The first will focus on exam stress, but thereafter they will see what parents need are.

### **Working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

The school has a good working relationship with the local CAMHS. They are able to ring a named contact in CAMHS if they want to discuss concerns about a specific student. CAMHS have made their referral system much easier, so it is now much quicker to refer on a student.

### **How is the Schools Emotional Wellbeing Work Funded?**

The majority of Framwellgate's work to promote the wellbeing of their students is funded through the school's normal funds. Although they have used Pupil Premium monies to help fund their school counselling service, this service has been going for 14 years, and so the investment predates this funding stream. The school obtained monies from the Durham Area Action Partnership which they used to host the Humanutopia days. This grant also supported some vulnerable older students to follow a more appropriate curriculum based on horticulture.

### **Contact for further information**

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