

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING RESOURCE GUIDE

FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Loreto High School, Beaufort



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1. Introduction

Youth mental health and wellbeing are very important to our school and we want our school community to be a place where the mental health and wellbeing of every student is nurtured and valued.

In working towards this, we are engaging in the “One Good School” initiative, a two-year programme facilitated by the charity, Jigsaw, which seeks to support our school community to promote youth mental health. As part of this initiative, we recently we asked you, our parent and guardian community, to participate in a short survey to determine what you feel you need to fully support our students in this area. A clear outcome from this survey was the need to share with you information on the mental health and Care Team resources that are already available in the school, as well as highlighting related initiatives that are underway or are planned for the school year ahead.

Accordingly, we have put this “Mental Health & Wellbeing Resource Guide for Parents & Guardians”. As well as highlighting the available school resources and initiatives, the guide also includes information on some helpful external supports and services that are available to students and/or their families.

We will continue to liaise with you in the months ahead to further develop our shared understanding on how best to support our students in the area of mental health. Furthermore, we have arranged a series of talks during the school year from leading practitioners in this and related areas and will be in touch nearer the time with more details on these sessions.

We hope you find this guide useful. If you have any questions or suggested additions to this booklet, don't hesitate to get in touch with the One Good School team at the email address below.

Thank you.

The One Good School team.

onegoodschool@loretohighschool.com

Members of the One Good School Team

Parents: Ros O'Shea (Jenny Marron 5th year)

Neil Hoey (Freya Hoey 6th year & Milla Hoey 3rd year)

Teachers: Nuala O'Higgins

Kerri Gallagher

Rachel Hiney

Bethan Farrell

Students: Abby Fenlon (6th year)

Emily Tuite (6th year)

Muireann Nathan (5th year) Secretary

Eimear Kirwan (5th year)

Mia Minch (5th year)

Ava O'Farrell (5th year)

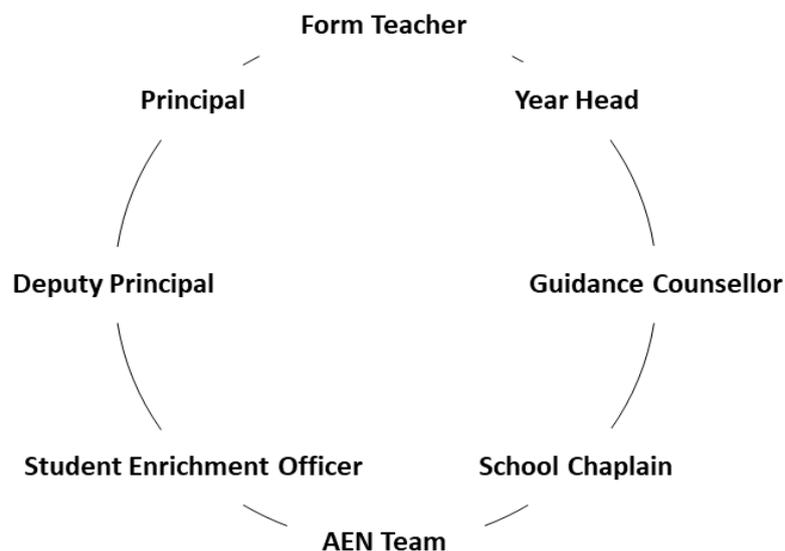
2. School Resources

2.1 Our Pastoral Care Team

Year Heads & Form Tutors

Our Year Heads from 1st to 6th Year (along with our form tutors) work to ensure that the wellbeing of each student is nurtured and that school spirit and ethos is developed within each year group. Form tutors liaise with our Year Heads who have overall responsibility for the students in his or her care. See our website for further detail.

Our Care Team:



The Care Team in Loreto High School Beaufort aims to:

- Be inclusive, providing for the needs of all students.
- Develop an awareness and acceptance of students' talents and abilities.
- To assist students in the development of positive self-esteem thereby helping them to live full and fruitful lives.
- Provide support for learners to enable them to make wise and informed personal, educational and career choices.

- To help students explore the career options available to them considering their interests, personalities, and abilities.
- To ensure that students have all the information they need to make their career choices.
- To equip students with the skills they need to research and explore the various career options available to them.
- To provide students with appropriate support in times of difficulty, crisis, and trauma
- To facilitate their integration into the school community through various peer related activities
- To identify students at risk and put in place appropriate strategies to help them deal with the difficulties they may be experiencing.
- To provide where possible appropriate support for parents and guardians where such support is deemed necessary.
- To ensure that we act within ethical and legal requirements.

The Role of Our Student Enrichment Officer

The Student Enrichment Officer is a key person in the ladder of referral in our school who liaises with the Year Heads, Principal and Deputy Principal to ensure robust student care to encourage our students to reach their full potential academically, socially, morally, and physically.

The Role of our Career Guidance Counsellors

Our Guidance counsellors advise students so that they can make informed choices about their future in relation to employment, education and training. Responsibilities include assessing ability and potential in students, providing one-to-one counselling, and liaising with other professionals in this area.

Referrals

Personal counselling for all students either through self-referral or referral from a teacher or parents/ guardian is offered. Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

Our Additional Educational Needs Department

In the AEN Department, we aim to ensure that students identified as needing additional support:

- Receive appropriate tuition within the classroom context or within a selected group or one to one.
- Are assessed in a way or ways appropriate to their individual needs
- Are monitored and reassessed to establish their changing needs.
- Are provided with all possible support as they need it throughout their time in the school.

The Role of our Chaplain

The chaplain is a 'faith friend' to all students accompanying them on their educational journey and facilitating each student's spiritual maturing.

She provides a listening ear for students who may need guidance in terms their spiritual journey.

Guidance offered by the chaplain is in the area of spiritual or pastoral support. This guidance is also available to staff and parents or guardians.

Other Supports

Any student can go to any teacher they may feel most comfortable with, or 'One Good Adult'/staff member, concerning any problem they may be experiencing, and the appropriate supports will be put in place.

Each class is allocated a 6th Year class prefect and staff volunteer to be mentors to 6th Year students.

The Ladder of Referral

If a student needs or wants to reach out to a staff member for support, below is the chain of referral for our support team.



2.2 Mental Health & Wellbeing Initiatives

The promotion of good mental health and wellbeing in our school is central to the Loreto spirit. We endeavour to nurture an environment where our students can flourish and achieve their full potential. Related “Whole School” initiatives include the following:

Jigsaw’s One Good School (OGS) Mental Health Programme

We are participating in Jigsaw’s OGS programme, aimed at supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people by developing a shared responsibility for mental health across the whole school community, including teachers, staff and school leadership, parents and guardians and the students themselves. Jigsaw recognises that schools are in a good position to support youth mental health and have the opportunity to support young people to develop all the skills needed to develop good mental health and to develop the “whole-child”, not only their academic skills but their social and emotional skills too. Evidence shows that early intervention in and prevention of mental health difficulties can protect against future such challenges. There is also link to academic performance: learning takes energy and good mental health is essential for energy and a learning mindset.

A key strength of the OGS programme is that there are opportunities for all members of the school community to build their knowledge of mental health, think about their own self-care and support young people. Examples are set out below and can be accessed by logging onto the OGS portal i.e.

<https://onegoodschool.learnupon.com> and click 'REGISTER NOW'

Courses available for parents:

1. Mental Health Awareness for parents (45 minutes)
2. Self-Care for Parents/Guardians (45 minutes)
3. Upcoming webinar for parents: “Understanding Friendships and their impact on Mental Health” Tuesday March 14th, 2023, 7.30 pm. Register on the portal (see address above).

There are plenty of other resources and useful material available on the portal, so feel free to browse the content and use the material to initiate or continue having conversations with your young adult.

Courses available for students:

1. “Let’s Talk, Sure why not?” Online course for young people.
2. “Managing exam stress” Online course

There are also a variety of ways that young people can access support through www.jigsaw.ie. Here you’ll find useful articles and videos on a variety of mental health difficulties a young person may be experiencing, along with information on the range of supports and services available. There are interactive and confidential features that young people can access too, including “ask a question”, webinars and group chats with a Jigsaw clinician.

In addition, a young person can speak directly to a Jigsaw clinician via email if they require more support.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE in Junior Cycle provides a unique opportunity for students to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their overall health and wellbeing. SPHE also provides the context within students can learn about important moral, physical, social and emotional issues around relationships, sex and sexuality including where to get reliable information from trusted sources.

The topic of mental health is covered in Strand 4: My Mental Health. Students explore what it means to have positive mental health and ill-health. They also develop coping skills through the practise of a range of strategies for building resilience and dealing with tough times and times of loss or bereavement.

The Wellbeing Committee

The Wellbeing Committee is a group of 4th year students who are passionate about creating an awareness about the importance of mental health and promoting a culture of positive mental health in our school. The Wellbeing Committee is run by Ms Browne and our 6th year Wellbeing Prefects Abby Fenlon, Martha McDonnell, and Lucy McDonnell. Throughout the year Wellbeing organises initiatives such as Friendship week, the first house meeting of the year, and our 'Carols at the Crib' Christmas concert, aiming to bring people together our school community. As the year progresses, the Wellbeing Committee hope to hold a fundraiser which will raise as much money as possible for various mental health charities in Ireland.

The Sensory Room (Our "Calm Cave")

We are also delighted this year to have a wonderful new addition to our wellbeing environment in the form of a sensory room which our students have named the "Calm Cave". A sensory room uses sensory equipment to create a calm and focused environment and includes comfortable seating, low lighting, bean bags, fidget toys, lava lamps, headphones and so on.

Sensory rooms are primarily used by students with additional needs including mental health issues like anxiety and depression and also those on the ASD spectrum and students with ADHD and ADD. It helps these students calm and focus themselves so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others. Benefits include:

- Creates a safe space with tools students can use to self-regulate and manage anger, over stimulation and stress.
- Provides a safe crisis and de-escalation area
- Motivates learning
- Reduces stereotyped repetitive behaviours

Mainly the space can be used for students to take time out, regulate their emotions and then return to school activities in a better frame of mind for learning.

In addition to these “whole school” programmes, we have a number of initiatives tailored to specific year groups. Some examples of these initiatives are set out below.

1st Year Peer Buddies

To support 1st year students with the transition from Primary to Secondary school, we have introduced a system of peer buddies. It is well documented some students feel more at ease to ask advice and questions of older pupils. We carefully select a group of twenty-six 5th year pupils and each has a group of four 1st years pupils to encourage and help. The peer buddies get a day’s training at the start of the academic year and regular meetings are set up for them and their 1st years. They often organise fun events, especially towards the end of the year.

Transition Year Head Strong Committee

Our transition year students take part in the National Programme “Headstrong”, a mental health and wellbeing programme designed by Cycle Against Suicide for secondary schools, which aims to:

- Stamp out stigma - Promote resilience - Encourage inclusivity
- Enhance wellbeing - Empower student voice

Each month the Headstrong group along with Ms. Delahoy tackle different themes by supporting our school community through events and talks.

Ember Committee

The Ember Committee is a Faith Leadership Programme offered in second-level schools coordinated by the Dublin Catholic Archdiocese. Ember provides opportunities for 4th & 5th year students to develop leadership skills by leading in-school faith-based activities and to deepen their own personal faith. Faith development is facilitated through

engagement in training and other initiatives offered by the school's Religion and Chaplaincy Departments, by the Loreto Education Trust and by the Archdiocese of Dublin.

6th Year Mentoring

Mentoring forms an integral part of our key wellbeing initiative, LHS Connected. The mentoring scheme aims to promote student wellbeing through the establishment of positive mentor-mentee relationships.

Throughout the school year, we aim to:

- help our students have an enjoyable, productive and successful final year in Beaufort.
- help them overcome the challenges and obstacles which they may experience.
- encourage them to become resilient and take responsibility for their own wellbeing.
- discuss and explore their plans for third-level study or professional life.

3.External Resources for Students and/or their Families

Charity/ website	Area	Brief Outline of Services
ADHD Association www.adhdireland.ie	ADHD	Up to date information, resources and networking to people with ADHD, their parents and professionals who serve them
AsIam www.asiam.ie	Autism Spectrum	Provides the public and those with autism with a portal of information, a platform for people to share their stories and views, and a strong voice for the concerns of the community.
Aware www.aware.ie	Depression	Provides support services for people affected by stress, depression, bipolar disorder and mood related conditions including appropriate therapies.
Jigsaw www.jigsaw.ie	Youth Mental Health	Support young people's mental health, online and in person.

OCD Ireland www.iocdf.org	Compulsive Disorders	For people with obsessive compulsive disorder, trichotillomania and body dysmorphic disorder
Parentline www.parentline.ie	Parenting	A national, confidential helpline that offers parents support, information and guidance on all aspects of being a parent and any parenting issues.
Pieta www.pieta.ie	Suicide and self-harm	Provides a free, therapeutic approach to people who are in suicidal distress and those who engage in self-harm, as well as counselling to those bereaved by suicide.
Reachout.com	Helping young people feel better	<p>Anonymous and confidential, ReachOut is a safe place where young people can openly express themselves, get a deeper understanding of and perspective on what's happening in their lives, connect with people who will provide judgement-free support, and build the resilience to manage their challenges now and in the future.</p> <p>There is also valuable information, resources and advice for parents, carers and schools, to help them better understand the young people in their lives and to actively play a role in their wellbeing.</p>

RISE Foundation www.therise foundation.ie	Addiction	Supports family members of those with addictive behaviour, including alcohol, drugs, gambling, food or sex addiction.
Samaritans www.samaritans.org	Emotional distress	Provides support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide often through its telephone helpline.
Shine www.shine.ie	Mental Health	Provides information and support for people affected by mental health difficulties.
Social Anxiety Ireland www.socialanxiety Ireland.com	Social Anxiety	Dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by social anxiety along with raising national awareness about its implications and available treatment options.
Spunout www.spunout.ie	Youth information	Provides immediate support in the short term and connects people to resources that will help in the future
Teenline www.teenline.org	Emotional Distress	A 24-hour active listening service for young people up to the age of 18 (run by the ISPCC for teens)

Teni www.teni.ie	Transgender equality	Supports trans people and their families so that trans people are understood, accepted, and respected, and can participate fully in all aspects of Irish society.
TurntoMe www.turntome.ie	Mental Wellbeing	Provides a 3-tiered approach to supporting mental well-being: self-help, support groups & professional Support.
YHS www.mysexual health.ie	Sexual Health	A free, non-judgmental, sexual health & counselling service for young people aged 23 and under.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list. Your GP and/or local HSE CAMH services offer support in many of the areas above, as well as private psychiatry / psychology professionals. Please also note that with regard to the list of charities above, Loreto does not promote any particular charity nor has independently assessed the quality of the services provided, so parents and guardians may need to further determine if any given agency is a good fit for their particular needs.