



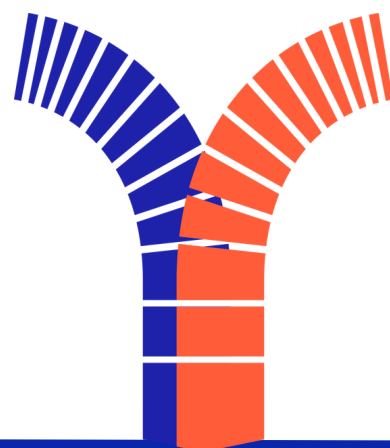
Developing a Mental Health Strategy



Live Well.

Brief Summary for School Leaders

This session, delivered through the Youth Sport Trust and featuring insights from Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, focuses on how schools can create a comprehensive and successful strategy to support the mental health of students and staff.



Key Messages

Mental health should not sit in a separate intervention or pastoral team. The strongest approach is woven through leadership, culture, curriculum, relationships, movement, staff practice and targeted support.

Clare Mount Specialist Sports College shows how a coherent mental health strategy can help pupils thrive, strengthen engagement and build confidence, particularly in a complex SEND context. Its experience suggests that emotional literacy, self-regulation, character and physical competence are foundations for learning, participation and preparation for adulthood – not optional extras.

The model is deliberately preventative and responsive. Universal provision establishes a healthy culture for everyone; early help is easy to access; and specialist support is connected through clear referral pathways. This reflects the Department for Education's whole-school approach, which places leadership, ethos, curriculum, staff development, pupil voice, monitoring, targeted support and work with families within one strategy.

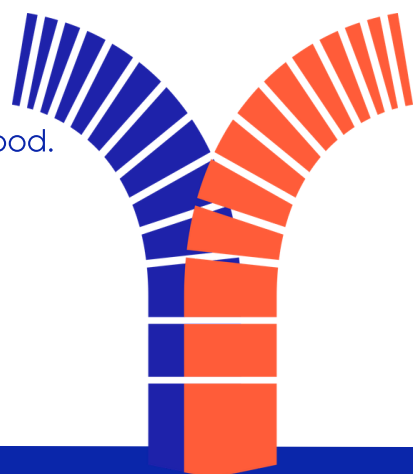
Key success factors included:

•Leadership and culture

Make mental health a standing strategic priority. Use a recognised framework, establish a shared language and ensure the senior mental health lead has authority, capacity and visible support.

Curriculum, character and movement

Teach emotional literacy, resilience, relationships and self-regulation explicitly. Create practical routes to confidence through PE, physical activity, outdoor learning, performing arts and preparation for adulthood.



Everyday communication

Give pupils multiple safe ways to communicate need, including trusted adults, check-ins, visual or sensory tools, non-verbal methods and carefully designed digital routes.

A graduated support pathway

Join up classroom practice, pastoral support, sensory regulation, mentoring and specialist therapy. Make thresholds, roles, referral routes, safeguarding escalation and information sharing clear.

Student leadership and co-creation

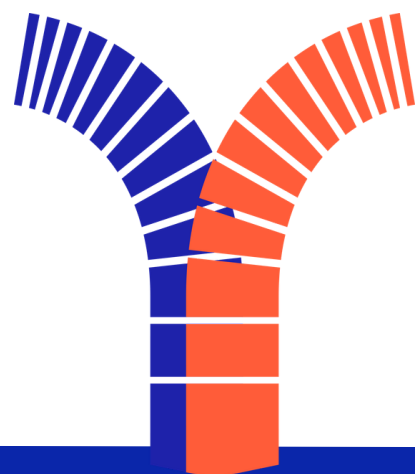
Involve pupils in identifying barriers, designing provision and reviewing impact. Participation should extend beyond consultation to genuine influence and leadership.

Families, staff and partnerships

Support staff wellbeing and capability, work with parents and carers, and build purposeful links with health, local authority, voluntary-sector and specialist services.

What success looks like

- Pupils understand emotions, know how to seek help and can identify trusted adults.
- Support is timely, inclusive and proportionate, with fewer pupils waiting for difficulties to escalate.
- Mental health, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and SEND systems work together rather than in parallel.
- Staff feel equipped and supported, without being expected to act as clinicians.
- Leaders can show impact through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative evidence.





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