

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Independent listener service coming to Bedale High School

I am writing to make you aware of an important and exciting intervention that we are planning to be able to offer to our students in late 2021.

We are working to put together a service to support wellbeing and mental health at Bedale School. This service will be made up of an independent listener, plus some counsellors and coaches, all of whom will be outside the school staff and governance and who students can contact and work with directly about personal, social, emotional problems or concerns whilst at school.

I am sure that you will agree that maintaining and promoting good mental health and positive wellbeing for our community underpins our school's core vision. Providing an in-house support service has been something which we have needed for some time with external agencies and referral waiting lists being so long. We hope that by providing this support in-house, we will prevent emotional or behavioural issues from escalating and requiring specialist intervention or that our service will 'bridge the gap' for those students who do need a referral to an external agency.

We are wanting to involve members of our community to help develop this service so if you have any contacts who are trained counsellors, supervisors, coaches, mentors, nurses, GPs, family/social services, clinical psychologist or psychiatrists who may be willing to offer us further support or advice, please get in touch with me on knigha@bedalehighschool.org.uk.

To clarify, the main aims will be to:

- give students an opportunity to talk to someone, in private, that is removed from the school organisation so that a sense of autonomy is held
- give students an opportunity to talk through things in a safe and non-discriminatory manner
- encourage students to work with others and to participate in decisions affecting them
- keep accurate and confidential records – bearing in mind some students will wish to remain anonymous
- safeguard and protect students from issues arising in conversations as these will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Alison Knight) as soon as possible. Students to understand this protocol
- support students in fulfilling their potential
- provide generalised feedback to the Assistant Headteacher and Associate Leader in Personal Development so the school can develop our provision in a child-centred manner

The scheme is still in its infancy, but progress is being made and we will be in touch with further details about how the service will operate within the day to day running of school and the students' day.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Alison Knight

Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion