



## Mental Health Education in our Island's schools

### Helping young minds bloom

Isle Listen has always held early intervention and prevention at its core. Our education programmes provide a universal offering, allowing us to support children and young people across the Island to develop core skills from an early age, helping them understand themselves, develop a strong sense of identity and self-worth, build positive relationships and feel connected to the wider community around them. Just as we nurture literacy and numeracy, teaching children about mental health and wellbeing helps create confident, compassionate learners who are better prepared for life both inside and outside the classroom.

As part of a wider review of our educational offering, from September 2026 we are introducing an updated framework, centred around the core principles of resilience, respect, empathy and relationships. This update builds on the existing curriculum which has been running for 5 years, and has been informed by feedback from schools, our experience delivering sessions, clinically informed practice, and the evolving needs of young people across the Island. Each Key Stage's curriculum is based on this framework, incorporating our own blend of fun and learning, with a range of activities to engage every learning style.

Our updated framework is centred around a holistic approach, recognising that mental health and wellbeing are closely connected to the development of strong character, positive relationships and the skills young people need to thrive. Rather than focusing on mental health only when difficulties arise, our aim is to equip and empower the next generation with knowledge, confidence and practical skills they need to build resilience, develop positive wellbeing and navigate life with greater confidence.

## Working together

Fundamental to the success of our programme is our relationships with schools. By working together, we support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through education, collaboration and care.

In our relationship with schools, we agree to:

- Use best practice, evidence-based approaches,
- Deliver sessions that are engaging, age-appropriate and inclusive,
- Respect each school's culture, routines and safeguarding policies,
- Clearly communicate with staff,
- Give plenty of advance notice in the rare occasion that a session needs to be changed or cancelled (covering sessions with other staff wherever possible),
- Provide a welcoming, non-judgemental approach.

We ask that schools:

- Support sessions by managing classroom behaviour,
- Promote positive mental health throughout the school, not just during sessions,
- Share relevant information (within data protection and safeguarding guidelines) to help us deliver the best activities and resources,
- Provide feedback to help us improve.

## Additional needs

We ask that schools let us know about any additional learning needs in their classes. We want everyone to be able to benefit from sessions and have adapted resources or alternative activities where this would be helpful for pupils.

## Safeguarding

Isle Listen has a robust commitment to safeguarding. You can view our safeguarding policy on our website. We will always liaise with school staff or other relevant agencies should any safeguarding concerns arise from sessions.

## Contact

For schools, their first point of contact is their allocated Facilitator. Alternatively, or for anyone else, the team can be contacted at [education@islelisten.im](mailto:education@islelisten.im).

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Programme pillars  | page 3  |
| Age progression    | page 4  |
| Primary overview   | page 6  |
| Secondary overview | page 17 |

## Programme pillars

Isle Listen's framework is based on four key pillars. These pillars are fundamental to our holistic curricula, helping young people understand themselves, build confidence and self-worth, develop healthy relationships and strengthen the resilience and skills they need to look after their wellbeing throughout life.

### **Awareness - My internal self**

Understanding parts of the brain (Amygdala, Pre Frontal Cortex, Hippocampus) and relevant chemicals, emotional literacy, coping skills and self-awareness. Children develop the language and understanding to recognise what is happening within themselves and learn practical strategies to support their emotional wellbeing.

### **Character - Who I am as a person**

Developing resilience, perseverance, growth mindset, gratitude, confidence, self-esteem and a positive sense of self-worth. This pillar supports children to understand who they are, recognise their strengths and qualities, develop confidence in themselves and build the character strengths that help them grow and flourish.

### **Connection - My relationships with others**

Developing respect, empathy and positive communication. Children explore how their actions and words affect others, how to build healthy and supportive relationships, and the importance of feeling understood, valued and connected to those around them.

### **Community - Me in the wider world**

Exploring belonging, group think, choices and consequences, and wider social awareness. Children consider their place within their school, our island community and the wider world, developing an understanding of how they can contribute positively and recognise their role within the communities they are part of.

## Age progression

### Seeds: planting ideas of wellbeing

#### *Key Stage 1 (Years 1&2)*

In Key Stage 1 the emphasis is on building a safe emotional foundation and healthy habits. Pupils practice understanding and talking about different emotions, learn simple strategies to help navigate big feelings, recognise their strengths and build positive relationships.

The curriculum is based on three of our key learning pillars: **awareness** of our internal selves, understanding our **character**, and exploring our **connections** with others. Sessions incorporate a combination of practical activities, stories, discussion and play to help children learn, practice new skills, and reflect.

### Roots: building foundations of resilience

#### *Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6)*

In Key Stage 2 pupils build on foundations, strengthening emotional understanding and reflecting more deeply on their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. They continue to develop healthy ways to manage challenges and changes, recognising how their strengths and values help build resilience. As they grow, they are also encouraged to think about the roles they play within their communities, and the importance of empathy and respect in how they interact with others.

The curriculum is built around our four learning pillars: **awareness** of our brain, emotional literacy and coping skills; understanding our **character**, developing confidence and resilience; exploring communication and our **connection** with others; and recognising our place in our **community**.

Each year, the final session provides an opportunity for reflection, helping pupils embed learning, celebrate their growth, and consider future goals. Skills and understanding build each academic year, reinforcing previous learning while expanding topics and language in an age-appropriate way.

For year 6, there is a focus on the transition to high school, exploring how skills can be applied to navigate this next stage.

## **Branches: exploring identity & relationships**

### *Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)*

In Key Stage 3 students deepen their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, building on the foundations established in earlier years, and developing new skills that are relevant to adolescence and the challenges of everyday life. Through a combination of PSHE lessons and Drop Down Days, pupils cover different elements of our learning pillars and are encouraged to have greater self-awareness, applying learnings to their real-life experiences.

Sessions provide opportunities for discussion, reflection and practical skills building, helping students to recognise where they can take personal action, when they might need further support, how to seek help for themselves or others and where to access appropriate services. Throughout, students are reminded of the support options available to them, and are given details of how to access Talk and other local services when needed.

## **Treetops: looking ahead with confidence**

### *Key Stage 4&5 (Years 10-13)*

In Key Stages 4 and 5, students are preparing for the future and navigating the increasing independence that comes with it. Building on the knowledge and skills developed throughout the programme, sessions explore real-life challenges that are particularly relevant at this stage, including managing stress and pressure and preparing for exams.

The programme encourages students to reflect on their strengths and aspirations, helping them to make informed choices that support their mental health and wellbeing. As they begin to look beyond school and towards further education, employment, or training, they are supported to understand what is within their control, develop confidence in seeking help when needed, and recognise the importance of accessing support early. Throughout the programme, students are regularly reminded of the services available to them, including Talk and other local support agencies, and how to access these independently.

## Primary overview

|           | Awareness             |                     | Character           |                   | Connection                |                 | Community                   | Reflection             |
|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Reception | Big feelings          |                     | Superhero capes     |                   | Friendship web            |                 |                             |                        |
| Year 1    | Emotion cup           |                     | Feelings volcano    |                   | Boundary bubbles          |                 |                             |                        |
| Year 2    | Coping skills toolbox |                     | Emotions board game |                   | Friendship pizza          |                 |                             |                        |
| Year 3    | Brain Tree            | Coping skills bingo | Mirror stickers     | Power of words    | Who is in my team?        | Teamwork wins   | Brain HACK                  | Discovery              |
| Year 4    | Growing your brain    | My inside world     | Resilience tree     | Growth mindset    | Your good qualities       | Team build      | Goals in my community       | Building understanding |
| Year 5    | Know your brain       | Describe, Act, Draw | Character profiles  | Circle of Control | Ask, Listen, Learn        | Banter vs Bully | Rights and responsibilities | Application            |
| Year 6    | Worry vs Anxiety      | Coping skills map   | Character strengths | Goal setting      | Relationships and respect | Brain HACK      | Actions for good            | Looking ahead          |

Please note, while Facilitators will usually follow the outlined curriculum, they may occasionally run an alternative session or activity if they feel this will better suit the needs of an individual class, or if this is requested by a school. They may also rotate sessions in schools who have classes with merged year groups.

## Pods (EYFS / Reception)

### **Awareness: Big Feelings & Breathing Bracelets**

**Session Aims:** To introduce children to mental health being how we Think, Feel and Act, helping them explore and recognise different emotions. Children will learn about big feelings and the amygdala as a “brain alarm” that helps keep us safe. They will explore how slow breathing can help them feel calm and create a breathing bracelet to use as a calming tool.

### **Character: Superhero Cape**

**Session Aims:** To help children understand how recognising their strengths, qualities and the things they enjoy can support their mental health and make them feel good about themselves. Children will explore positive qualities such as kindness, bravery, caring and helping others, and think about how they can use these qualities in their everyday lives.

### **Connection: Friendship Web**

**Session Aims:** To help children think about their friendships and understand how kind words and actions can affect how others feel. Children will explore how kindness can spread from person to person like a ripple effect and help us build positive friendships and connections.

## Seeds (KSI)

### Year 1

#### **Awareness:** Emotion Cup Game

**Session Aims:** To help children recognise and talk about different emotions and understand that all feelings are a normal part of our mental health and wellbeing. Children will practice identifying emotions, sharing how they might feel and exploring simple coping tools that can help them manage big feelings.

#### **Character:** My Feelings Volcano

**Session Aims:** To help children understand that when emotions build up and are not expressed or managed, they can affect how we treat ourselves and others. Children will explore how recognising feelings, talking to trusted people and using healthy coping skills can help them make calmer, kinder choices.

#### **Connection:** Boundary Bubbles

**Session Aims:** To develop children's understanding of personal boundaries and why they are important, while helping them recognise that everyone has different boundaries. The session will also develop children's confidence in communicating their own boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others.

### Year 2

#### **Awareness:** Coping Skills Toolbox

**Session Aims:** To help children understand that everyone experiences big feelings and that we can use different coping skills to help us manage them. Children will explore a range of coping tools and create their own personal toolbox of strategies they can use when they need help feeling calm.

#### **Character:** Me and My Emotions Board Game

**Session Aims:** To help children recognise and talk about different emotions and understand that all feelings are a normal part of our mental health and wellbeing. Through a fun, team-based game, children will explore how they feel in different situations, recognise positive qualities in themselves and others, and begin to understand how talking about our feelings can support confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Connection:** Friendship Pizzas

**Session Aims:** To help children understand what makes a good friendship and recognise the positive qualities they bring to their friendships. Children will explore what they look for in a friend and understand that if we want to have good friendships, we also need to be a good friend to others. The session will encourage children to celebrate their own strengths, explore what they value in a friend and have fun creating a friendship pizza.

## Roots (KS2)

### Year 3

#### Awareness 1: **The Brain Tree**

**Session Aims:** To introduce children to the brain and revisit their understanding of the amygdala from KS1, while introducing the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus. Children will develop an understanding that different parts of the brain have different roles and work together to support how we think, feel, learn and act.

#### Awareness 2: **Coping Tools Bingo**

**Session Aims:** To explore a range of healthy coping strategies through charades, bingo and collective class discussion. Children will learn how strategies such as talking to someone, deep breathing, journalling and other activities can help manage difficult emotions. They will also recognise that coping strategies are personal and that what works for one person may not work for another.

#### Character 1: **Mirror Stickers**

**Session Aims:** To help pupils develop an understanding of self-esteem by recognising their own strengths, qualities, and the importance of encouragement. Pupils will explore positive and kind language, identifying words and phrases that can support their individuality and help build confidence, self-worth, and the self-esteem of both them and others.

#### Character 2: **The Power of Words**

**Session Aims:** To help children understand the power of words and how their tone, emotions and choices can affect others. Children will explore how the amygdala and prefrontal cortex influence how we respond and learn the importance of thinking before speaking, saying sorry and forgiving.

#### Connection 1: **Who is in my team?**

**Session Aims:** To help pupils identify the trusted people in their support system who encourage, support, and believe in them. Pupils will understand that these positive connections help them feel safe, valued, and confident, while providing and identifying the people they can talk to, rely on, and turn to for support when they need it.

#### Connection 2: **Teamwork Wins**

**Session Aims:** To develop pupils' ability to work effectively as part of a team by practicing communication, cooperation and problem-solving skills. Pupils will understand the importance of listening to others, sharing ideas, encouraging team members and recognising how working together can help everyone feel included, supported and confident.

**Community: Brain Hack**

**Session Aims:** To teach pupils the 'Brain Hack' as a tool for managing their thoughts, feelings and actions. Pupils will explore the link between Think, Feel and Act, and understand how the amygdala and prefrontal cortex influence our responses. They will learn how pausing, thinking and making positive choices can help them manage their reactions and respond in ways that support themselves and others.

**Reflection and wrap up: Introduction and Discovery**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will reflect on their year of learning about mental health and wellbeing, recognising the new ideas, feelings vocabulary and wellbeing strategies they have discovered. They will identify skills that have been most useful to them and celebrate their growing awareness of themselves and others. This session helps children recognise that looking after their mental health is an ongoing part of everyday life.

## Year 4

### Awareness 1: Growing your Brain

**Session Aims:** To recap the three key parts of the brain from Year 3, the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, and introduce Year 4 pupils to five important body chemicals: adrenaline, dopamine, cortisol, oxytocin and serotonin. Explore the different roles these chemicals play in our emotions, reactions, motivation, stress, mood, sleep and relationships, and help children recognise how different situations can trigger different chemical responses in the body.

### Awareness 2: My Inside World

**Session Aims:** Children will explore different ways to process emotions, with a focus on creativity as a tool for expressing feelings. They will develop an understanding of how emotions can build up if not processed or expressed, and how this can make us feel overwhelmed. Children will explore the link between emotions, the brain, and the body, including the role of the amygdala, cortisol, and serotonin. They will use their own piece of artwork to reflect on, process, and communicate their emotions, as well as exploring the importance of sharing feelings with trusted people.

### Character 1: My Resilience Tree

**Session Aims:** To recap self-esteem and introduce self-worth. Children will explore how achievements, abilities and performance can change over time, while their character, qualities and values form an important and lasting part of who they are. Children will recognise that it is good to feel proud of what they achieve and to celebrate their successes, but achievements do not define who they are or determine their worth. Using the resilience tree, children will understand that, like the roots of a tree, their character helps to ground and sustain them over time, through different seasons, experiences and challenges.

### Character 2: Growth vs Fixed Mindset

**Session Aims:** Introduce the concepts of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Children will explore how their mindset influences the way they approach challenges, mistakes, and learning, and begin to recognise the characteristics and examples of both mindsets.

### Connection 1: Your Good Qualities

**Session Aims:** Revisit self-esteem and self-worth and explore the importance of kindness and the impact that words can have on our own confidence, our relationships, and the confidence of others. Reintroduce Oxytocin as a hormone linked to bonding, trust, and feeling connected to others. Help children understand how small acts of kindness can positively influence self-esteem and wellbeing.

**Connection 2: Team Build**

**Session Aims:** Put teamwork into practice by identifying different team roles and exploring the qualities needed to be a positive team member. Children will develop skills in communication, cooperation, creativity and problem-solving in a supportive and inclusive environment. The session will encourage children to understand the importance of different roles and build positive relationships through a fun, low-pressure team challenge.

**Community 1: Goals in my Community**

**Session Aims:** Recognise that children have an important role within their community and understand the positive impact they can have through their actions and contributions.

**Reflection and wrap up: Building Understanding**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will revisit and consolidate their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, reflecting on how their knowledge and confidence have developed throughout the year. They will identify the strategies, supports and habits that help them manage feelings and maintain wellbeing, while recognising how these can be used in different situations. The session reinforces key learning and strengthens pupils' understanding of positive mental health.

## Year 5

### Awareness 1: **Know your brain**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will apply their prior learning about the brain by constructing and labelling their own brain headband. They will locate the amygdala, hippocampus and pre-frontal cortex, develop a basic understanding of their functions, and be introduced to the limbic system.

### Awareness 2: **Describe, Act, Draw**

**Session Aims:** Encourage pupils to learn through interactive play and from one another, allowing them to reflect on their own knowledge of mental health through group discussions around coping tools and emotions. Pupils will also learn they can express their feelings in several ways, as it can feel tricky at times to find the words to talk about big emotions.

### Character 1: **Character Profiles**

**Session Aims:** Get pupils to take on the role of a creator, creating their own character profile where they will think about their character's values, strengths, and the positive impact they have on their community, as well as their "superpowers" (special qualities or talents) and the coping tools they use to manage challenges and big emotions.

### Character 2: **Circle of Control**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will understand that there are things they can control, things they can't control and things they can influence. They will consider situations where it could be helpful to apply this way of thinking to help them deal with big emotions or frustrations.

### Connection 1: **Ask Listen Learn**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will discuss, understand and practice the skill of active listening, understanding the role it plays in building connections and strengthening relationships. Pupils will be encouraged to engage in conversation with classmates, asking questions and listening to find out new facts that they didn't previously know, building connections with their peers.

### Connection 2: **Banter Vs Bully**

**Session Aims:** Help pupils differentiate between banter and bullying and explore the impact that both can have on connections and mental health. Pupils will apply their previous learning about the Brain HACK, pre-frontal cortex and amygdala to deepen their understanding of how they can respond to challenging social situations.

### Community 1: **Rights and responsibilities of a child**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will explore what children's rights are and why they matter, and will discuss and recognised how having rights ignored or taken away can affect our mental health. They will reflect on how restricting others' rights impacts them, and how we need to take responsibility for our actions.

**Reflection and wrap up: Application**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will reflect on how they have applied wellbeing knowledge and skills in school, at home and within relationships. They will evaluate which strategies have been most effective for them and consider how they can continue to make informed choices that support their mental health. The session encourages pupils to recognise themselves as active participants in maintaining and promoting their own wellbeing.

## Year 6

### Awareness 1: **Worry vs Anxiety**

**Session Aims:** To help pupils understand the difference between everyday worries and anxiety and explore when these feelings become helpful or unhelpful. Pupils will identify triggers and signs of worry and anxiety, and where they can access the right levels of support.

### Awareness 2: **Coping Skills Map**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will evaluate and expand on their personal coping strategies, recognising the difference between proactive and reactive self-management, and understand what coping skills can be used in different environments.

### Character 1: **Character Strengths and Personal Identity**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will be encouraged to explore their own character, strengths, values and personal qualities, and understand how these contribute to confidence, wellbeing, positive relationships and successful transitions. They will reflect on areas they want to develop as they move to high school.

### Character 2: **Goal setting and looking ahead**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will explore how goal setting supports wellbeing, motivation and self-belief. They will practice using the SMART method to set meaningful, personal goals, how goals can be broken down into smaller steps, and who can provide support to keep them motivated or if they might slip.

### Connection 1: **Relationships, respect and responsibility**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will examine how respect, boundaries and responsibility contribute to healthy relationships. They will identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, explore boundaries and the importance of mutual respect, and consider how they stay safe online.

### Connection 2: **Brain HACK**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will revisit the Brain Hack, and how the prefrontal cortex supports decision-making, impulse control and emotional regulation. They will develop an understanding of peer pressure and apply the Brain Hack to real-life situations to see how it can help them make positive choices.

### Community 1: **Actions for good**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will consider how positive actions and kindness supports good mental health, strengthens relationships and creates a sense of purpose and belonging. By exploring the roles of upstander, bystander, follower and instigator, they will reflect on how our choice of action can help create safer and more supportive communities.

**Reflection and wrap up: Looking ahead**

**Session Aims:** Pupils will reflect on their mental health learning journey through primary school and consider how it will support them in the future, including during times of change and transition. They will identify the personal strengths, coping strategies and support networks they can draw upon as they move forward. The session helps pupils leave primary school with greater confidence, resilience and a toolkit of wellbeing skills to support their next stage of learning and development.

## Secondary overview

|            | Awareness                             | Character                 | Connection                    | Community                      |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year 7     | Physical, Social and Mental Wellbeing | Circle of Control         | Building friendships          | Supporting others              |
| Year 8     | Understanding anxiety                 | Resilience tree           | Healthy relationships         | Accepting everyone             |
| Year 9     | Your brain                            | Building self-worth       | Communicating with others     | Social media                   |
| Year 10    | Emotional safety                      | Time management           | Boundaries                    | Group think and herd mentality |
| Year 11    | Managing exam stress                  | Expectations and pressure | Peer pressure                 | Wellbeing action plan          |
| Sixth Form | Managing exam stress                  | Circle of Control         | Being comfortable on your own | Looking ahead                  |

Sessions in green are part of the core delivery, while those in grey are additional options. While Facilitators will usually follow the outlined curriculum, they may occasionally run an alternative session or activity if they feel this will better suit the needs of an individual class, or if this is requested by a school. Delivery of the curriculum is agreed by individual schools. Some schools may choose not to access certain elements of the curriculum, while others may arrange additional sessions.

## Branches (Key stage 3)

### PSHE Lessons

#### Year 7: **Circle of Control**

Students explore the Circle of Control model, helping them identify what they can control, influence and let go of when facing change and challenges. This links in with moving up to secondary school.

#### Year 8: **Understanding Anxiety**

Students gain an understanding of what anxiety is and how it shows up emotionally, physically and behaviourally. Students learn that these signs are very similar to when we feel worried, but that is a normal experience. We discuss the importance of being able to tell the difference between worry and anxiety in order to access the right level of support.

#### Year 9: **Building Self-Worth**

Students learn about self-worth and engage in activities where they consider what their positive qualities are and how having a good sense of self-worth positively impacts our relationships. Students then write affirmations to use and a letter to their future self about what qualities they hope they still have and what qualities they hope to get better at and gain.

### Drop down days

#### Year 7: **Building Friendships**

Students explore the qualities of healthy friendships, the importance of respect and boundaries and how to manage conflicts that arise.

#### Year 9: **Social Media**

Students explore how online activity can affect mental wellbeing, including the benefits of balancing screen time and the impact of positive and negative online content. The session examines social comparison, body image, online relationships, misinformation, targeted advertising and harmful online behaviours. Students also learn how to stay safe online, report concerns, and access support when needed.

## Treetops (Key stages 4&5)

### PSHE Lessons

#### Year 10: **Groupthink and Herd Mentality**

A group activity exploration of social influence, peer pressure and decision-making. Students form groups for an activity and then decide if they want to leave their group for another. This is a real demonstration of how quickly we can stick to the groups we are in, without questioning if they are right or if there are more appropriate groups.

#### Year 11: **Managing Exam Stress**

Students develop an understanding of exam-related stress and learn practical strategies to manage pressure, maintain wellbeing and perform at their best.

#### Year 11: **Expectations and Pressure**

This session explores the impact of expectations from ourselves and others, helping students develop healthy ways to cope with pressure and build resilience. We focus on building expectations that are internal, positive and realistic, rather than focusing on expectations that are negative or unrealistic.

#### Sixth Form: **Managing Exam Stress**

A practical session focused on recognising stress, maintaining balance and using effective coping strategies during periods of academic pressure.

#### Sixth Form: **Circle of Control**

Students reflect on factors within and outside their control, developing skills to manage uncertainty, reduce stress, and focus on meaningful action.

### Drop down days

#### Year 10: **Emotional Safety**

Students engage in an activity where they reflect on all the mental health content they have covered with Isle Listen and in their PSHE lessons.