**Briefing for Headteachers**

Senior Leads for Mental Health

(SLMH)

In order to support children and young people as they return to schools and colleges, Birmingham Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) will be providing a series of training sessions for Senior Leads for Mental Health. These sessions will be based on a national programme developed jointly by the DfE and Department for Health and Social Care, but adapted to meet the needs of Birmingham’s children and young people.

Sessions will be offered at the start of November. For further information about the training and to book your place, please visit the BEP website.

In its recent Mental Health Green Paper, the Department for Education (DfE) committed to incentivise and support all schools and colleges to identify a ‘Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health’ by the end of 2025.

In 2018, over two thirds of schools and colleges reported having a lead practitioner for mental health, although responsibilities, and roles differed across settings. The DfE are encouraging schools to ensure that these roles are occupied by senior members of staff who are involved in strategic planning and can lead on a whole school or college approach to mental health.

The DfE state that “the exact nature of the senior lead role is likely to vary according to a range of factors, such as the needs of pupils and students, existing provision and the size of your school or college and may be embedded within part of wider arrangements for pastoral care and other statutory responsibilities”. Key duties would likely include:

* Leadership and creating an ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity
* Enabling the Student Voice
* Identifying the need for, and impact of, mental health interventions
* Ensuring appropriate referrals to specialist services
* Working with parents, families and carers
* Staff development

The roles would be ideally suited to senior staff who are: creative and solution-focussed, approachable and empathetic and who are persistent in their pursuit of positive outcomes for students.

**Opportunities for Training to Support the Return to Learning**

**Role Description and Context**

Over the coming months, we will be establishing local wellbeing networks to bring together Senior Leads for Mental Health from across primary and secondary schools. The networks will provide a forum within which wellbeing leads can meet to share good practice and enable us to support schools in ways which are attuned to their local context. Further details about wellbeing networks will be shared through our monthly Education Wellbeing Briefing.

**School Wellbeing Networks and SLMHs**

**Next Steps**

If you have not already done so, please identify a member of staff to act as a ‘Senior Lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing’ within your school or college. Once you have done so, please share their details with your link Educational Psychologist or email the Educational Psychology Service directly at:

Philippa.Hands@birmingham.gov.uk