



Emma Garrett

Development Director

Eastbourne College

Emma describes her career as 'squiggly' but wouldn't have had it any other way, and believes that her varied experiences as a mother, entrepreneur, business owner, volunteer, charity fundraiser and Deputy Lieutenant in the county of Bedfordshire have all been invaluable pieces of the jigsaw that create the picture of who she is today.

Emma is a do-er, her glass is always half full and she never takes no for an answer. Indeed, if the answer is no, she just phrases the question in a different way. Her forward thinking, tenacity and perseverance were crucial when she decided to renovate disused buildings in Bedford and convert them into thriving award-winning cafés and community hubs.

Emma studied English and Theatre Studies at university and worked in television before starting a family. She took some time off from work, but it is hard to keep a good woman down, and if she wasn't running the school PTA, she was putting on events for charity. She lived abroad for many years before settling in Bedford with her husband and five children.

Emma ran a social media business alongside her park Cafés providing training and social media management for SMEs and charities. She was also President of the Bedfordshire Businesswomen's Networking Group and Pavilion at the Park, one of her cafés was mentioned in the Good Food Guide as well as being chosen as one of 100 SMEs recognised in the 2018 Small Business Saturday Campaign. She was also recognised by f:entrepreneur as one of 100 female entrepreneurs in the #ialso Campaign in 2019.

She is a Vice Patron for Autism Bedfordshire and until she moved to Sussex in 2021 was an Ambassador and on the Senior Management Team for the Schoolreaders Charity. She is the founder of the SoupFest Fundraiser in Bedford and sat on the Bedford Homeless Partnership Executive committee.

Emma's squiggly career has now taken her back to the beginning – to Eastbourne College where her father taught for 25 years and where she was at school. She has recently taken the helm in the development office and she is delighted to be a Regional Vice President for IDPE.

#IDPE2023