

Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

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1. POLICY AIMS

- Promote positive mental health in all students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide support to staff working with young people working with mental health issues.
- Provide support to students suffering with mental health issues, and support for peers and parents.
- Promote greater independence with emotional regulation.

This policy sets out our commitment to support the mental health and wellbeing of all our students. There is a separate and complementary policy supporting staff mental health and wellbeing. However, both policies aim to ensure that every member of our community is able to learn and work in an environment that promotes and supports positive mental and physical health. We recognise that supporting mental health and wellbeing forms part of our overall commitment to safeguarding, and as such, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, alongside other related policies and procedures listed at the end of this document.

2. APPROACH

The QoL framework provides high-quality holistic education whilst affording dignity, respect, kindness and compassion, in all aspects of our provision, including the consideration of positive mental health and wellbeing.

All students will be supported with:

- Dignity and compassion.
- Feeling valued and respected.
- Achieving the QoL they wish and aspire to.
- Feeling supported and empowered.
- Being listened to.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. We aim to achieve this by developing and implementing practical, relevant, supportive and effective mental health policies and procedures, promoting a safe, stable and thriving environment for students who might be affected, both directly and indirectly, by mental ill health.

3. OBJECTIVES

What is Mental Health?

Mental health, defined by the World Health Organization, is "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2004).

The concept that mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness has been largely endorsed, as well as the notion of mental health as a dynamic state, a continuum of internal equilibrium, which enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society. Basic cognitive and social skills, ability to recognise, express and modulate one's own emotions, as well as empathise with others; flexibility and ability to cope with adverse life events and function in social roles; and harmonious relationships between body and mind represent important components of positive mental health which contribute, to varying degrees, to the state of internal equilibrium.

Autism and Mental Health

Autistic people are at much higher risk of developing a mental health problem than the general population. 70% of children and young people with autism will have a mental health concern at some point in their life and 40% will have two or more. This is reflected in the use of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, with 1 in 10 of the children and young people who use CAMHS having autism.

Teaching and Learning about Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing

The intention and aim is for students to be increasingly more independent in the management of their own behaviour, learning to regulate and develop their wellbeing. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe, are included as part of the PSHRE curriculum. The content of lessons will have an emphasis on enabling students to develop the knowledge, understanding, language, coping and tolerance skills, and confidence to self-manage as well as being equipped to seek help, as needed, for themselves and/or others. We will ensure that we teach positive mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which empowers and supports students to thrive in their life-long learning.

4. OPERATIONAL DELIVERY

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the safeguarding team. In the first instance, if there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headteacher. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services (as necessary). Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the lead professional in the DSL Team supporting the student.

The school has a full-time psychologist available to support all students. Every student is entitled to access timetabled sessions with the psychologist but also have the understanding and awareness that this support is there within school should they suffer a decline in mental health. In certain circumstances, the school psychologist will undertake home visits, online appointments or telephone appointments in support of a student's mental health.

Recognising Warning signs: All staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate students are experiencing mental ill health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns as a matter of importance. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- New or increasing behaviours of distress.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood.

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Changes in clothing – e.g., long sleeves in warm weather.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Decreased school attendance / reluctance to attend specific lessons or engage with specific situations.
- Reduced academic performance.
- Frequent physical health complaints.
- Reduced concentration.
- Reduced engagement with / interest in previously enjoyed activities.
- Mood swings.
- Increased incidents of behaviour of concern / conflict.
- Negative comments (e.g., negative statements about self / others).
- Communication of specific worries / anxieties.
- Notable changes in behaviour (e.g., increased repetitive/restrictive behaviours).

In an emergency, staff can only fall back on their professional experience and judgement of the situation, their training, their common-sense, the 'best interest' principle and their over-riding duty of care to wherever possible to prevent harm to a vulnerable person. Provided staff act reasonably, proportionately and sensibly, their actions will be supported. Any such emergency action must be carefully recorded on Schoolpod and/or using the 'Cause for Concern' system as designated within the safeguarding policy.

What to do when you suspect a student is experiencing mental ill health: School will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and colleges and in the wider local community. School will actively work in partnership with Social Care Services and Health Services, including CAMHS Teams, to ensure there is transdisciplinary working and contribute openly and transparently to cross multi-agency working. School will display relevant sources of support and will regularly weave and highlight sources of support for students into relevant parts of the curriculum and, when relevant and appropriate, in schools' newsletters.

Whenever sources of support are highlighted, it will be ensured that students understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why to access it.
- What is likely to happen next.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Working with Parents and Carers

All families will be signposted to a copy of the school's wellbeing and mental health policy prior to admission to the school on the school website. This will also be included in the student induction pack. This helps students and their families to know how we work together to create a safe and positive learning environment.

We always endeavour to work collaboratively with parents/carers and be sensitive in our approach. We would always signpost further sources of information where possible. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful.

Clear means of contacting the school and relevant professionals with further questions should be offered and staff should consider booking in a follow-up meeting / phone call right away as parents/carers often have many questions as they process the information. Any meeting arranged should end with agreed next steps and staff should always keep a brief record of the meeting.

Furthermore, in order to support parents/carers the school will endeavour to:

- Highlight reliable and informative sources of information and support about common mental ill health issues.
- Ensure that they are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this if they have concerns about their own child/young person or a friend of their child/young person.
- Share schools' wellbeing and mental health policy in an easily accessible manner for parents/carers.
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support wellbeing and positive mental health in their child/young person.
- Closely working with external multi-agencies to include CAMHS teams, Social care, and any other professionals involved in the circle of care of the student.

Senior Leader Responsibilities

- Ensuring and supporting the implementation of this policy in school.
- Ensuring that a comprehensive recording and reporting process is in place and is regularly reviewed.
- Ensuring that the support systems in place in the school are used competently through regular monitoring and training of staff.
- Ensuring plans are shared with the individual, using the method of communication most appropriate to them, parents/advocates, and other agencies, recognising the importance of consent in terms of the fundamental issues of respect, dignity and mental capacity.
- Ensuring that individual support plans and safeguarding plans are regularly reviewed and updated in the light of people's development and progress.
- Ensuring that any significant events are communicated promptly to parents/carers.

Responsibilities for all School Staff

- To treat all students fairly, with respect and understanding while having regard for their rights and responsibilities.
- To assist students with their understanding of mental health and wellbeing.
- To facilitate an environment in which students feel able to communicate their mental health and wellbeing needs or concerns.
- To familiarise themselves with students' safeguarding and support plans and help to keep them up to date with relevant information.

6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed biannually by Abbie Sutton, Wellbeing Lead. At every review, it will be approved by SLT and ratified by the governing body.

7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES This

policy is linked to our:

ASD Policy

Behaviour Policy

Child Protection Policy

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings

Health Policy

Home/School Communication policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Key Working policy

Safeguarding policy

Reviewing Schedule Date	Name
Drafted by	Abbie Sutton (April 2023)
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Reviewed by	
Reviewed by	
Reviewed by	