



Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

Approved by: Staff and Governing Body	October 2020
Approved by: School Council and pupils	October 2020
Reviewed: July 2022	
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Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

It is evident that organisations who adopt an organisational approach to improving the health and well-being of staff within the organisation can achieve substantially reduced costs associated with staff turnover, absenteeism and risk management. It is also evident that staff morale, job enrichment, quality of work and work-life balance alongside continuous improvement of educational achievement are all important, positive outcomes. Ultimately this can lead to improved productivity and the improvement of overall organisational performance.

It is also essential that the healthy organisation recognises people as its main strength and resource. It is essential, therefore, that they develop policies, systems and practice which optimise people's ability to work together and achieve their full potential within an inclusive, empathic and emotionally literate context.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and 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 with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Ellen Smith - designated safeguarding lead
- Yvonne Thorpe, Samantha Williams, Anna Robinson, Lisa Hall (extended day) – deputy designated safeguarding leads.
- Ellen Smith and Yvonne Thorpe - mental health leads

- Charlotte Lampitt - Character Education Lead
- Yvonne Thorpe – SENCo
- Education Welfare officer – Rebecca Giles (Local Authority)

Definitions

The term mental health difficulties can encompass a wide range of experiences. These can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental illness and conditions which are diagnosed and treated by specialist health providers. Although a difficult definition to give in absolute terms it is important that all within the community avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached. This kind of behaviour may well deter staff and students from accessing the support required. Inappropriate use of medical terms might also be misleading and cause unnecessary labelling. Consequently, within this institution all staff and students will be encouraged to respond to individual needs as opposed to specific labels.

Links with Other Policies

This health and well-being policy interacts with and refines several already established policies. The institution's duty of care towards both staff and students is determined externally by legislation such as the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974; Human Rights Act 1988; Data Protection Act 1988; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Act 2001. Its links between this policy and other guidance are clear and include the following: Health & Safety Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Anti-racist Policy; Complaints and Grievance Procedures; Sickness Absence Policy, Capability Procedures; Stress Management Guidance, Fitness to Teach Guidance; Occupational Health Guidance; Job Share Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Disability Statement and Policy; Disciplinary Procedures; Whistleblowing Policy; SEND policy, Positive Behaviour Policy.

Confidentiality

It is important to note that confidentiality is of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties and problems. However, it is essential that students and staff are aware that, in certain circumstances, where an individual is deemed to be at risk then this policy will need to be breached. At all times it is the safety of the majority that needs to take precedence over confidentiality of the individual and the majority that need to take precedence over confidentiality.

Responsibility of the Institution

It is the responsibility of this institution to:

- Promote the emphasis towards good health and well-being and consideration of the school within all relevant aspects of its day-to-day running;

- Ensure the provision of central support and advisory services as appropriate;
- To produce and disseminate explanatory notes to the policy in order to offer practical step-by-step procedures and guidance;
- To provide training to staff and students in the area of well-being and mental health problems;
- To promote and encourage a non-stigmatising community in order to enhance the effectiveness of its actions;
- To monitor the effectiveness of this policy through annual reporting to the governing body.

Responsibility of Key Role Holders

It will be the responsibility of key Role Holders to:

- Provide external health services and specialist therapeutic agencies with accurate information on all aspects of work activities for members of staff or students in order that informed recommendations can be made;
- To advise external health service agencies with regard to the scope of the support services the school can offer to staff and students;
- To ensure the establishment of effective monitoring processes so as to be able to evaluate the impact of the policy;
- To make recommendations on developments and improvements to the policy;
- To establish an on-going effective communication with external agencies and ensure appropriate supervision for those within the school who are providing therapeutic input;
- To ensure the promotion of this policy throughout the whole school organisation.
- Complete risk assessments as necessary to support staff and children.

Responsibility of Staff

It is the responsibility of all school based staff and support staff to ensure the following:

- Maintain a non-stigmatising community;
- To treat each other and all students with dignity and respect as an individual and not as a problem or condition;
- Access and take advantage of appropriate support, training and sources of information;
- To uphold confidentiality while safety is not at risk;
- To recognise their own limits in terms of how they can support both themselves and others.

It is the responsibility of students to also:

- Contribute towards the maintaining of a non-stigmatising community;

- To treat each other and their teachers with dignity and respect and not to label one another or treat each other simply as a problem or condition;
- To access appropriate support on offer within the school context including both individual and group support;
- To understand the confidentiality procedures and the fact that these will need to be breached if their behaviour is evidently going to put them at risk;
- To recognise their own limits as to how they can support others and know when to seek help and advice.

The Sources for School Based Staff who Provide Support for Others

The school will ensure that all staff members, who are providing any form of therapeutic input or support for students with mental health difficulties, are appropriately supported and supervised. This will be ensured by the link with external specialist therapeutic agencies including BEAM and BeeU, alongside access to school based specialists including the education psychologist, Education Welfare Officer and the phase leaders and line managers. Services available to students and staff will be made public by regular awareness campaigns and by a staff induction procedure and publicity for students on the school website and newsletters.

Teaching about Mental Health

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 our developmental Character Education (PSHE) curriculum and assemblies.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. We also use resources from The Art of Brilliance Outstandingly Happy programme to support the well being curriculum.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, other members of staff.

¹ [Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)

- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums. Additional signposts are also available on the Mental Health and well - being page on the school website.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record (cpoms).

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through newsletters, website, parenting workshops/groups.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home (Curriculum overviews and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural information available on the website).

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset

- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling
- Childline information and phone number is on display in every classroom.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

We will ensure strategies and resources about relevant information are shared with staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#)² provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. We also provide updates from Dragonfly Education, BEAM and Place2Be.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix A.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring 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

Key Indicators

1. Physical health

There is much research evidence to show that regular ie daily, light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease alongside a range of life threatening diseases. There is also a clear link between physical exercise and mental well-being. The provision of opportunities for physical activity is one way in which the school could contribute to promoting health and preventing illness in both students and their teachers. We are, therefore, committed to ensuring that the following are in place:

² www.minded.org.uk

- Opportunities to participate in fitness or exercise activities;
- Occupational health referrals where necessary;
- The existence and quality of an on-going staff health promotion/education programme which covers physical health issues;
- The existence of other preventative initiatives in the area of physical health.

Information provided may include the immunisation programme, injury prevention, personal and physical safety and the promotion of healthy food choices.

2. Personal well-being

There are many psycho-social factors which influence health and well-being and it is evident that mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress alongside promoting and understanding of mental illness. We would consequently aim to ensure that the following is in place:

- An ongoing mental health promotion or education programme for both staff and students which is of high quality and supported by external agencies; All staff have access to Health Assured – the Employee Assistance Programme.
- As far as possible we will respond to requests for flexible working arrangements in order to cater for family and other external responsibilities or demands;
- We will include on the staff well being noticeboard, resources alongside organisations and information which is relevant in this area are made available to staff and students;
- We will ensure that diversity is celebrated, both amongst staff and students, and that there is an awareness of the relevant legislation amongst both staff and students;
- We will ensure the existence and quality of effective communication systems in order to reduce stress across all curriculum areas and across all procedures and systems.

3. Organisational health

There is a great deal of research to show that harmonious working relationships which are created by effective leadership and staff involvement in decision making alongside effective administration systems are vital in terms of contributing to staff health and well-being. Administrative and professional support can assist school based staff to undertake their designated roles with organisational purpose and direction. We, therefore, seek to ensure the following:

- That leadership is considered to be supportive of all staff needs and that this is ensured via both formal and informal communication processes including a well-being questionnaire, informal consultations with staff regarding their input and feelings and regular recognition of staff achievements both formally and informally; (verbal. Email, staffroom board, supervision sessions with team leaders)
- We will also aim to ensure that staff are empathic and supportive of one another and that there are opportunities available on a regular basis to ensure quality staff interaction eg team teaching, mental programmes, social activities;
- We shall also ensure that all staff have a clear understanding and acceptance of their roles and responsibilities within the school context and this will be

conducted via the reviewing of performance as part of our self-monitoring processes and procedures;

- At all times the work demands on staff will be reviewed and monitored to ensure that they are both reasonable and realistic and do not engender stress or low morale.

4. Community relationships

It is essential that a strong and positive relationship exists between the school and the local community. This is important for staff's support and development as well as providing co-operation and access to resources. We will therefore aim to ensure the following:

- The existence and quality of parent involvement in the school. This will include the development of a mechanism for parents' views about the school to be regularly obtained and made known to all staff;
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local recreation and leisure agencies regarding access to resources and services for health and well-being;
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local businesses via the development of a formal communication process with specific responsibility for this allocated to staff members on the team;
- We will ensure that local agencies and specialist provision are aware of the school's health and welfare policy and seek to further develop relationships and conduct regular communication with such agencies.

Where there are concerns raised, the following processes will be followed:

Pupils:

- Support will be offered through school staff including staff within the year group team, ELSA trained staff or Inclusion mentor.
- Signposts to external agencies including BEAM, Kooth, school nursing team.
- Where necessary, advice from the EP or referral to BeeU

If the nature of the concern relates to self harm, parents/carers will also be directed to A&E alongside the above strategies.

Staff:

- a conversation with an appropriate member of staff, this may include, line manager or another colleague.
- Supervision support meetings with appropriate line manager/phase leader or with the Educational Psychologist. Supervision can be requested either verbally, via email or via the supervision support button on cpoms.
- Offer a stress Risk assessment
- Signpost to Health Assured

- Occupational Health referral
- Signpost to own GP

This policy was reviewed in August 2023 and it will be reviewed again in September 2024

See also: Safeguarding supervision and support policy

APPENDIX A

Support Available in School and Local Community:

Accessed via School

Health and Wellbeing Practitioners
Educational Psychologist
Loudmouth Productions
STAR programme
Smash Life
AFC Telford/House 1
Pony Pals
ELSA work
Emotional Health and Wellbeing Toolkit
Emotional Health and Wellbeing Panel
BeeU
School Nursing team
Health assured Employee Assistance Programme

Support in Community

BeeU <https://camhs.mpft.nhs.uk/beeU>
Kooth <https://www.kooth.com/>
NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
PLACE2Be <https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/supporting-your-child-s-mental-health/>