

Mental Health Policy

Aim High, Learn Together, Feel Proud!

Policy Statement

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 pupils.

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 pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- 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 pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Dr Tatters Headteacher- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Carly Benton Deputy Headteacher/ SENCO- Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Designated Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Kim Jones Parent Support Advisor- Designated Safeguarding Lead/Designated Mental Health Lead/Mental health First Aider
- Mr Broad Head VI Centre Manager and Specialist Teacher – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead/Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL. If the pupil 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 if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Senco/ Safeguarding Lead.

Healthcare Plans

A Healthcare Plan will be created for pupils causing concern or who have received a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our **PSHE curriculum i.e. Jigsaw** (*accessed via the school shared system*).

The specific content of lessons will be adapted by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. The pupils at Westbrook are aware which adults from whom they can seek advice.

We will follow the **PSHE Association Guidance** to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff room, Reception area, website, school newsletters, coffee mornings etc. and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

What help is available

Who it is aimed at

How to access it

Why to access it

What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental 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 with DSL/DMHL.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- 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
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding procedures including how to respond to a disclosure and the relevant actions necessary. This response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on MY CONCERN (www.myconcern.co.uk). This information should be shared with the DSL, who will offer support and advice about the next steps and then proceed with the appropriate action.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. If a pupil is at risk or is in danger of harm, no promises of confidentiality should be made and a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead should follow immediately.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with an appropriate colleague, usually the safeguarding lead, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer

solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed when disclosures regarding a pupils' emotional or mental health and wellbeing are made. Unless a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, then parents should not be informed and the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

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? E.g. in a secluded room

Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.

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 are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

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 up-date our records on MYCONCERN.

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, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child (**Mrs Jones, Parent Support Advisor / Mental Health Lead**)

Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents

Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information coffee mornings

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 (*see termly curriculum letters*)

Working with Pupils

In line with this policy and with the aim of facilitating good mental health practices the school has implemented the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme. Two members of staff are trained ELSAs and their role involves supporting children identified as displaying warning signs (outlined above) through a range of different strategies e.g. 1:1 sessions, regular check-in sessions or small group activities. The ELSAs receive regular support through supervision from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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 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 as deemed necessary. Points to consider might include:

What is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told

How friends can best support

Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset

Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of emotional upset)

Additionally, pupils will be supported to know:

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

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. We will distribute relevant information on our website for staff, parents and carers who wish to learn more about mental health. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered through the school's CPD procedures. Training related to specific mental health issues that arise will be delivered as necessary. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Dr Tatters Headteacher/Carly Benton Deputy Head, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Suicide

Awareness and support after a suicide: Support will be offered through various avenues: Kim Jones Mental Health First Aider 1:1 support accessing services. School would also seek advice and support from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service.

Current UK practice in post-prevention support. While there is no single way to deliver support to people following a suicide, it is helpful to look at what others are doing in England and across the UK. The common thread, which we aim to adhere to is a commitment to partnership working, spanning the development and delivery of services.

www.hounslowhub.org.uk

All staff will receive regular training on the awareness, recognition and response to pupils who may be displaying signs of ill mental health which will include suicide.

Information about support and advice on suicide will be on our website for staff, parents and carers who wish to be better informed in this area.

www.papyrus-uk.org

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in February 2025. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If

you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to DMHL - Carly Benton/ Kim Jones. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.