



## Heathside School

### Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

*As a school committed to the principles and values of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this policy particularly highlights Articles 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,12,13,14,15,18,24,25*

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**Staff Member with Responsibility:** Miss Brinson      **Role:** Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

**Reviewed by:** Local Advisory Board

**Date of review:** Spring 2019

**Date of next review:** Spring 2020

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#### Introduction

*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 Organisation)*

At Heathside School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both 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. 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.

This policy 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.

#### Aims

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- To promote and open culture which increases understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff and parents working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should make a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies will be followed.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the school's pastoral staff.

## **Risk Factors**

Certain characteristics put some pupils at more risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the child themselves, to their family, to their community or life events.

### *In the child:*

- Genetic influences
- Learning disabilities
- Specific development delay or neuro-diversity
- Communication difficulties
- Difficult temperament
- Physical illness
- Academic failure
- Low self-esteem

### *In the family:*

- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence
- Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)
- Inconsistent or unclear discipline
- Hostile and rejecting relationships
- Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs
- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect
- Parental psychiatric illness
- Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder
- Death and loss – including loss of friendships

### *In the school*

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships
- Peer pressure
- Poor pupil to teacher relationships

### *In the community*

- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Homelessness
- Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events
- Discrimination
- Other significant life events

(Taken from "Mental health and behaviour in schools", Department for Education 2016)

## **Risk Assessments**

It may be helpful to create a risk assessment for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up with involvement of the student, the parents and relevant health professionals.

This can include:

- Details of a student'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

## **Children at risk of harming themselves**

*What is the threshold for whether students are well enough to be in school?*

- For a student to be in school, they must be well enough (low enough risk) that they are able to participate in lessons and can be unsupervised at break/lunch/going to the toilets. If the student is considered to be at risk of harming themselves then they need to be referred to a medical professional (CAMHS, GP or A&E) by their parents. In case of an emergency, the usual procedure will be taken by school to ensure that the child is safe and is taken to A&E if necessary.

### *Support*

- Each student identified as highly vulnerable they will have a member of SLT allocated to them who knows them and their needs. The HoL/SSCO can liaise with the member of SLT when making decisions about risk during the school day and at regular review meetings.
- On rare occasions, a reduced timetable may be arranged, for a limited period. If students are not in timetabled lessons they must be in a pre-arranged location, supervised and engaged in a productive activity.

## **Trips**

Where students have a risk assessment in place to be in school, an additional risk assessment to enable that student to attend the trip will be necessary. Note: if the risk is too high and we cannot mitigate it, the student will not be able to participate.

## **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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the age and needs of the cohort, 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.

Heathside follows the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure it teaches mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

## **Signposting**

We ensure that staff, students and parents are made aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

Relevant sources of support are displayed in communal areas such as common rooms and corridors and we regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever sources of support are highlighted, we 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

The school website also signposts parents to some useful webpages on a range of topics.

## Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a student 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 the Designated Safeguarding Team.

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

## Managing disclosures and confidentiality

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, should this happen staff should follow the guidance from the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## Staff roles and responsibilities for supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing:

In addition to developing positive and supportive relationships with students, staff have the following responsibilities:

<b>Teaching and support staff</b>	Vigilant, listen to disclosures, report concerns
<b>Heads of Learning and SSCOs Special Educational Needs Coordinator SLT</b>	As above plus; signposting students and parents to relevant support services and organisations, risk assessments, liaison with external agencies
<b>Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead</b>	As above plus; run counselling service includes assessment, one to one support, group work, family support
<b>Vice Principal (Designated Safeguarding Lead)</b>	Ensures all processes to support Mental Health and Wellbeing adhere to sound safeguarding principles Liaison with Children's Services as necessary
<b>Local Advisory Board</b>	Ensure the practice aligns with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## Working with Parents

In order to support parents with their child's positive mental health and wellbeing 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 our information evenings
- Keep parents informed about any mental health topics their children are learn within the PSHE curriculum

## 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, 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 in in-group settings and will be guided by conversations by 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs 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

## The School Counselling Service

Heathside School offers a counselling service for all students in years 7-13. This is run by an experienced and qualified Integrative Child Psychotherapist who is available two days a week to help support the mental wellbeing of our students. As a member of the UKCP, United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapists, our therapist is bound by code of ethics, and practices in accordance to their guidelines and principles. More information can be found at [www.ukcp.co.uk](http://www.ukcp.co.uk). The counselling service is supported by trainee and volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists who adhere to the code of practice outlined by their accrediting body.

What is counselling/therapy and how may it help?

- It can help us understand relationships better and improve them
- It can help us to increase our level of self-awareness
- It can help us explore our feelings, and help us to manage them better
- It can help us to recognise unhelpful thought patterns and adopt new ones
- It can help us recognise the past and current behaviours which we do not want to take into our future
- It can help us to improve our communication skills
- It offers a place to reflect upon oneself and our relationship with the world

Counselling is a process, which offers guidance and support when needed. The counsellor will provide a safe and confidential place for a young person to explore thoughts and feelings, which perhaps are overwhelming and upsetting, in a drive to enable change.

Issues young people may struggle with:

- Bullying
- Academic pressure
- Parental divorce or separation
- Peer Pressure
- Drug and/or alcohol use
- Sexual health
- Arrival of new sibling
- Low mood
- Anxiety
- Exam stress
- Bereavement
- Confusion
- Anxiety about the future
- Self-harm

### **Referrals and Assessments**

Students can self-refer to the school counsellor or they can speak to a member of pastoral staff who can make a referral for them. Parents and teachers can also refer students by speaking to the relevant SSCO or Head of Learning or to Miss Brinson directly.

The young person may have needs that are not appropriate for counselling and may require alternative intervention. These needs may require signposting to other agencies, either within or outside of school.

Once a referral has been made, the counsellor will meet and assess the student. The process is important to identify the needs of the young person and to ensure they have agreed to attend. Counselling must be voluntary.

### **Confidentially**

All young people are entitled to confidentiality as outlined by the BACP Code of ethics. This means that the information they bring to the session will be held in confidence between themselves and the counsellor. Information will not be shared unless the young person has agreed to it.

The counsellor will however, state that they need to break confidentiality should they deem the young person to be at significant risk to themselves or others. At this point information may need to be shared with another party. The counsellor is aware of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and adheres to this policy as appropriate.

Young people are entitled to confidential counselling. Gillick competence will be assessed by the counsellor in the initial meeting and if deemed competent the young person will be able to give consent to counselling. Assessment of competence based on the Gillick principle depends on:

- The maturity of the young person
- The young person having sufficient intelligence and understanding of the consequences of his or her actions
- The young person having sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable them to understand what is being proposed

As a rule, most secondary students are deemed mature and intelligent enough to understand the counselling process, but there are occasionally those who are not. It is crucial at this point, that parental consent is obtained. Every effort is made to engage parents and where appropriate, young people are encouraged to inform their parents that they are receiving counselling.

## **Training**

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

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

## **Evaluation**

The mental health provision at Heathside will be reviewed yearly and the following data will be collected:

- Yearly student surveys
- Evaluation of the impact of the schools' counselling service
- Review of the counselling and ELSA provision
- Review of the curriculum in relation to mental health
- Review of staff training needs

## **Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health**

At Heathside, we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community.

We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision.

We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

This purpose of this policy is to ensure that we embrace the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and wellbeing for all staff. It outlines some of the ways in which we commit to maintaining staff wellbeing and it recognises that each individual member of staff and their circumstances are different but provides an overview of the basis on which everyone can contribute, and expect to be treated.

### **1. Aims**

We aim to ensure that our school:

- supports staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimises stress
- helps staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- helps staff to manage their family and work responsibilities
- ensures staff feel valued
- recognises and promotes the importance of a happy team
- involves staff in decision making
- takes account of equality implications.

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The senior leadership team (SLT), Local Advisory Board and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

### **Members of staff are responsible for:**

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate workspaces.

### **The Head of School and Senior Leadership Team is responsible for**

- listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- acting as gatekeeper and prioritising reforms and innovations
- ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- providing personal and professional development opportunities to ensure that staff are equipped with the right training to do the job confidently
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- providing opportunities for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- planning the year's timetable considerately bearing in mind staff commitments
- recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances
- maintaining contact with staff during long absences

### **The Local Advisory Board is responsible for:**

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- ensuring that the resources are in place to keep staff workload at healthy levels
- reviewing this policy and ensuring that other school policies and procedures take account of staff wellbeing
- overseeing that change management is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

The Head of School implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the senior leaders and pastoral staff, who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

## **3. Support in specific circumstances**

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to specific circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services but the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.