Mental Health Policy

Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees

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Document History

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1	Andrew Baker	21 April 2020	

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Contents

1. Context and rationale

Mental health can be defined as *'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'. (WHO, 2014)*

We have a central role to play in promoting our pupils' mental health and wellbeing and enabling them to be resilient. This policy explains how we do this.
Many national indicators highlight the need to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing. We are confident that a focus on mental health and wellbeing will enable us to provide healthy and happy school environments for pupils and staff and prepare the citizens of tomorrow with sound character and values, but also directly support our immediate mission: the promotion of effective learning. *(Weare, 2015)*

2. Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with pupils with mental health problems.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health problems and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from all staff that staff may have mental health issues, and that support is available in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Instil a culture of staff and pupil wellbeing where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and wellbeing around school.

The principles identified by Public Health England (2015) underpin this policy.

- Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing.
- An ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity.
- Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning.
- Enabling student voice to influence decisions.
- Staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of pupils.
- Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions.
- Working with parents and carers.
- Targeted support and appropriate referral.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy acknowledges the statutory requirements and guidance for promoting mental health and wellbeing from the following sources:

- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools *(DfE, 2018)*
- Keeping Children Safe in Education *(DfE, 2019)*
- Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges *(DfE, Government Social Research, 2017-19)*
- Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing-a Whole School Approach *(Public Health England, 2015)*
- What Works in Promoting Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Responding to Mental Health Problems in Schools? *(National Children's Bureau, 2015)*

Other policies promote mental health and wellbeing.

These include Safeguarding and Child Protection, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Behaviour (and Exclusion), Sex and Relationships Education and Anti-Bullying.

4. Role and responsibilities

The promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing for pupils is everyone's concern.

All staff have a duty to contribute to the school's role in the following areas:

- to promote mental wellbeing;
- to identify pupil specific mental health needs;
- providing mental health support for pupils;
- referring to specialist provision.
(Supporting mental health in schools and colleges summary report, 2017)

Specific roles:

The Local Governing Board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the school to account for its implementation.

The Local Governing Board will ensure that it monitors the effectiveness of this policy.

Headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

There are key members of staff who have specific roles to play:

- Headteacher
- Designated Mental Health Lead (statutory post by 2025)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Pastoral Staff
- SENCO/Inclusion Lead/Behaviour Lead
- PSHE Coordinator

5. Organisation and planning to promote wellbeing

a) **Leaders champion efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing**

Organisation and planning through:
- leaders who take championing roles and lead actions;
- governors who play an active role in ensuring this policy is implemented.

b) **An ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity**
We:
- promote, respect and value and diversity;
- relate to, and build relationships with pupils;
- normalise mental health and challenge stigma;
- raise awareness of mental health issues;
- create a shared vision and understanding about an approach to supporting mental health.

Through:
- teaching school values in a multi-layered way – promoting them in assemblies, in class and in all adult interactions with pupils;
- school/classroom environments that include quiet areas;
- the use of wellbeing tools;
- providing a safe and inclusive learning environment;
- clear systems to promote positive behaviour;
- using informal opportunities for adults and pupils to talk;
- peer mentoring schemes;
- anti-bullying ambassadors;
- restorative approaches to discipline;
- mealtime initiatives.

c) **Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and to support social and emotional learning**
We:
- teach mental health and wellbeing learning as part of our curriculum;
- specifically teach resilience and resilience techniques;
- explicitly teach and coach social and emotion skills, self-awareness, managing feelings, empathy, social skills and aspirations and teach about anti-bullying;
- teach pupils coping strategies and self-help tools.

Through:
- identified curriculum time for PSHE/Citizenship [and Relationships Education] or other discussion activities;
- specific skills teaching to identified groups;
- structure of breaks enables relaxation, physical activity, informal adult child connection;
- participating in national activities and events focusing on mental health issues;
- whole class physical activity;
- teaching relaxation techniques, such as mindfulness, yoga;
- developing support groups for pupils;
- healthy eating promotion.

d) Enabling pupil voice to influence decisions
We:
- ensure all pupils have the opportunity to express their views and influence decisions in matters that affect them.

Through:
- in class activities and informal and planned conversations with adults;
- School Council;
- pupil surveys, questionnaires;
- pastoral or academic mentoring.

e) Staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of pupils
We:
- support staff in relation to their own health and wellbeing and to be able to support pupil wellbeing (See also LSP Wellbeing Charter);
- have a shared understanding of the key concepts of social and emotional wellbeing and mental health;
- monitor confidence and skills needs and provide CPD opportunities;
- we use consistent language.

Through:
- opportunities for staff to celebrate success together and share concerns;
- using the 5 Ways to Wellbeing tool to plan for staff wellbeing;
- providing stress management/wellbeing training and mental health awareness and other specific issues training for staff.

f) Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions
We:
- systematically assess the needs of pupils and the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing;
- record information and have clear communication paths between staff;
- use resources to aid screening or identifying.

Through:
- identification pathways include: staff observation, ICT systems, self-referral, 'Team around the Child' meetings with parents and carers.

g) Working with parents and carers
We:
- work in partnership with parents and carers to promote wellbeing and mental health;
- work with parents and carers where there are concerns about the teaching of mental health issues.

Through:
- teacher and parent/carer contact opportunities;
- opportunities at parents evenings;
- the school website;

h) Targeted support and appropriate referral
We:
- identify and provide targeted support;

- appropriately refer to other services;
- regularly work with services for support and information.

Through:
- clear protocols for pathways for extra support;
- activities that include individual or group or opportunities to:
  - build relationships, resilience, teach managing stress techniques, talk with key adults/counselling, group/individual work focusing on wellbeing issues e.g. sleep, diet, relaxation, alcohol, assertiveness, resilience, circle of friends;
- dedicated and appropriate space(s) available;
- timeout/access to down-regulating time;
- accessing advice and support from local and national mental health agencies and charities.

6. Monitoring

Governors monitor the school's endeavours to promote the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils in a range of ways including meeting with school leaders and staff, reviewing the Trust annual staff and pupil questionnaires and talking to pupils.

References

World Health Organisation. Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice (Summary Report) Geneva: World Health Organisation 2014.
What works in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and responding to mental health problems in schools (Weare, National Children's Bureau 2015)