



Alderman White School

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Statutory or non-statutory: | Non-statutory    |
| Author/Reviewer:            | Katie Hodgkinson |
| Approved by Governors:      |                  |
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## **1. Policy statement**

'Mental Health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community' (World Health Organisation)

At Alderman White we aim to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers and governors, and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We have a supportive and caring ethos where each individual and contribution is valued and all individuals can be supported whether affected directly or indirectly by mental ill health.

## **2. Policy Aims**

Our school aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students
- Create an environment where all children and young people have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Enable students to feel they can talk openly with a trusted adult about their **feelings** without feeling any stigma
- Provide opportunities for students to develop their confidence and self-esteem
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques
- Increase understanding and awareness common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students including types of support and how and when to access this support for students and their parents/carers
- Support staff in relation to looking after their emotional wellbeing

## **3. Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff and governors outlining our school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies:

- Safeguarding
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs
- SEND
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- RSHE

## **4. Key staff members**

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. There are also key members of staff who have specific roles to play including contributing to the School Mental Health Team:

- Pastoral Staff
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- SENCO
- Mental Health Champions

- RSHE Coordinator
- ELSA trained staff
- School Counsellor

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Katie Hodgkinson or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Maria Owens.

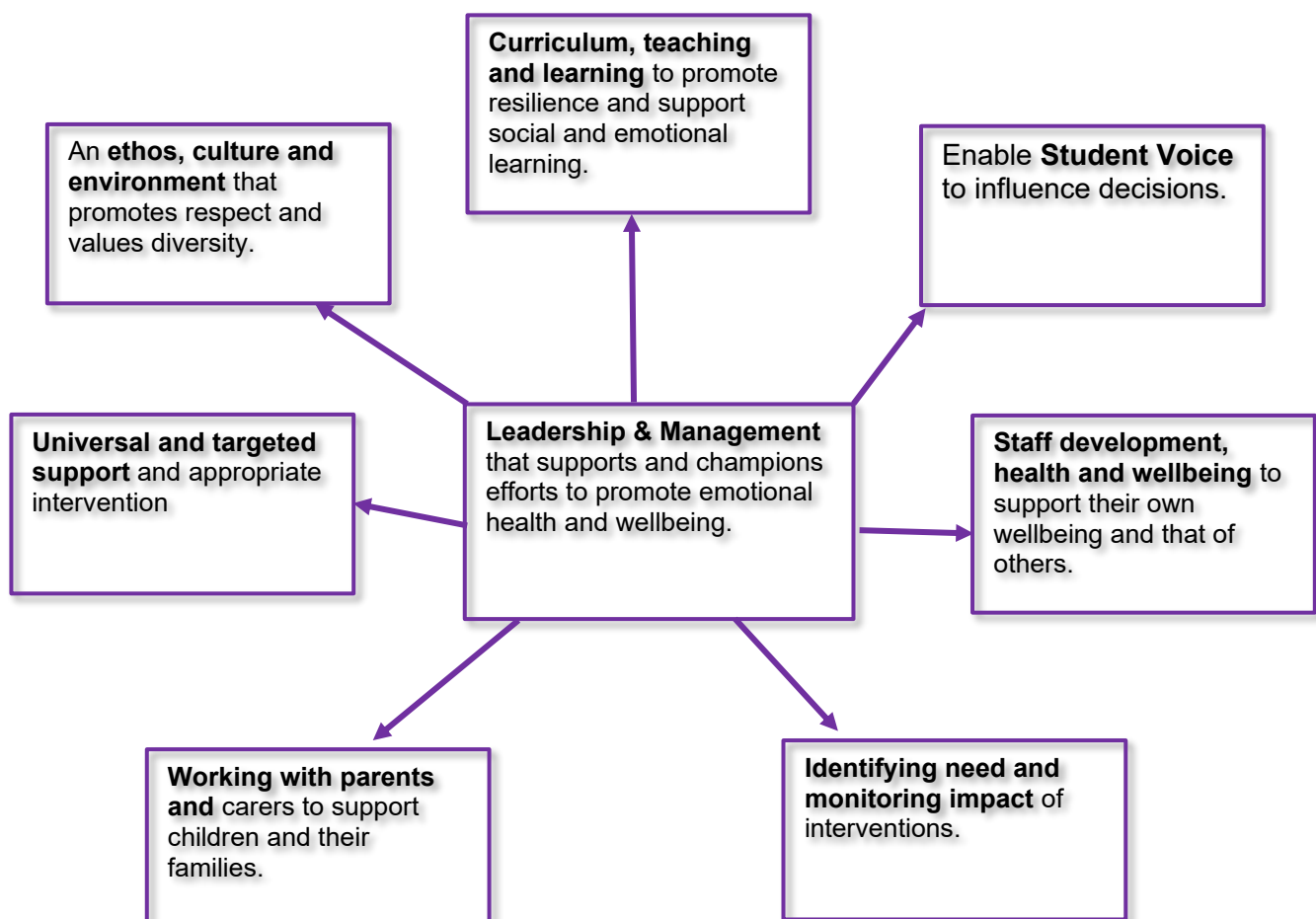
If there is a concern that the student is at risk of harm, the school's Child Protection procedures should be followed. In the case of a medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

### 5. Whole school approach

We will follow a whole school approach towards promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing across the whole school community.

Our approach is built around 8 key areas:

1. Leadership and management
2. Identifying need and measuring impact
3. Ethos, Culture and Environment
4. Student Voice
5. Curriculum, teaching and learning
6. Staff development, health and wellbeing
7. Support
8. Working with parents



## **6. Teaching about mental health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RSHE curriculum. This includes the Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education orders.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>.

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages enables us to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties in relation to mental health with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support others effectively and while also caring for themselves.

Our school also promotes positive mental health through assemblies, events, transition programmes, nurture groups and peer mentoring.

## **7. Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

We aim to operate an early identification and intervention system. eg. through safeguarding referrals, the Sharp system, and questionnaires.

### Warning Signs

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 alert the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of, 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.

### Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up by professionals. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency including the role the school and specific staff

The school recognises the importance of confidentiality, and information is shared on a need to know basis.

## **8. Universal Sources of Support**

### Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students, and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, toilet cubicle posters etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

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

### School Based Support

- RSHE– All students are taught about mental wellbeing as part of the Personal Development Curriculum. This work includes development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.
- Sharp Referral – An anonymous referral system in which students can report any worries they have about themselves or someone they know.
- Take 2 – All students can use a Take 2 outside the classroom to support with dysregulation. All students have been introduced to calming strategies they can use during their Take 2.
- Pastoral support – If necessary, students can have an individual arrangement where they can leave or be collected from a lesson to access support with the agreement of a parent.
- Wellbeing checks - Informal weekly check ins with students by a trusted adult. This support is suitable for students with mild/moderate mental health concerns and can be accessed either on request from student or if the student is identified by pastoral or safeguarding team.
- School counsellor Group workshops - Group session run for 5 weeks. Sessions are aimed at students with mild/moderate mental health concerns. Workshops include topics such as

exam stress, resilience, friendships, and worry. Students are identified by the pastoral team who then contact parents with relevant information.

- School counsellor - 1:1 45 minute sessions with the school counsellor. These sessions run for a minimum of 6 weeks. Referrals are made by pastoral team after discussion with the student and parents.

#### Local Support

- Mental Health support Team (MHST) <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs> 0115 876 0167
- Healthy Family Team <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/healthy-family-teams> 0300 123 5436
- BeUNotts <https://www.beusupport.co.uk/> 0115 708 0008  
Referrals: parents/carers can make a self-referral by completing the referral form.
- The Family Service—Early Help unit [early.help@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@nottscc.gov.uk) 0115 804 1248 The service prefers referrals to be made by a professional via an Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF), which can be completed by a key worker from the young person’s school on their behalf.

### **9. Targeted support**

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with the Mental Health Support Team and the Healthy Family Team in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our students. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Nottinghamshire City Council Children’s Services, Nottinghamshire CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing through the single point of access (SPA), students who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the student and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a ‘stepped care’ approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child’s needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Nottinghamshire CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered

will take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;

- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

## **10. Managing disclosures and confidentiality**

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially as a safeguarding referral on CPOMS, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent will be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

We also believe it is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents will always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school contacts the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

## **11. Supporting and Training Staff**

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. Nominated members of staff will receive professional Mental Health Champion Training.

We will provide relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The National College portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. <https://nationalcollege.com/>

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 training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Katie Hodgkinson [katie.hodgkinson@whptrust.org](mailto:katie.hodgkinson@whptrust.org) and Lisa Rockley [lisa.Rockley@whptrust.org](mailto:lisa.Rockley@whptrust.org) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing

## **12. Working with parents/carers**

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we will consider these questions first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place? – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

We will signpost parents to other sources of information and offer support in these instances. At the end of the meeting, we will keep lines of communication open should the parents have further questions or concerns and we will suggest a follow-up meeting or phone call.

We will ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the student's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and

- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

### **13. Supporting Peers**

When a student is experiencing mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student and their parents/carers 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

### **14. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **25/10/2025**. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Katie Hodgkinson [katie.hodgkinson@whptrust.org](mailto:katie.hodgkinson@whptrust.org)

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.