

Ashton Community Science College

Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy

Version Control

Named Owner:	Miss Claire Parkinson – Associate Assistant Headteacher
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Overview of Amendments to this Version:	Paragraph about student support plans removed Added additional member of staff Additional paragraph included 'Ashton's approach to MH' Removal of section 'teaching about MH'

Rationale:

"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 and Emotional Well-being (MHEW) 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 and emotional wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health and wellbeing issues linked to social or emotional challenges. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective policies and procedures in this area we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by any challenges they may face with these aspects of their well-being.

Scope:

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and well-being. 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 Needs policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue. The SEND policy should also be referred to where a student has an identified special educational need.

Aims:

The policy provides guidance for promoting the positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-being of all staff and students at Ashton such that:

1. The promotion of positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-being amongst staff and students is a primary consideration of all decisions made in school;
2. There is an ever-growing understanding and awareness of common issues related to mental health and emotional well-being;
3. Staff are alert to early warning signs of mental ill health or concerns linked to Mental Health Emotional Wellbeing;
4. All relevant stakeholders are provided with support for working with young people with mental health or well-being issues;
5. All students who are facing challenges with their Mental Health and Emotional Well-being are supported through school, as are their peers and parents/carers.

The Policy:**Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Miss Parkinson – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and MHEW Lead
- Mrs Bradshaw – Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Evans– Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Mr Clarke - Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) / Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Robinson – Student Peer Support coordinator

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSLs. If the student 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.

Ashton's Mental Health Strategy

Ashton's approach to Mental Health as 3 parts, Prevention, Internal and External.

Prevention is about helping the student learn strategies from becoming 'stuck' in a cycle of poor mental health. This will be taught in PSHE and SRE. Through On-Line safety, assemblies, Mental Health and anti-bullying weeks. Staff and students follow the Ashton Way which acknowledges we all belong to the same school family. When a student joins the Ashton family part way through a year, they will always be given a buddy to help them settle in to the Ashton way.

Internal is about the interventions and resources on offer to our students. These include 1-2-1 or group mentoring, sessions in the Diggery (an outside learning space), appointments with the school nurse or school counsellor, wave testing to check for any undiagnosed learning need. In addition, the school website has a section for students which has links to several organisations who can help with a variety of issues and is accessible 24 hours a day. Any referrals are actioned through a review meeting (Revs). (A weekly meeting attended by DHT for Pastoral and Curriculum, SENCO, Behaviour Lead and the DSL.)

We also recognise the importance of peer support at Ashton and as a response have introduced a Student Wellbeing Team. 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 or 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 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

We now have several members of staff who have completed their Mental Health First Aiders Qualification and they can be identified by a green lanyard which has the words Mental Health First Aider. They are also on the safeguarding poster which is in every classroom. Students can seek these members of staff out individually or the member of staff will be asked to meet with them if a concern has been raised through the REVS meetings.

External is about referring students to agencies when they have a need which school cannot meet internally. The main external organisation we work with is Compass Bloom. They are a Mental Health Support Team (MHST). Compass Bloom have dedicated Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) who work closely with our school and will have a direct input to children and their parents/carers.

Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is appropriate, this will be managed by a member of the Pastoral team.

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 on our school website.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as pastoral spaces, form 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

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing Mental Health and Emotional Well-being issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the student's Head of Year in the first instance and with Miss Parkinson, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

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 or remote learning
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

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

All disclosures should be passed on to the Mental Health Lead who will ensure the incident is recorded appropriately on the student's confidential CPOMS log (an electronic secure file). This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

The Mental Health Lead will then offer support and advice about the next steps to be taken.

Confidentiality

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

- 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 student 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 for example if they are or likely to suffer significant harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, 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.

Providing it does not put the child at risk of significant harm, parents will be informed about the early help school are putting in place. Students will be encouraged to inform their parents initially which will then be followed up with a call from a member of staff. Students should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but a member of the Safeguarding Team must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents and Carers

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.
- 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.

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 step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents and Carers

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's Mental Health and Emotional Well-being. In order to support parents, we will:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- 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

Training

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

We will post information about Mental Health and Wellbeing issues on Synergy for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#)¹ provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 to 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 in the first instance with the MHEW lead, and subsequently with our CPD Coordinator who will highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year as a minimum.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated when appropriate. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to the MHEW lead, via email enquiries@ashtoncsc.com

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.