





# Mental Health Policy (NS-42)

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<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	June 2024

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## Policy Statement:

The importance of **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing: **... 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.** This policy is consistent with the schools' duties under the Equality Act 2010 which recognises that a mental health condition that adversely affects behaviour amounts to a disability. Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all members of our school community to:

- Feel confident in themselves;
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately;
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others;
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life;
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change;
- Learn and achieve.

### Cockermouth School:

- Promotes positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; students, staff, parents and carers;
- Values all members of our school community and recognises that our mental health and well-being play a crucial role in our development, learning and achievement;
- Recognises Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice;
- Promotes a positive behaviour policy to ensure the school is a safe and calm educational environment where bullying is not tolerated and staff and students have a sense of belonging;
- Promotes a nurturing and supportive environment to develop the self-esteem and resilience of staff and students to better manage life events, overcome adversity and achieve our potential;
- Uses the academic and pastoral curriculum to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues;
- Ensures early Identification of those who are struggling with their mental health and provides signposting, care, support and intervention for staff and students with mental health needs including referral to external agencies.

## Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out:

- how we promote positive mental health;

- how we identify and support students with mental health needs;
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse;
- key information about some common mental health problems;
- where parents, staff and students can get advice and support.

This policy interfaces with the school's Workplace Wellbeing Policy which should be also consulted when considering staff mental health and wellbeing.

## **A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing which encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating a culture through our ethos, policies and behaviours to support mental health and resilience;
2. helping students to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping students to be resilient learners through an excellent curriculum and quality first teaching
4. teaching students social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health through the Personal Development curriculum;
5. early identification of students who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience – through application of our Workplace Wellbeing Policy (see separate policy document).

## **Identifying and supporting students with mental health needs.**

All members of staff concerned about a student will discuss low-level concerns with the student's Pastoral Lead and refer serious safeguarding concerns to their Pastoral Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the school's Child Protection procedures.

These signs might include:

- Changes in behaviour including non-verbal behaviour;
- isolation from friends and family or becoming socially withdrawn;
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits;
- lowering academic achievement;
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide;
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope;
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism;
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE;
- drug or alcohol misuse;

- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather;
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff are trained to identify early warning signs of mental health problems and refer students with mental health needs to ensure they get early intervention and the support they need.

### The Senior Mental Health Lead:

- Is trained to the level of Senior Mental Health Lead;
- Is responsible for the development of the school's mental health strategy and embedding a whole school culture of calm dignity and respect for the whole school community where mental health can be talked about openly;
- Is accountable for student wellbeing and reports on mental health to the trustees;
- Liaises with the Headteacher and Business Manager to promote staff wellbeing through the whole school Workplace Wellbeing Policy and our wellbeing framework and wellbeing champions network;
- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health;
- Is the first point of contact with external services and liaises with the Mental Health Support Team to ensure students are able to access appropriate services effectively;
- Liaises with the Mental Health Support Team to co-ordinate their work in providing CBT and other interventions;
- Line manages the Inclusion Team and co-ordinates the provision of evidence-based school-led interventions such as the school counsellor, ELSA, Decider Skills and Draw and Talk;
- Provides advice and support to Pastoral leaders, their teams and all staff and organises training and updates as part of the CPD programme;
- Develops and leads on mental health in the pastoral curriculum, including assemblies;
- Line manages and liaises with the curriculum lead for PD to ensure students have a relevant and full mental health curriculum;
- Liaises with the Learning Support Department, SENDCOs and specialist provision to support students with SEMH needs using Education Health and Care Plans where appropriate in line with the Code of Practice and alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues;

- Liaises with the safeguarding team to ensure mental health is understood as a safeguarding concern and using the Early Help process to support students where appropriate;
- Liaises with parents and medical professionals to write Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs) for students with medical needs where appropriate.

#### **Pastoral Leaders:**

- Set a positive tone and ethos supporting the school's values of respect and community;
- Deliver key messages about safeguarding and wellbeing through tutor time and assemblies;
- Ensure good liaison and communication of student information across transitions including with primary schools and between key stages;
- Ensure tutors make it a priority to know the needs of the students in their forms;
- Support tutors in the pastoral planning process to help students with low level concerns;
- Communicate the pastoral and mental health of the students in their care through Class Charts and other methods to all staff who work with the students;
- Communicate with parents and carers regularly and signpost them to information and other agencies to better support their child;
- Discuss the mental health needs of individual students with the DSL and Senior Mental Health Lead during safeguarding supervision and in pastoral and behaviour strategy meetings;
- When school suspects a student has a mental health problem, use the graduated response process (assess – plan – do – review) to put support in place;
- Work closely with the behaviour team to understand behaviours as a way of students communicating their needs;
- Refer students to interventions in school such as the school counsellor, ELSA, Decider skills and Draw and Talk.
- Liaise with the SMHL to refer students to the appropriate external services such as CAMHS, MHST, First Step and Togetherwe;
- Refer students to the DSL through CPOMS when mental health concerns become safeguarding issues;
- Record actions and interventions using CPOMS.

#### **The Personal Development Head of Department:**

- Liaises with the Senior Mental Health Lead to ensure mental health is taught in the PD curriculum;
- Provides opportunities for student voice feedback regarding mental health and wellbeing in the PD curriculum;
- Works with the SMHL to develop the pastoral curriculum.
- Promotes the mental health agenda in the whole school academic curriculum.

#### **Line managers and school leaders:**

- Should consider the mental health and wellbeing of students in their work, for example in the development of policies, procedures and the wider school curriculum;
- Should maintain positive relationships, behaviour and a positive ethos in school;
- Have a professional responsibility to support the wellbeing of staff colleagues they line manage at all times, and specifically through the appraisal process;
- Should signpost colleagues who need support to the help available to them via colleagues on the senior team, in HR and the Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Apply the Workplace Wellbeing Policy in their leadership of staff.

#### **The Academy Trust Board is accountable for ensuring the school:**

- Promotes a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage staff to discuss matters of concern regarding mental health and wellbeing;
- Has a senior mental health lead (SMHL) on the senior leadership team who has the ultimate lead responsibility for mental health and wellbeing. The SMHL has the appropriate authority and time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff and liaise with other agencies;
- Has effective policies and procedures in place for mental health and wellbeing;
- Ensures that safeguarding and mental health training for staff, is part of the whole school wellbeing approach;
- Monitoring this work through the safeguarding and wellbeing committee.

#### **Students:**

Students have a responsibility to show kindness and consideration to all members of the school community by developing positive relationships with their peers and staff and following the school's behaviour policy.

Student leadership plays a key role in promoting positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Student leaders have developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Promoting positive mental health during Mental Health Awareness Week;
- Providing student mentoring;
- Providing safe spaces in school for students in need;
- Leading on mental health initiatives, such as the anti-bullying Ambassadors and the 'Red Line' campaign through the Student Council's wellbeing committee;
- Feeding back key student voice information to staff through student voice activities and the Student Council.

## **Disclosures by Students**

We recognise how important it is that staff follow the same procedures as for safeguarding disclosure and are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to students who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of students is paramount, and staff must listen to the student, rather than give advice.



Staff will explain to students that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded to provide appropriate support to the student. Staff will also give students the opportunity to express their preferences about the next steps in their support. Listening to the student is key.

Whilst it is good practice to involve families wherever possible (see 'Parents and Carers' below), in some circumstances the child may not wish to have their families involved with any interventions or therapies they are receiving. In these cases staff are aware that those aged 16 or over are presumed to be capable of consenting to their own medical treatment, and procedures and children under the age of 16 may in certain circumstances consent to their own treatment if they are deemed to be 'Gillick competent', i.e. a relevant medical professional judges that they have sufficient intelligence, competence and understanding to appreciate what is involved in their treatment. Otherwise, an adult with parental responsibility can consent for them.

### **Non-Verbal Disclosures by Students**

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

### **Confidentiality**

All disclosures are recorded and held confidentially on CPOMS, including date, name of student and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

## **Parents and Carers**

We support parents and carers in caring for their children's mental health by:

- Sharing information through parents' evenings and information events;
- Celebrating the positive achievements of students through Class Charts and awards evenings;
- Signposting parents and carers to information and advice from external agencies;
- Contacting parents and carers and meeting with them when there is a concern about a child's welfare;
- Involving parents and carers in their children's interventions (unless the wishes of the child or child protection concerns prevent this) through action plans including Early Help;
- Supporting parents and carers to access services where appropriate and, in the rare event that parents and carers do not access services, we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

## Staff Training

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors using resources from the Anna Freud institute (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a student is experiencing mental health problems. We work with organisations like Every Life Matters to deliver training in our CPD programme.

## Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on:

- Appraisal & Probation Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Staff Code of Conduct
- Workplace Wellbeing Policy

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Protective and Risk factors (from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE November 2018)

	<b>Risk factors</b>	<b>Protective factors</b>
<b>In the child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Low IQ and learning disabilities</li> <li>• Specific development delay or neuro-diversity</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Difficult temperament</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humour</li> <li>• A positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
<b>In the family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>

	<b>Risk factors</b>	<b>Protective factors</b>
<b>In the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying including online (cyber)</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Deviant peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Peer on peer abuse</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct)</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> <li>• Positive friendships</li> <li>• Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies.</li> <li>• An effective early help process</li> <li>• Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working</li> <li>• Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively</li> </ul>
<b>In the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> <li>• High standard of living</li> <li>• High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>• Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>• Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children.

For more information see pages 18-20 in Mental Health and Behaviour in School (DfE, November 2018)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1069687/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf)

## Appendix 3

Where to get information and support:

For support on specific mental health needs:

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

Every Life Matters for suicide and self-harm support <https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk>

For general information and support:

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health <https://www.annafreud.org> for information and support for children, parents/carers and professionals.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/> NSPCC has information for parents and carers, young people and professionals.

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