

Policy Statement

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 wellbeing 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, 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.

Scope

This document 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 academy councillors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy/health care plans in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/guardians or carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mr. L. Hope – Deputy Principal - Lead, Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer.
- Mrs A.M. Snape – Mental Health champion/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ms E. Boustead – SENDCO/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Mrs S Lee - Health and Safety/Risk Assessment/Lead First Aider.
- Mrs A. Skelding - Assistant Principal/CPD lead/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Head of Year , mental health champion and/or any member of the safeguarding team in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the lead designated Child Protection Officer, the Principal or the designated Academy Councillor. 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Designated Safeguarding lead/ SENDCO/ mental health champion/ DDSLs

Individual Health Care Plans

The pastoral team, in conjunction with the SENDCO and School Nurse, will initiate the drawing up and reviews of, an individual health care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents/guardians or carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil'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

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PD curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/guardians or carers 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 website and will be communicated to individual parents/guardians or carers as necessary. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as form rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils 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 pupil 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 Heads of Year and/or one of our safeguarding team, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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

Managing disclosures

A pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

Staff will seek advice from DSL,DDSL, Sendco, HOYs, mental health champion if required and report any concerns.

The disclosures may be recorded on "My Concern" if it is a serious safeguarding and asked for by DSL,DDSL, Sendco, HOYs including the following information:

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

This information shared with the Head of Year, mental health champion and DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will seek to offer the appropriate support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- 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 pupil 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/ guardian or carer.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Head of Year and/or Safeguarding team. 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 pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Pupils may choose to tell their parents/ guardians or carers themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before we contact 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/ guardians or carers should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding and Deputy safeguarding leads, must be informed immediately. The DSL and DDSL will decide on the next course of action.

Working with Parents/Guardians or Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/guardians or carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/guardians or carers 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/guardians or carers, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/guardians or carers 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 parents/guardians or carers 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/guardians or carers 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/guardians or carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents/ Guardians or Carers

Parents/guardians or carers are often very welcoming of support and information from us about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/guardians or carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/guardians or carers 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/guardians or carers
- Share ideas about how parents/guardians or carers can support positive mental health in their children through regular sharing of information.
- Keep parents/guardians or carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PD and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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 pupil who is suffering and their parents/guardians 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

Supporting Staff with Positive Mental Health

- We as staff should seek support or help when we think we are experiencing a problem, if possible, to a clearly identified line manager or named individual.
- We should act in a manner that respects the mental wellbeing and safety needs of ourselves or others whilst in the workplace.
- We should consider wellbeing and support mechanisms offered by the Shaw Trust.
- We should attend any training on health and wellbeing issues where we feel that this is appropriate, if offered.
- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.
- We should all consider a work life balance and Madeley School works to support all staff with this.

Training

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.

We will host relevant information in our staff shared area for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

Training opportunities for staff that 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 pupils.

The mental health champion will regularly discuss mental health and well being with the vice principal/ DSL to ensure we address any concerns as a whole school or areas of need. This happens in bi- weekly line management meetings and within safeguarding supervision meetings.

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 Mrs Skelding, our CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2025.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.

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

Policy Review:

Signed by: (Principal) Signed by: (Chair of
Academy Council)

Date: Next Review Date: June 2025