



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Pupils

Applicable to:	✓	Astley Community High School
	✓	Seaton Sluice Middle School
	✓	Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Pupil Support Committee	

Status:

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Review frequency	Governing Body to determine
Approval by	Governing Body to determine

Publication:

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Agreed to publish on school website	Yes

Review:

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Author	Creation Date	Version	Status
Head of School SSMS (KMc)	25 March 2024	0.1	Initial draft based on The Key model policy (July 2023)
Changed by	Revision Date		
Business Director (BW)	15 July 2024	0.2	Minor changes to formatting and layout
Business Director (BW)	29 July 2024	1.0	Final approved version for publication

1 Aims

1.1 At Seaton Valley Federation, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

1.2 This policy focuses on pupils' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- set out our federation's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across our schools
- provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- inform pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

2 Legislation and guidance

2.1 This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our schools and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or mental health lead in their school.

3.2 Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Heads of School
- DSLs
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators (SENDCos)
- mental health leads

4 Common mental health issues and warning signs

4.1 Common mental health issues include:

- self-harm
- eating disorders
- anxiety
- depression
- loss and bereavement

4.2 All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- changes in:
 - mood or energy level
 - eating or sleeping patterns
 - attitude in lessons or academic attainment
 - level of personal hygiene
- social isolation
- poor attendance or punctuality
- expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- abuse of drugs or alcohol
- rapid weight loss or gain
- secretive behaviour
- covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

5 Managing disclosures

- 5.1 If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.
- 5.2 Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.
- 5.3 Staff will always follow the federation's Child Protection Policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file.
- 5.4 When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:
- the full name of the member of staff who is making the record
 - the full name of the pupil(s) involved
 - the date, time and location of the disclosure
 - the context in which the disclosure was made
 - any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

6 Confidentiality

- 6.1 Staff will not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret - instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.
- 6.2 A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:
- being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
 - the support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
 - other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question
- 6.3 Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

- 6.4 Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:
- who they will share the information with
 - what information they will share
 - why they need to share that information
- 6.5 Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.
- 6.6 Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the federation's Child Protection Policy will be followed.

7 Supporting pupils

Baseline Support for All Pupils

- 7.1 As part of our federation's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our schools offer baseline support to all pupils by:
- raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PSHE/SMSC and Mental Health Awareness Week
 - signposting all pupils to sources of online support on the federation website
 - having open discussions about mental health during lessons
 - providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our schools that are negatively impacting their mental health
 - monitoring all pupils' mental health through pupil surveys
 - appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole federation approach to mental health and wellbeing
 - offering pastoral support e.g. through Student Progress Leaders and Heads of Year, student counsellors, Thrive practitioner etc.
 - making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing in PSHE/SMSC lessons
 - using trained peer Wellbeing Champions

Assessing What Further Support is Needed

- 7.2 If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support we can provide further to the baseline support detailed above.
- 7.3 We will offer support in cycles of:
- assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
 - creating a plan to provide support
 - taking the actions set out in the plan
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

Internal Mental Health Interventions

- 7.4 Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our schools includes:

- a reduced timetable
- a time-out pass
- nurture groups
- friendship groups
- wellbeing clubs
- time in the sensory room
- Lego therapy
- art therapy
- counselling

Support Plans

- 7.5 A pupil will be offered a support plan if they need additional support for more complex mental health issues. Support plans are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.
- 7.6 The pupil's support plan will contain the following details:
- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
 - The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
 - Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
 - The level of support needed
 - Who will provide the support
 - Who in school needs to be aware of the child's condition
 - What to do in an emergency

Making External Referrals

- 7.7 If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our schools provide, we will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.
- 7.8 A pupil could be referred to:
- their GP or a paediatrician
 - Primary Mental Health
 - CYPS
 - mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
 - local counselling services

8 Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

- 8.1 We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:
- asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
 - informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
 - engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
 - highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on the federation website, including this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Pupils
 - liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child

- providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)
- keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

8.2 When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

8.3 These meetings can be difficult, so we will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

8.4 A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

8.5 If appropriate, a support plan will be created in collaboration with parents/carers.

9 Supporting peers

9.1 Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

9.2 We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- strategies they can use to support their friends
- things they should avoid doing/saying
- warning signs to look out for
- signposting to sources of external support

10 Signposting

10.1 Sources of support are displayed around our schools and linked to on the federation website, so pupils and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

10.2 The federation's mental health leads will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

11 Whole federation approach to promoting mental health awareness

11.1 We follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

11.2 Pupils are taught to:

- develop healthy coping strategies
- challenge misconceptions around mental health
- understand their own emotional state
- keep themselves safe

11.3 For more information, see the PSHE/SMSC curriculum for each school on the federation website.

11.4 Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating

12 Training

12.1 All staff will be offered training so they:

- have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help

13 Support for staff

13.1 We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- treat mental health concerns seriously
- offer staff supervision sessions
- support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- offer support via our Occupational Health provider

Appendix A: Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis

