

**Southcoates**  
**Primary Academy**



part of the **enquire**  
learning trust

# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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## 1.0 Policy statement

At Southcoates Primary Academy, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and, through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events.

As defined by the **World Health Organization** 'Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.' In summary, Mental Health is our ability to respond to challenges.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role at Southcoates is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the Southcoates approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including Safeguarding, anti-bullying and Jigsaw PSHE.

## 3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.

- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

## 4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff – including: Well-Being worker; Attendance Officer and Learning Links Worker
  - Designated Safeguarding Leads
  - Inclusion Lead (SENCo/CP/DSL)
  - Mental Health First Aid Lead
  - Mental Health First Aid Champions (TAs)
  - Jigsaw PSHE Coordinator

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 Safeguarding Lead and begin to record concerns on CPOMS within 36 working hours.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

## 5.0 Pastoral support plan

When a pupil has been identified as having a 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 a Pastoral support plan should be drawn up. 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.
- The role the school and specific staff

## 6.0 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 Jigsaw PSHE curriculum.

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

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity 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 Jigsaw as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe.

## 7.0 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 and displays) 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

## 8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support includes but is not limited to:

*Class teacher*

*Well-being Worker*

*Specifically, supportive small group interventions: Lego Therapy, Friendship Groups, The Power Program, RELAX Kids...*

*Attendance Officer*

*Learning Links Worker*

*Inclusion Lead (SENCo/CP/DSL)*

*The Academy Senior Leadership Team*

*Mental Health First Aid Team*

## Local Support

In Hull, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership** and **THRIVE**: providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing.

These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people, and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

<https://www.humber.nhs.uk/services/camhs>

## 9.0 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

## 10.0 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 abuse.

We work closely with THRIVE and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. 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 Hull City Council Children’s Services, Hull CAMHS, HeadStart and other services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral.
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree a Pastoral support 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 Hull 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 which are available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should 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.

## **11.0 Managing disclosures**

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 on the student’s personal file using the *designated system* (See Safeguarding policy for further information)

This information will be shared with the school’s safeguarding leads.

## **12.0 Confidentiality**

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 aim to tell them:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Who we are going to tell.      | ▪ Why we need to tell them.     |
| ▪ What we are going to tell them | ▪ When we’re going to tell them |

Ideally, consent should 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 tell them that we cannot promise to keep secrets.

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 individual. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must 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 a 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.

## **13.0 Whole school approach**

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

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, there are questions to consider 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.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to the pupil's record and a Pastoral support Plan created if appropriate.

### **13.2 Supporting parents.**

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 outside agencies 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.

## 14.0 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. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

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 twilight 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 Mr Tom Libera and/or Mrs Dawn Thurston who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## 15.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 18 months as a minimum. The next review date is **01/05/2025**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Mrs Dawn Thurston – Inclusion Lead

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

### Academy Contacts:

Role	Name	How to Contact
Principal	Mr T Libera	Call the Academy on 01482 701407 To arrange an appointment.
Vice Principal	Miss H Boba	
Inclusion Lead	Mrs D Thurston	
Well-Being Worker	Mrs R Gleadhill	
Learning Links Worker	Ms S Jackson	
Attendance Officer	Mrs J Hepworth	
All Academy Staff		