

# **Blackpool Skills Academy – Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy**

*Supporting the Mental Health of Students and Staff*

## **1. Policy Statement**

Blackpool Skills Academy is committed to promoting and protecting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of all members of our school community. We recognise that mental health is just as important as physical health and that positive wellbeing underpins academic achievement, social development, and staff effectiveness.

We aim to foster a supportive, inclusive environment where students and staff feel safe, respected, and valued—able to talk openly about mental health and access appropriate support when needed.

## **2. Aims of the Policy**

- To promote a whole-school culture of positive mental health and wellbeing.
- To provide students and staff with the tools to manage their mental health proactively.
- To ensure early identification and intervention for those who may be experiencing mental ill-health.
- To reduce stigma and raise awareness of mental health across the school.
- To provide clear procedures for supporting mental health concerns and crises.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at Blackpool Skills Academy
- All teaching and support staff
- Volunteers, visitors, and third-party service providers

It is linked to other key policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- PSHE and RSE Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

#### 4. Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

##### For Students:

- A structured **PSHE curriculum** including emotional literacy, coping strategies, and resilience.
- Access to a **Wellbeing Lead** or **Pastoral Mentor** for support.
- Opportunities for **learner voice**, including feedback and involvement in wellbeing initiatives.
- Calm, structured environments with **trauma-informed practice** embedded in behaviour management.
- Signposting to external services such as CAMHS, Kooth, and Young Minds.

##### For Staff:

- Regular **supervision and wellbeing check-ins** from line managers or SLT.
- Access to a confidential **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**.
- Promotion of a **healthy work-life balance**, including reasonable workload expectations.
- Training opportunities around mental health, wellbeing, and trauma-informed practice.
- An open-door policy for staff to raise concerns about their own or others' wellbeing.

#### 5. Identification and Early Intervention

We recognise that early warning signs of mental ill-health can include:

- Changes in mood, behaviour, attendance, or performance
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Physical symptoms without clear cause
- Difficulty concentrating
- Expressions of hopelessness or distress

All staff are encouraged to report concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, **Wellbeing Lead**, or **Mental Health First Aider**.

Where necessary, a student's needs will be supported via:

- An **Individual Support Plan**
- Referrals to in-school or external counselling
- Involvement of parents/carers (where appropriate)

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Lead the school's strategic approach to wellbeing.
- Ensure systems and culture support staff and student mental health.

### Designated Mental Health Lead / DSL:

- Oversee mental health interventions and support pathways.
- Provide advice, training, and referrals.
- Liaise with external services and families.

### All Staff:

- Promote positive mental health through inclusive, respectful relationships.
- Know how to recognise and respond to early signs of distress.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where mental health is linked to risk of harm.

### Students:

- Encouraged to speak to trusted adults or use the support available.
- Participate in wellbeing activities and help create a positive school culture.

## 7. Crisis Management

In the event of a mental health crisis (e.g. self-harm, suicidal thoughts, acute distress):

- **Safeguarding procedures** will be followed immediately.
- A **risk assessment** will be completed where necessary.
- Parents/carers will be contacted (unless doing so poses a risk to the student).
- Support will be offered post-crisis, including reintegration plans or adjusted timetables.

## 8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information will be shared on a **need-to-know basis** to ensure appropriate support.
- Staff are not expected to act as mental health professionals but should listen, support, and refer concerns appropriately.
- Confidentiality will always be maintained in line with **safeguarding policy** and **GDPR**.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- Wellbeing indicators (attendance, behaviour, feedback) are regularly reviewed.
- Staff and students are consulted on wellbeing support and provision.
- This policy is reviewed **annually** by SLT and updated in line with national guidance.

**Policy Date:** September 2024

**Next Review Date:** September 2025

**Approved by:** Senior Leadership Team