

Positive Mental Health Policy

(Non-Statutory)

Reviewed/Approved by Trustees' Education Committee: 14/06/18

Review Cycle: Every Three Years

Review Date: Summer Term 2021

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 for every student. 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. Statistics tell us that 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.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and trustees.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy 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.

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Specific staff have DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and DDSL (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) responsibilities, these additional responsibilities are outlined in the Safeguarding policy.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Student Wellbeing team and, where appropriate, log their concerns with the DSL. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate contact with the DSL or the head teacher. 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 an external agency is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Student Wellbeing Team.

Teaching and Promoting Good Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. Our EBCM (Every Burgate Child Matters) strategy ensures that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the needs of the cohort 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.

Sharing good practice is key to understanding and promoting good mental health

Throughout the school year, we actively promote whole school good mental health through initiatives such as Feel Good Fortnight, non-uniform days and sporting events. Our Wellbeing team offer targeted support to individuals and small groups with ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) and counselling sessions. The Wellbeing team meet once a week to discuss and triage all referrals. Where appropriate students are referred to our school counsellor, who runs a series of targeted sessions relevant to the needs of the individual.

We ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

- We display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as classrooms, pastoral noticeboards, communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support for students within relevant parts of the curriculum.
- We run and promote wellbeing awareness evenings for parents through our parent focus group.
- Our school website is a good source of up to date and relevant information.
- Up to date wellbeing guidance, including valuable websites and app, is available through the pastoral team.
- Students are actively encouraged to develop and use effective coping strategies. All students are encouraged to follow the 5 steps to good mental and wellbeing as recommended by the NHS.

Warning Signs

School 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 communicate their concerns with a referral to the Wellbeing team. Possible warning signs include, but are not restricted to:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental (by self or others)
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in behaviour or mood, eg self-neglect, irritability, oppositional and defiant behaviour.
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing thoughts of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism, or avoidance of certain lessons, places, situations.

Confidentiality

We should be honest and open with regards to the issue of confidentiality (Safeguarding Policy)

If a student 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. It is important to follow the same guidance as stated in the safeguarding policy.

All disclosures must be shared with the DSL and Wellbeing team.

Parents must always be informed if the student is putting themselves at risk of harm, and/or the situation has been ongoing for some time and change or action at home is required. Students will always be encouraged to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts 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 should not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

Training / Update on Key issues

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

The pastoral team review and audit mental health concerns.

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 developing situations with one or more students.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Wellbeing team who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.