



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING POLICY

The Deanery Church of England High School

November 2024

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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)

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using a whole school approach and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and staff enabling our school community to live life to the full and flourish.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable school environment for pupils, and staff affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

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 governors.

The policy aims to:

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

Key Staff Members

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

- Mrs L Quirk - Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer
- Mrs S Hannam – Mental Health Lead & School Counsellor
- Miss Georgia Grange -School Counsellor (Wigan Deanery Trust)
- Miss Sophie Bamber- Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Heads of Year - Pastoral Staff
- Behaviour & Learning Mentors – Pastoral Staff
- Mr T Walker- PSHE Co-ordinator
- Mrs L Quirk – Assistant Head - SENDCO
- Mr D Tobin - Acting Deputy Head - Pastoral

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Wellbeing Lead 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead.

When a young person is found to self-harm, the professional (e.g. class teacher) must treat the person with respect, address any physical needs (e.g. calling SLT and being escorted to the Health & Wellbeing Officer), ensure the young person is aware of sources of support, address any safeguarding concerns (Mrs Lesley Quirk DSL or Deputy Safeguarding Leads) and ensure that the wider peer group are supported by offering signposting to drop-ins. (Appendix 1)

If the pupil 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 both pastoral Heads of Year and Stella Hannam, Mental Health Lead & School Counsellor. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in ¹ Please speak to Mental Health Lead if unsure of the current form to use.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual assessment and plan for pupils who are receiving counselling or brief CBT informed intervention. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's presenting problem, situation
- Special requirements and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

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 PSHE 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 pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance² to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents 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 in Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources for Teachers and Teaching Staff³. Mrs Karen Dwyer, Family Liaison Officer (FLO), can also signpost families for general and wellbeing support.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Through communication channels (website, social media, pupil and staff bulletins), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils 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

²Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/Mental%20Health%20guidance%20online%20version%20%28Updated%20July%202019%29.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

³ Public Health England, June 2021. Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources for Teachers and Teaching Staff https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993669/Mental_Health_Resources_for_teachers_and_teaching_staff_June_2021.pdf {accessed on 03/08/2021}

these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Stella Hannam, Mental Health Lead & School Counsellor or immediate risk concerns to Lesley Quirk, our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs 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

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we deem it necessary to pass on our concerns to another professional to keep the pupil safe, 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
- When we are going to do this
- How we will do this.

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. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead, Stella Hannam or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Lesley Quirk, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, 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.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils 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 Lesley Quirk must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable but may not always be possible.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents 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 parent/carer 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/carers can also be helpful too e.g. parent/carer 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 often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record (CPOMS). Confidentiality further protected by tagging CPOM notes with "Therapeutic Intervention" to limit access.

Working with All Parents/Carers

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

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get 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/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through pastoral consultations
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE 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 by the pupil who is suffering and their parents 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend 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

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue⁴.

⁴ Minded. <https://www.minded.org.uk/Component/Details/660879> [accessed on 03/08/2021]

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 pupils.

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 Lesley Quirk, our Mental Health Lead (Stella Hannam) can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

The Thrive Approach to Social and Emotional Development will be introduced into school this year (2022). The aim is to help children and young people become more emotionally resilient and better placed to engage with life and learning. This will be through a whole-school approach to wellbeing – proven to improve attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Our Thrive Practitioners are:

- Mrs J Abbey
- Mr D Tobin
- Miss E Hart

Staff Wellbeing

At The Deanery Church of England High School, we encourage all our school community to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

Staff wellbeing is supported holistically, including the physical, emotional and spiritual. Good levels of wellbeing enable staff to feel motivated, engaged and resilient, meaning that generally we can cope well.

It is important that all our staff are given the right emotional and practical support, so that they can in turn support their pupils; enabling all of our school community to flourish.

Support Mechanisms

- The Senior Leadership Team (Headteacher, Deputy Head, and other managers) will promote and live the school ethos, to create an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.
- Where additional, professional advice is required, then Occupational Health Professionals and other avenues for example HR (Claire Codling) or the Wellbeing Team can provide support via 1:1 sessions or signposting. Stella Hannam (adult therapy trained) is the Mental Health Lead & School Counsellor. Georgia Grange is also a School Counsellor also trained to work with adults.
- Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the free confidential counselling service from [Education Support Partnership](#) 0800562561.
- Menopause Mentors are available in school to support anyone affected by the menopause. This support is open to all, it may be that a member of staff is affected by a partner experiencing the menopause or family member. There is a separate Menopause policy. The Menopause Mentors are:
 - Miss A Friend (2nd Floor office)
 - Mrs S McMullen (Finance Office)
 - Mrs S Hannam (Room 200B)
 - Mrs C Collins (201)
 - Ms M Lay (301)

Appendix 1

Self-harm: assessment, management and preventing recurrence.

NICE guideline published: 07 September 2022

Assessment in schools and educational settings

1.8.3 Educational settings should have policies and procedures for staff to support students who self-harm. These should include:

- how to identify self-harm behaviours
- how to assess the needs of students
- what do to if they suspect a student is self-harming
- how to support the student's close friends and peer group.

1.8.4 Educational settings should have a **designated lead** – Lesley Quirk (Safeguarding Lead) responsible for:

- ensuring that self-harm policies and procedures are implemented
- ensuring that self-harm policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date in line with current national guidance
- ensuring that staff are aware of the self-harm policies and procedures and understand how to implement them
- supporting staff with implementation if there are any uncertainties.

1.8.5 All educational staff should:

- be aware of the policies and procedures for identifying and assessing the needs of students who self-harm
- know how to implement the policies and procedures within their roles and responsibilities
- know who to go to for support and supervision.

1.8.6 For students who have self-harmed, the designated lead should seek the advice of mental health professionals to develop a support plan with the student and their family members and carers (as appropriate) for when they are in the educational setting. This should include guidance from other agencies involved in the person's care, as appropriate. The support plan includes documenting self-harm and reasons on CPOMS, phone call home by Head of Year to inform of removing harmful objects, include signposting and safety advice. This is followed up by a safety advice email. See Appendix 2)

1.8.7 Educational staff should take into account how the student's self-harm may affect their close friends and peer groups and provide appropriate support to reduce distress to them and the person.

Appendix 2

Safety email following up from phone call home.

Dear Mr/Mrs.....

I am emailing to provide you with some resources that may help in supporting XX's mental health concerns and to follow up on our earlier conversation. As discussed, it is advised that any sharp objects, razor blades, sharpener blades, medication or harmful substances like bleach, alcohol are removed from out of sight/locked away from X to reduce the risk of any possible self-harm/suicide. This is for preventative measures as is the safety information/booklets.

The following services provide useful information and resources aimed at helping to support mental health. You may be familiar with some of the resources already, but I thought it would be useful to have it in one place.

- Young Minds
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/> (Includes Young Minds parent helpline)
- <https://www.papyrus-uk.org> PAPYRUS is the UK Charity for the prevention of young suicide (under 35). For PAPYRUS HOPELINEUK call 0800 068 4141
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/> Mind Mental Health Charity.
- Calm harm app - free app, useful for delaying self-harm and providing alternative coping strategies.
- Kooth.com

Information around risk is included in the booklets attached and there are contact numbers for CAMHS for further advice/emergency assessment should that be needed (please ask Head of Year /Stella Hannam for any further information).

Standard safety advice

1. If your child discloses any thoughts around harm to self - CAMHS duty worker can be contacted for advice **01942 764473 (9 - 5pm)**
2. If they disclose self-harm or suicidal thoughts **after 5pm** please contact **0800 051 3253 (24/7)** mental health crisis line for people of all ages in Wigan).
3. Your child should be taken to A&E for urgent assessment if suicidal plan or intent is disclosed or she/yourself feel unable to keep her safe.
4. **Any stated means used to attempt suicide or self-harm should be removed from access as a means to reduce risk, but this will not eradicate risk.**
5. It can be advisable to check social media content – search-based algorithms that influence news feed.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your child's Head of Year.

Yours sincerely