

Positive Mental Health Policy

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Approved By	Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor
SLT Member Responsible	Assistant Headteacher/DSL (PAT)

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 member of our staff and student body. 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. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. 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.

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.

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.

The Policy Aims to:

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

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mrs Zandra Puddephatt – Assistant Head-Inclusion (DSL/SENCO/Mental Health Lead)
- Mrs Debbie Shutter- Deputy Head (DSL)
- Mrs Carolyn Leonard (DSL/Attendance and welfare)
- Mr Noel Watkins (DSL)
- Heads of Year
- Miss Lauren Wright - Head of PSHE

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. 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 referral to the designated child protection officer. 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 CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Zandra Puddephatt

Health & Well-being Support Plans

Will be drawn up for an individual student causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This will be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about 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.

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

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance¹ 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, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students 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 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 Mrs Zandra Puddephatt or Head of Year or DSL.

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

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

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.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why? All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will store the record appropriately on CPOMS and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student 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/carer.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parent/carer should be informed and students may choose to tell their parent/carer themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer Mrs Zandra Puddephatt or another DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with the parent/carer

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

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parent/carer, the student, 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.

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 on CPOMS.

Parent/carer's are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their child's emotional and mental health. We will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parent/carer's 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 parent/carer.
- Share ideas about how parent/carer's can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parent/carer's 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 student 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 student 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 students safe.

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, 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 Philip Dore, Deputy Head who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Possible Sources of support and Advice

Calderdale's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service Guide for Families

This service guide has been written by parents and professionals working together. It has been developed to support families whose children and young people are experiencing emotional health and wellbeing difficulties.

If you would like to order a hard copy of this document, please contact

Joanna.marshall@calderdale.gov.uk

Wellbeing Guides for Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Anna Freud Centre for children and families has produced some helpful and accessible wellbeing guides for supporting mental health and wellbeing. The booklets cover issues such as anxiety, low mood, and exam stress. The booklets can be downloaded from the Calderdale CAMHS website - <https://calderdalecamhs.org.uk/school-wellbeing-guides/>

Distract-A-Pack (self-care packs for young people who self-harm)

The Distract-A-Pack is for young people who self-harm, they are designed by a group of young people who have personal experience of self-harm. The young people believe alongside the correct support the Distract-A-Pack could help to combat or minimise the amount of self-harm young people experience. If you would like the self-help group to come and give a presentation to your service, or you would like to know more about the pack then please contact Chantelle Hadley on either 01422 392080 or

chantelle.hadley@calderdale.gov.uk

Open Minds: www.openminds.calderdale.org.uk

Healthy Minds: www.healthyminds.calderdale.sch.uk

Kooth: www.kooth.com