

Positive Mental Health Policy

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 Organisation)

At our school, we aim to promote mental health for every pupil and every member of staff. We pursue this aim using universal whole school approaches and selected and targeted approaches for the more vulnerable.

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 pupils 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 pupil’s mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified Special Educational Need.

Aims

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warnings of mental health
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- Provide information for pupils and families about how to promote positive mental health
- Provide support to pupils and their families when a pupil is suffering mental ill health
- Provide support to pupils and their families when a member of the family is suffering from mental ill health

- Provide support to pupils and their families when a school friend is suffering from mental ill health

Lead members of staff

Designated Child Protection Officer/Safeguarding Lead – Rachael Bentham

Deputy designated Child Protected Officer/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Dena Mulligan

Other senior CPO/Safeguarding officers – Emma O’Brien & Louise Rigby

Lead mental health advocate – Rachael Bentham

SENCO – Louise Rigby

Lead LSA for Mental Health interventions – Jackie Johnson

Lead First Aider – Jackie Johnson

Mental Health steering group –

Rachael Bentham (HT)

Louise Rigby (SENCO)

Jackie Johnson (LSA)

Jacelyn Tapper (Mental Health Link Governor)

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health 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 child protection officer. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the lead first aider and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to Healthy Young minds (previously known as CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENCO.

Individual Care Plans

An individual care plan will be drawn up for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This will include:

- Details of the pupil’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 pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are taught across our curriculum, but particularly in our developmental PHSE curriculum and our Relax Kids Education Programme.

The Oldham Whole School and College Emotional Health and Mental Wellbeing Framework – supporting young minds through tough times, has been launched and is now a main driver for our work in this area in school. The framework sets out key actions within eight principles:

1. Management and Leadership
2. The school ethos and environment
3. Curriculum, teaching and learning
4. Student voice
5. Staff development, health and wellbeing
6. Identifying need and monitoring impact
7. Working with parents and carers
8. Coordinated support

“If the eight principles are consistently and comprehensively applied across the whole school setting they can positively impact on:

- *The cognitive development of children, their learning, motivation, and sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and with school.*
- *Staff wellbeing, reduced stress, sickness and absence, improved teaching ability and performance.*
- *Pupil wellbeing including happiness, a sense of purpose, connectedness and meaning.*
- *Development of social and emotional skills and attitudes that promote learning, success, wellbeing and mental health, in school and throughout life.*
- *The prevention and reduction of mental ill health such as depression, anxiety and stress.*
- *Improving school behaviour, including reductions in low-level disruption, incidents, fights, bullying, exclusions and absence.*
- *Reducing risky behaviour, such as impulsiveness, uncontrolled anger, violence, bullying and crime, early sexual experience, alcohol and drug use.”*

(Supporting young minds through tough times)

School has completed an audit against these 8 principles and created an action plan to ensure that it is offering the best possible provision.

Graduated response –

School will respond to support in mental health using a graduated response, as advocated in the Oldham Framework:

Stage 1: Universal Support. This is what school offers all children to promote positive mental health. Support is embedded in all classrooms and is part of the whole school approach. Eg. Relax Kids, Daily mile, Worry boxes in class etc.

Stage 2: Selected support. This is where we put specific interventions into place. These are delivered in school by school staff. Sometimes in consultation with other agencies. Eg. Self esteem groups, 1:1 counselling by specific LSA.

Stage 3: Targeted support. This is where specific interventions are delivered in school by external agencies. School remain involved. Eg. MIND charity, Healthy Young minds.

Children may move around within the different stages depending on their need/improvement.

Relax Kids

The main driver for promoting positive mental health in our school is the implementation of the Relax-Ed Schools Programme. We have invested in this programme and the related training as we feel it has the right approach for our pupils. There are set lessons as well as a toolkit of short activities that the children can access through the day in different circumstances.

“These sessions feature research based techniques such as mindfulness and sensory awareness exercises, physical and mental relaxation, peer and self massage, movement, stretches and breathing exercises to help students to develop a range of social and emotional skills that will enhance their personal and academic skill set.” Relax Kids.

Signposting

We will ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers are aware of sources of support available within the school and the local community. This will be delivered via assemblies, the curriculum, newsletters, the school website and events such as the Parent’s Forum and Showcase events.

The 'Supporting young minds through tough times' document has an extensive directory of agencies and organisations we can signpost staff and families to.

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 our lead mental health advocate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – eg. Long sleeves in warm weather.
- Secretive behaviour
- Avoiding PE or asking to get changed privately
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

A pupil 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.

In this situation, 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 exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file.

This information should be shared with the lead mental health advocate who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We need to be honest with pupil's who make a disclosure about themselves or a friend. If we feel it is necessary to pass on the concerns we should tell them:

- Who we are going to tell (parents/carers, other staff, health care professionals etc.)
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is reason to believe that there is an underlying child protection issue, in which case the CPO will be informed immediately.

Staff will share disclosures with a colleague, usually the lead, as this helps to safeguard their own emotional wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We will discuss this with the pupil.

Working with parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach.

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We will highlight the support available in school and from other services. Next steps will be agreed and a brief record of the meeting will be kept.

In general, we will support parents to support their children by:

- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health issues
- Ensuring all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have a concern
- Making this policy easily accessible to parents
- Sharing ideas through our Parent's Forums/Showcase events etc.
- Keeping parents informed about the related work being carried out in school

Training

Staff will receive face to face and online training about recognising and responding to mental health issues and associated topics. We will also host relevant information electronically for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

School will make links with suitable associations and charities who can support with training and provision in school eg. MIND charity.

Staff will also refer to DfE document: Mental Health and Behaviour in School. March 2016.

Written by R. Bentham. Jan 18.

Adopted by the Governing Body. March 18. To be reviewed in 2021.