

# **South Bromsgrove High**

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

**Reviewed**

**September 2020**

**Next Review**

**September 2021**

**Policy responsibility**

**Deputy Headteacher**

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## Policy Statement

*“Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 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 policy 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 safeguarding policy and, in cases where a student has an identified special educational need, with our SEND policy.

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

The school recognises that only medical professionals should make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition.

## Lead Members of Staff

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

- Miss Kristy Pascoe – DSL/DSL/MH/Deputy Headteacher
- Mr Nick Coates – Deputy DSL/Director of Sixth Form
- Mrs Kate Nicol – Deputy DSL/Assistant Headteacher
- Mrs Jess Rees – Deputy DSL /HOY 11
- Mrs Penny Simpson – Student Support Officer (Health & Mental Wellbeing)
- Miss Hannah Talbot – Deputy DSL/Assistant Headteacher
- Mrs Claire Wilkin - Deputy DSL/Deputy Director of Sixth Form

The school is also committed to identifying and training a Designated Senior Lead for mental health before 2025, as detailed in the Government document *'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper and Next Steps'* (July 2018).

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to a DSL in the first instance. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the student presents as 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 made by a DSL or the Student Support Worker (Health and Mental Wellbeing)

## 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 the PSD curriculum in Years 9 -13. The specific content of PSD sessions will be determined by the specific 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 and support, as needed, for themselves or others.

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

## Signposting

Following lockdown, through our Pastoral School Recovery Plan, a student wellbeing plan has been developed to support and signpost our young people. This will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Some examples of support that is available within our school and locality, who it is aimed at and how to access it, is outlined below:

Example of support	Location	Who it is aimed at	How it is accessed
Student Support Worker (Health & Mental Wellbeing)	SBHS	Individual or groups of students	Via Penny Simpson
Therapeutic Youth Worker (Richard Pincher)	SBHS	Individual students	Referral via Penny Simpson (PS)
Mindfulness and Wellbeing Sessions (Fiona Partridge)	SBHS	Individual or groups of students	Organised by Head of Year
Blues Programme	SBHS	Small groups of Y12/Y13 students	Identified by questionnaire and invited to group sessions
Healthy Minds (NHS)	Community	Students aged 16+	Self-referral to Worcestershire Wellbeing Hub or via GP referral
General Practitioner (GP)	Community	Individual students	Student/Parent book appointments directly
Kooth	Online	Individual students	Online self-referral
CAMHS	Community	Individual students	Through a GP, or through school in consultation with the DSL, Head of Year, the student and their parents/carers.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the Sixth Form Common Room 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**

Mental health is a broad issue and includes a wide range of disorders. Therefore, a large spectrum of symptoms is possible. Note that behavioural changes do not necessarily point to mental health problems – they may be temporary and caused by a negative experience or distressing life event. However, persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviour can indicate an underlying problem.

Warning signs can 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 immediately communicate their concerns to the student's Head of Year or a 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**

Our school adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) and the Local Authority. Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the Regional Child Protection Procedures for West Midlands and the WSCP Levels of Need Guidance.

Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure must report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff or Children's Social Care.

All concerns about a child or young person should be reported without delay and recorded using the electronic recording form on CPOMS. Following receipt of any information raising concern, the DSL will consider what action to take and seek advice from Children's Services as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

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?'

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with students regarding the issue of confidentiality. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Staff must explain this to the student and discuss it with them.

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, 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?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be 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 time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information 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. Each meeting will end with an agreed next step and a brief record of the meeting on should be recorded on Bromcom.

## **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 with 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 safeguarding 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 appraisal 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, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

## **Staff Wellbeing**

The school recognises that staff wellbeing is a key component of a mentally healthy school and can result in reduced levels of stress and sickness and absence, and improved teaching ability and performance. It also enables staff to effectively manage the mental health and wellbeing of students within the school. Following lockdown, through the Leadership section of the School Recovery Plan (SRP), a staff wellbeing plan has been developed to support and signpost our staff.

A number of measures have been implemented to improve staff wellbeing and include:

- An email protocol to reduce email traffic, especially outside of core hours
- Termly 'Wellbeing Weeks' where no after school meetings take place
- Weekly staff shout-outs
- 'Small acts of kindness' between wellbeing buddies
- Small gifts on birthdays
- Wellbeing Committee
- Care Clinic
- Virtual Staffroom