



Maghull High School

Wellbeing Policy

2020-2021

Policy Approved: February 2021
Policy Renewal: February 2022

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Mission statement

At our school, positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of staff and for all students has always been a key priority but in the midst of the global pandemic, takes on even greater significance. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students, as well as Wellbeing for Education Return training through the local authority. In addition to promoting positive mental health and resilience, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we promote a safe and supportive environment for students and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

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 special needs and inclusion 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 to 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:

- Marie Bennett - designated safeguarding lead
- Marie Bennett - mental health lead/staff wellbeing lead
- Laura Lindley – SENDCO/ deputy designated safeguarding lead
- Robyn Watson – First Aid Coordinator
- Robyn Watson - pastoral manager/deputy designated safeguarding lead
- James McQuade – Phoenix Centre Manager

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 normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead or a member of the team. 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 by the DSL.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and

relevant health professionals and will be reviewed by Robyn Watson and the mental health lead. This can include:

- Details of a 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 students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our personal development curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the needs of the cohort we are 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. Within this, we will also teach students the benefits of maintaining general wellbeing.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. We will teach students to differentiate between stress and depression whilst helping them identify the signs of both. Coping strategies for both stress and depression will be highlighted and students will be guided to receive help from outside professionals.

Student, staff and parent feedback, as well as local and national evidence based research will be used regularly to feed into all teaching of mental health and wellbeing.

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 and are asked to employ the CARE method recommended by the Anna Freud Centre: be Curious, be Approachable, Refer any concerns to the safeguarding team and be Approachable. Any warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these should communicate their concerns with the relevant member of the pastoral and/or safeguarding teams. Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather

- 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
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

When assessing the problem, the following will be considered:

- The duration of the changes
- The severity
- The impact
- The complexity
- The context

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 on a safeguarding form and held on the student's confidential safeguarding file. This information should be shared with the DSL/mental health lead, Marie Bennett or the deputy designated safeguarding leads.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. We should inform the student making the disclosure

- 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. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague from the safeguarding team, as 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.

Parents must always be informed if we have concerns around a student's mental wellbeing and students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case and the student is not at risk of immediate harm, 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 may not always be informed, but a member of the safeguarding team must be informed immediately.

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, 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 and give the parent 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 is being shared.

Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful e.g., parent 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. We should finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents 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 we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about wellbeing and common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support wellbeing and positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings and social media channels
- Keep parents informed about the wellbeing and mental health topics their children are learning about in personal development lessons 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 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 needs help

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. We will host relevant information on Firefly 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 issue.

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.

Staff Wellbeing

The wellbeing of staff is key if we are to effectively support the wellbeing of our students. The staff wellbeing group provides a forum for colleagues to raise concerns and suggest improvements to practice which will enhance staff wellbeing. The staff wellbeing policy is available to all staff. An ethos of self-awareness and self-care is fostered, and staff are encouraged to bring individual issues around wellbeing to the attention of Personnel, their union representative, their line manager or Marie Bennett. Concerns regarding a colleague's wellbeing should be addressed in the same way.

<https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/tips-for-teacher-wellbeing>

<https://www.headsup.org.au/healthy-workplaces/workplace-stressors>

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **February 2022**. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

APPENDIX A

COVID-19 Addendum

The COVID-19 outbreak has had an impact on everyone's daily life and it is important to remember that everyone reacts differently to events and changes that they have never faced before. These changes can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves, displaying feelings of loneliness, frustration, anxiety and boredom.

Bomber (2020) has gone so far as to say that society is undergoing 'collective trauma' as a result of the COVID 19 crisis. Due to the crisis, it is likely that our nervous system is on alert with low level fight or flight responses primed. Mental health of all members of the school community will have been affected by changes and uncertainties imposed by the situation and responsive measures should take this into consideration. Continuing positive relationships between teachers and students will be integral to reforming the supportive school community.

Details of the school's safeguarding approach amendments as a result of the pandemic can be found in the safeguarding policy addendum.

Student and family wellbeing and mental health support

- Wellbeing during the pandemic section on the Coronavirus tab of the website signposts a wealth of mental health and wellbeing support agencies and resources
- Additional to the ongoing safeguarding provision, virtual counselling calls have been made from the school counsellor to identified individuals
- Additional regular wellbeing calls have been made from the learning mentors and wider pastoral teams to identified individuals and their families
- Regular posts are released on the school and Phoenix Centre's social media. These posts have included the 5 ways to wellbeing. Within this we have posted workouts, signposted mental health support services, routine, and relevant mental health and wellbeing updates