



POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

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An academy within:



"Learning together; to be the best we can be"

Abbey School

Positive Mental Health Policy At Abbey School (Part of NEXUS MAT)

1 Introduction:

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.

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 other policies due to overlaps and links throughout our statutory information.

2 Aims and Objectives:

- 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 or carers

3 Lead Members of Staff:

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

- Luci Windle – Executive Headteacher
- Wayne Askham – Head of School & CPD Lead
- Liz Shimwell - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jill Newbolt – Assistant Head – Specific link to Wellbeing & Behaviour
- Rachel Lang – Assistant Head – personal development and wellbeing lead
- Jessica Gamble & Natalie Woodhall – Advanced Designated Mental Health Leads
- Natalie Woodhall - Mental Health First Aider
- Katie Crowley – Staff Well-Being Lead
- Tyson Gee - Wellbeing Lead

4 Individual Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP):

At Abbey School, each individual pupil has an individual Education, Health and Care Plan. These are reviewed every year, with new targets set at the annual review involving the pupil, parents / carers, school staff and relevant health professionals. This can also include:

- Details of a pupil's Primary Need
- Annual Review Targets – specifically for Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Annual Review Targets – specifically for Preparing for Adulthood
- Special requirements
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency

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 Safeguarding Lead (Liz Shimwell). 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.

5 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 curriculum. Positive Mental Health is embedded through cross curricular subjects with specific focus in weekly PSHE and Rights Respecting lessons.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort of young people in the class 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 follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

6 Signposting and Support

We display relevant sources of support in communal areas to ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Each student has access to a 'Listen Up' card in which they can speak to a member of staff at any point to discuss any worries or concerns. We also have

Playground Leaders which are promoted by our Pupil Parliament in which peers can offer support at break or dinner times.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. This is regularly embedded through safeguarding training and briefings. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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

7 Managing Disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. This is regularly embedded through safeguarding training and briefings.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on Cause for Concern forms, to be passed on to the Safeguarding Team. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Exact wording of the young person

8 Confidentiality

Staff should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary to pass 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

There are certain situations when information must always be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead e.g. if the student is at risk of harm or there is a child protection issue.

9 Working With Parents and Carers

At Abbey School, we operate an open-door policy in which parents and carers can contact school to discuss any worries or concerns. Meetings and support will be operated on a case by case basis and we can provide follow up meetings or a phone call to answer any further range of questions and information.

In school, we also have a variety of interventions that take place to support positive mental health and wellbeing. This includes ELSA, Music Therapy and Art Therapy. We will also:

- Highlight sources of information and support about 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 Mental Health Policy easily accessible to families
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

We will always highlight further sources of information and provide leaflets and website links to take away where possible. This might also include sources of further support specifically aimed at parents e.g. helplines and forums. Our Safeguarding Team also have links with external agencies such as Early Help and have meetings with services such as CAHMS which may be able to offer support (on a case by case basis).

10 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

11 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 to enable them to keep students safe. Any updates and online training opportunities are also sent via our weekly Safeguarding Briefing.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge are considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

12 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year as a minimum but will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Rachel Lang - Assistant Head – personal development and wellbeing lead

Date: 02/09/2026

Policy to be reviewed in: July, 2027