



# Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

## **Aims and Objectives:**

The Academy will aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, providing an environment in which there is a shared understanding of the approaches needed to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all.

Where students face specific difficulties in relation to their mental health or have a diagnosed mental health condition, the Academy will aim to provide the most appropriate support so that these students are still able to learn and thrive in their education, making reasonable adjustments and liaising with external agencies and other professionals as necessary.

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, the SEND Policy where a student has an identified special educational need and our Safeguarding Policy.

## **Lead Members of Staff:**

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

- Georgina Arnold (Deputy Headteacher)
- Adele Sherlock (Director of Special Educational Needs and Learning Support)
- Abbie Parker (Mental Health Specialist/On-Board Centre Assistant)
- Kerry Edwards (School Governor for Mental Health)

## **Identifying and Reporting Concerns Regarding Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should refer this to one of the safeguarding team using the usual procedure (logging a new incident on CPOMS or the completion of a Yellow Form if CPOMS is unavailable). If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding 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, informing parents and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Warning signs which could indicate a mental health issue will 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- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn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

## 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 follow the guidance issued through annual safeguarding training and in the Staff Handbook. Where necessary following a disclosure, external referrals will be managed by the Year Team of the student concerned.

## Confidentiality:

In line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;

All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets, which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All our staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.

It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.

The Academy may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Care.

We will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other professionals whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.

The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.

We will try to get consent from parents/carers (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding<sup>1</sup>) to share information, if possible. However, **we do not need consent if we have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being. If we decide to share information without consent, we should record this with a full explanation of our decision.**

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<sup>1</sup> Children aged 12 or over may generally be expected to have sufficient understanding. Younger children may also have sufficient understanding. All people aged 16 and over are presumed, in law, to have the capacity to give or withhold their consent, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

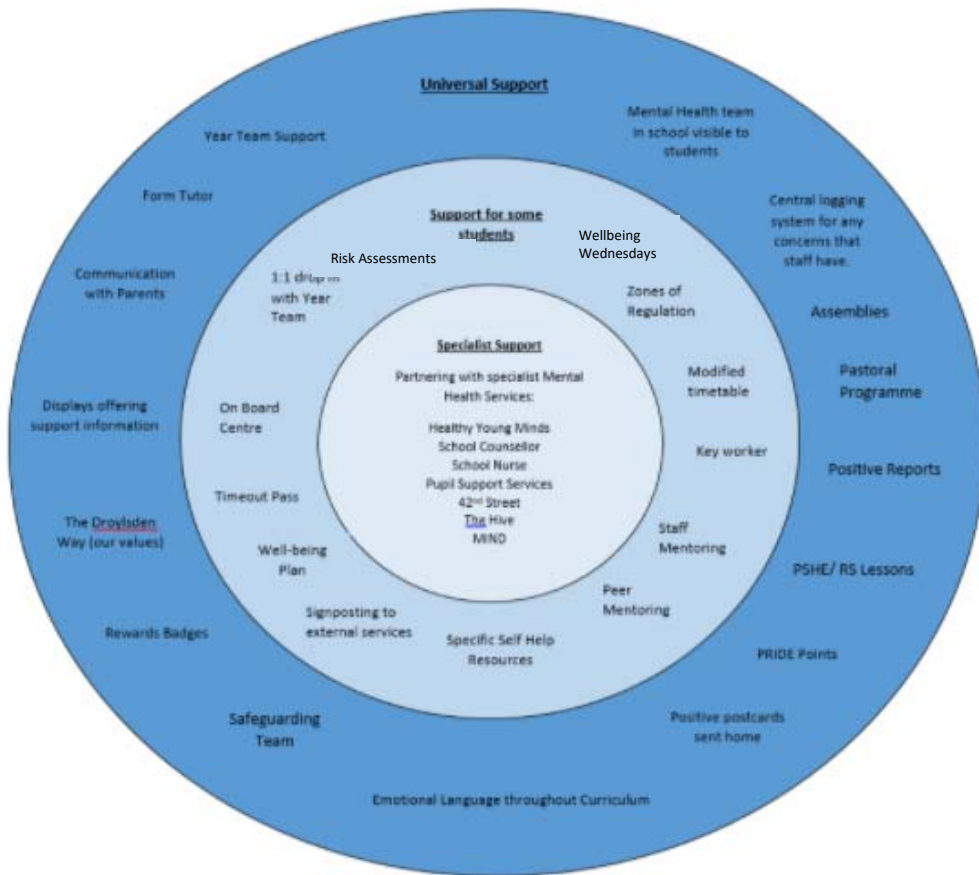
**Supporting Students:**

We recognise some students are at a greater risk of experiencing poor mental health than others. For example;

- Children in Care
- Young carers
- Victims of domestic abuse
- Students who have Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Students who are living in poverty
- Students who have parents who suffer with their own mental health
- Drug and substance misuse - both themselves or a parent

We work closely with a range of external agencies/partners to support the mental health of our students. Their abilities include early detection, assessing potential risks and intervening early to prevent issues escalating.

The Academy will use a range of strategies to support students with issues pertaining to their mental health and wellbeing; the most appropriate strategy will be selected based on the student’s needs which will be discussed at the weekly MAP meetings leading to actions being agreed. The strategies and responses are summarised on the diagram below (fig 1):



### **Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Curriculum:**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by students to understand and look after their own mental health are included as part of our Pastoral and Life Skills Programme (delivered by form tutors) year group assemblies, the taught curriculum (including a specific focus in RSL) and through specific sessions offered as part of Drop-Down Days and planned visits from external experts.

This provision is audited internally to ensure that we meet the statutory requirements and fulfil the intents of our curriculum.

### **Providing Information to Students and Families:**

We will aim to ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community – information is presented on the screens around the Academy, in the library, on display boards in school and parents can access the information on the Academy website which contains a range of information and links to follow for further information, guidance and support. Parents are also directed to services through the weekly Newsflash.

### **Training:**

We will share relevant information through the weekly Staff Bulletin which is essential reading for all staff.

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 necessary.

### **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Staff will be required to sign a document each time the policy is reviewed to say that the policy has been read and understood.