THE Eastbourne ACADEMY

Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kate Mahar
Mental Health Lead	Kate Mahar
Co Heads of School	Steve Rickard and Carly Rollings
Signed by Chair of Governors	Ian Fidge

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Rationale

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organisation). In an average classroom, at least five children will be suffering from a mental health condition.

At The Eastbourne Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. 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 teaching staff and non-teaching staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical information in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

Aims

- 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.

Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the positive mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit are outlined below.

Deputy Headteacher (Safeguarding, Behaviour & Mental Health)	Kate Mahar
Assistant Headteacher (Quality of Engagement)	Tara Hobson
Year Group Manager	Kiarna Foy
Year Group Manager	Jen Charlesworth
Year Group Manager	Gemma Bridger
Year Group Manager	Jack Lugg

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should contact the Year Team in the first instance and record it on My Concern. If there is a danger of immediate harm then the DSL needs to be contacted immediately and the safeguarding procedures are followed. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the 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 and managed by the Year Team.

Staff Wellbeing

It is vital that staff have a named person to maintain the importance of mental health issues and to champion their interest. This role is not to be directly responsible for the mental health of the school community but to keep it at the forefront of our considerations and to highlight the importance of wellbeing at every opportunity.
This includes:

- promotion of wellbeing materials
- acting as a signpost for other services or professionals
- relaying ideas and information to senior staff that could further improve wellbeing in school
- having oversight of school improvement plans to ensure that mental health has a key place
- helping to reduce barriers to positive mental health in school by promoting discourse in relation to mental health

Support Plans

When a child or young person is diagnosed as having a mental health condition, it is important that a meeting takes place with all stakeholders to support their individual needs. A plan will then be written and recorded on My Concern.

This can include:

- reason for the plan, including details of a pupil's condition, special requirements and precautions, medication and any side effects
- resources
- what needs to be done and by whom - who to contact in an emergency
- any contingency arrangements, if necessary
- advice for staff on managing any associated behaviours
- arrangements for reviewing the plan

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our SPHERE curriculum and dedicated Mentor sessions. We will also have regular assemblies led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead in order to support Year Groups with their mental health.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will respond to topical issues that may impact on the mental health of our staff and students as they arise.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within the school and in the local community. The support available will be linked on our website here: Website Links.

We will share new support and links as they arise with parents via our parent newsletter and with staff via the staff bulletin and in Monday/Friday briefings as necessary.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicates a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs must **always** be taken seriously and recorded on CPOMs as soon as possible (if not immediately).

Possible warnings signs may include, but are not limited to:

- evident changes in behaviour
- 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
- reduced concentration
- lowering of academic achievement
- talking, joking or researching 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 secretively
- an increase in lateness to or absence from school
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- spending more time at the bathroom
- discontinued hobbies or interests
- failure to take care of personal appearance
- seemingly overly cheerful after a bout of depression

Managing Disclosures

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 onto CPOMs as soon as possible (if not immediately). If, for any reason, CPOMs cannot be accessed then the concern must be reported to the DSL in person.

We must be honest students that we cannot offer confidentiality. 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

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL team must be informed immediately. The only situation in which we would not inform parents are where we judge there to be an immediate and serious risk to the child.

Working with 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 common mental health issues on our school website
- ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings

Behaviour

We recognise that behaviour in young people is a form of communication. At The Eastbourne Academy we strive to have firm, fair boundaries that are kindly delivered. Our students that demonstrate behaviours that negatively impact their ability to learn, or the ability of others to learn, will have access to:

- Opportunities to give their view
- A supportive pastoral structure
- A fresh start once the incident has been dealt with
- Calm, kind staff that work with the best interests of our students at the forefront of their decision making

Where dysregulation or disruptive behaviour is persistent, we will discuss the needs of our students as a team - such as in our fortnightly inclusion meetings - and endeavour to have a holistic view of the young person which informs solution focused, forward thinking interventions.

Behaviour, safeguarding and mental health are not mutually exclusive. Our students are complex and have many different influences, concerns and aspirations. We do not pretend to always know *why* our students may react to the school environment in positive or less positive ways, but we absolutely acknowledge that mental health is a key factor and therefore seek to create an environment that nurtures and encourages high levels of wellbeing.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues and receive annual child protection 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 performance management 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 additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health