



Gosfield School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

AIMS

At Gosfield School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing are to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. *"Mental Health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stress of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."* (World Health Organisation)

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience.

Our role in school is to ensure that students are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported in order to allow them to reach their full potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about:

- what they can do to maintain positive mental health
- what affects their mental health
- how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues
- where they can go if they need help and support

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and SEND. In addition, the links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. Staff, students and parents are able to talk about wellbeing and resilience and what this means in the school. The overall culture of the school fosters a child centred approach to mental wellbeing, and all staff are committed to supporting students including the most vulnerable children and young people.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- Mrs Amanda Gwynne is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL has a duty to respond to the needs of those identified with mental health issues and be part of the process of negotiating mental health care that meets the needs of our students and community. This may involve working with outside agencies, providing support in school with the Pastoral team, maintaining records and monitoring the progress of individuals. The DSL will also

assess any risks to extra – familial harms and exploitation as a preventative measure where the child is deemed vulnerable. If a child is at risk of significant harm the DSL will liaise with Safeguarding partners and follow advice from the Children and Families Hub(LSCB) and inform the Police if necessary. Parents will be kept informed unless they present the immediate threat to a child.

- Mr Rod Jackson (Principal), Mr John Cooper (Vice Principal) and Mrs Heather Bougard (Head of Prep) are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Pastoral Staff: Including the Heads of Section, Heads of House, Tutors, Pastoral Assistant, Principal First Aider, PSHEE Coordinator and Pastoral Support staff.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the student's tutor or class teacher in Prep. The tutor or class teacher may have information to share with staff, the tutor or class teacher can then refer to the Pastoral Team. The Head of Section who will make the appropriate enquiries and inform other members of the team, DSL, SENCO or School Nurse depending on the needs identified.

If there is a concern that a student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the School's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the student presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

SCOPE

This policy, which outlines Gosfield School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing, is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and Governors. It should be read in conjunction with other School policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, PSHEE and SEND and sit alongside our child protection procedures.

POLICY STATEMENT

At Gosfield School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all students, their families and members of staff and Governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

At our School we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable. At times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our School we:

- Help students to understand better their emotions and feelings
- Help students to feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help students socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure students know that they count.
- Encourage students to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- Help students to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting Student Voice in a safe environment
- Promoting student voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Whole school approaches
- Support for students going through recent difficulties such as bereavement or divorce within the family.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at students with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.

EDUCATION

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHEE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHEE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHEE Association promoting students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Relationships, health, and sex education (RSHE): mental wellbeing training module

Through the new mandatory health education curriculum, students are taught:

- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns, including common types of mental ill health
- where and how to seek support
- whom they should speak to in school if they're worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing.

The mental wellbeing training module aims to help schools:

- understand what they should teach.
 - improve their confidence in delivering mental wellbeing content.
 - engage children and young people in conversations about mental health and wellbeing.
- Additionally, we use assemblies, the tutor programme, targeted group work where required, chat clinics, peer mentoring and visiting speakers from mental health charities to raise awareness of help and support beyond the curriculum and school environment. We promote applications specific to mental health and wellbeing, such as online platforms provided by NSPCC and Childline. We support students with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as helping students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. Some online platforms provide 24 hour contact.

SIGNPOSTING

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. Information containing useful contact numbers, the names and photos of Safeguarding officers and key Pastoral staff are in tutor bases, social spaces, corridors, and in changing rooms.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS

Staff may become aware of warning signs which 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 alert the Tutor or Head of Section who will speak with the student and make contact with home if appropriate to establish where support is needed. Some of the indicators are listed here:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Significant changes in behaviour
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, education staff are well placed to identify these and other potential warning signs. In doing so they can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention. If the student makes a disclosure that suggests there is any risk to the child, this will be referred to the Safeguarding Team for immediate action.

The Pastoral Team led by the Assistant Principal Pastoral, Mrs Amanda Gwynne (DSL) and the Vice Principal, Mr John Cooper, work with the Heads of Section, to identify any patterns or potential need. It may be necessary to create an Individual Care Plan in consultation with the student and the family. It may also be necessary to involve external support. We monitor the following to keep our students safe and supported:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns

- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- Monitoring of internet searches identified by the School's firewall

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND SUPPORT

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways for which we should be prepared. We allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health. For example:

- those who are in care,
- young carers,
- those who have had previous access to CAMHS
- those living with parents/carers with a mental illness
- those living in households experiencing domestic violence
- those living in a household experiencing financial difficulties or pending homelessness or hidden homelessness
- those living in a household where a parent is in Prison.
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school.
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care.
- those with SEN, disability, or gender questioning

We work closely with local services and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating. We work with agencies where a referral has been made by the School or family or doctor, and the multi-agency approach can involve a combination of those listed below:

- Principal First Aider
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service) (CYPMHS)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Guardians

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of a meeting with parents, lines of communication should be kept open in case the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed or agreed are added to the student's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

In order to support parents we will:

- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact at the School and how to contact them, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

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 in order to enable them to keep students safe. All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff should report any concern to the DSL or deputy.

Training opportunities for staff that 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 to developing situations with one or more students.

If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should follow their child protection policy and speak to their designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or take them to A&E immediately. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Useful links

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/09/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/a-whole-school-approach-to-wellbeing/>

Signed _____

Mr Rod Jackson, Principal

Date _____

11/9/2021

Date of next review: September 2027