**GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH POLICY FOR SCHOOL XX**

**Policy Statement**

*‘Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community’. (World Health Organization, 2012)*

Our aim is to promote positive mental health for all our students and for every member of our staff. We do this using a whole school approach which includes providing mental health education, running well-being programmes, establishing policies and procedures to pick up on any mental ill health difficulties early, educating on signposting and for those vulnerable, specific targeted help where appropriate. Our ethos to promote parity of both physical and mental health is embedded firmly in the fundamental beliefs and values of the school We will, at all times promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

This is the main mental health policy of the school. There are also a range of specific policies relating to depression, self-harm, eating disorders and substance misuse.

**Scope**

This document outlines the school’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff, governors and parents.

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 SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

**Policy Aims:**

* To promote positive mental health in the whole school community
* To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues through PHSE education for students and staff INSET.
* To alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
* To train staff in how to talk to and engage with a student who might be presenting with a mental health difficulty
* Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
* Provide support to students who have mental ill health as well as their peers and parents/carers

**Staff**

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

* XXXXX - designated safeguarding lead (DSL), contact xx
* XXXXX - mental health lead, contact xxx
* XXXXX - school nurse/first aider, contact xxx
* XXXXX - pastoral lead, contact xxx
* XXXXX - CPD lead, contact xxx
* XXXXX - Head of PSHE, contact xxx
* XXXXX - School chaplain/faith representatives in school, contact xxx
* XXXXX - school counsellor (to be agreed)

**Procedure**

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 standard child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or the head teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the usual procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff/school nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix

\*(If the school does not have a mental health lead member of staff, then it should be stated who has this responsibility)

**Individual Care Plans**

There will be a number of different sources of school based support, including pastoral staff, behaviour and learning support, school counsellors etc.

Individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health will be drawn up in collaboration with the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. 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 students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe will be included as part of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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.

Information for teaching material will be guided by validated organisations such as the PHSE Association and stem4.

Parents will be informed of the topics being taught and any concerns will be addressed beforehand. The school will endeavour at all costs to teach health and emotional wellbeing topics in a sensitive and safe manner which helps rather than harms.

Teacher guidance will be made available on teaching mental health topics.

Support will also made available to students or staff who may disclose concerns after these lessons. For students this will be through discussion with their form tutor or pastoral staff in the first instance or the mental health lead. Teachers will approach the mental health lead or their manager.

**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.

There will be learning that can be accessed on the school’s virtual learning portal and also on Mind-Ed a national learning resource developed by **stem4**.

There will be regular training of staff of mental health issues and on active listening through INSET training.

The mental health lead in the school will have further training possibly including Mental Health First Aid.

**Signposting**

Staff, students and parents will be made aware of sources of support within school and in the local community and these will be made available on XXXX

Relevant sources of support will also be displayed in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Help seeking information will also be made prominent and include

* What help is available
* Who it is aimed at
* How to access it

**Risk Indicators**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health difficulties. Staff observing any of these warning signs will communicate their concerns with XXXXXXXX, mental health lead on XXX

Specific warning signs are made available under each specific conditions (see stem4 draft policy guidelines for eating disorders, self-harm, depression, substance misuse)

Possible general warning signs include:

* Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
* Changes in eating / sleeping habits
* Increased isolation from friends or family
* Social withdrawal
* Negative changes in activity and mood
* Lowering of academic achievement
* Talking about self-harm or suicide
* Misuse of drugs or alcohol
* Increased risk behaviour
* Expressing feelings of failure or loss of hope
* Repeated absence from school

**Managing disclosures**

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member. All staff will be briefed on how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. This will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures will be recorded in writing and held on the identified student’s confidential file. This written record should include:

* Date
* The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
* Main points from the conversation
* Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the mental health lead, XXX who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

**Confidentiality**

The school will follow rules of confidentiality as within the safeguarding policy. The procedure in this school is XXX

Students will be informed from the outset on who will be told of the information they disclose, what was going to be said and why it was needed to be said.

Parents of students under the age of XXX will be informed routinely. Students over the age of XXX will be encouraged to tell their parents themselves within a XX period subsequent to which the school will inform them.

If a student gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, the DSL [XXX Insert Name] will be informed immediately who will implement child protection procedures.

**Working with Parents**

The school will endeavour to work with parents in a sensitive and supportive manner. The main point of contact for parents is XXX . If a face to face meeting is arranged, the aim of the meeting will be clear, a point of contact from the school will be named, agreed next steps will be recorded and reviewed together.

In addition, the school will

* Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on the school website
* Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to
* Make the school’ mental health policies easily accessible to parents
* Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through regular information evenings
* 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

**Supporting Peers**

The school will support peers who have a friend with a mental ill health difficulty in the following ways

* Manage disclosure - what it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
* How friends can best support
* Their role in disclosing signs of relapse
* Where and how to access support for themselves
* Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in Month, Year.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to XXXXX our mental health lead via phone XXXXX or email xxxx@xxxx.sch.uk

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

(Appendix. Guidelines on how to refer to CAMHS, **stem4** policies on eating disorders, self harm, depression, addiction)