MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Number	0073		**Policy Author**	A Gurney
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Policy Statement

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

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, targeted, and bespoke approaches aimed at promoting positive mental health and wellbeing through our work as a Trauma Perceptive Practice setting (TPP).

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 and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- 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

Lead Staff

Whilst we all have a responsibility to promote a positive culture of mental health & wellbeing, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Vicky Oddy – Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead/Trained Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mental Health First Aiders (see staff newsletter)
- Mental Health Champions (see staff newsletter)

Promoting wellbeing at all times: Staff

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Follow the school's communications guidance, including when it is and isn't reasonable to respond to communications
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff
- Provide a non-judgemental support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work

Role of senior staff

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct
- Manage a non-judgemental support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue
- Regularly review the demands on staff workload
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines, and events so that staff can plan and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern to access further support

Role of the Trust Board

The Trust Board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteachers and executive leaders
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly regarding workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring workload
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

If you have a concern

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student or colleague 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 communicate their concerns.

Possible warning signs include:

- Student or staff member has told you there is a problem, for example they are feeling low and/or anxious recently
- Significant changes in appearance, for example: weight loss/gain, decline in personal hygiene
- 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
- Changes in behaviours
- 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
- Students skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Emergencies

'A mental health crisis often means that you no longer feel able to cope or be in control of your situation. You may feel great emotional distress or anxiety, cannot cope with day-to-day life or work, think about suicide or self-harm, or experience hallucinations and hearing voices.' *NHS, 2019*

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should document their concerns via CPOMS. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed.

If a student or colleague presents as a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid trained staff.

There may be instances where a student or staff member's behaviour and/or mental state are concerning and may lead to immediate danger through harm to themselves or others.

The diagrams below are aimed to assist in the rapid response to these instances.

Mental Health Emergency Protocol: Students	
Mental Health concern reported via Emergency On Call/Team SOS	
↓	
First Aider to assess	
↓	
AT IMMEDIATE RISK	CAUSE FOR CONCERN
Phone call home to parents/contact 999 for crisis support (A & E)	Phone call to parents signposting to appropriate agencies/GP
↓	↓
DSL/DDSL to arrange meeting with parents and student	Wellbeing Centre follow up weekly with review date set
↓	↓
Referrals to outside agencies	Further agency support investigated

Mental Health Emergency Protocol: Staff

Mental Health concern reported via Emergency On Call/Team SOS	
↓	
First Aider to assess	
↓	
AT RISK	CAUSE FOR CONCERN
Discussion with staff member/contact 999 for crisis support (A & E)	Discussion with member of staff/ signposting to appropriate agencies/GP/EAP
↓	↓
HR informed/emergency contact notified if required	Follow up and review with line manager
↓	↓
Follow up and review with line manager on return to work	Further support available via HR (e.g. OH) if required

Individual Support Plans

It can be helpful to draw up an individual support plan or risk assessment to support a student with managing their mental health at school. This should be drawn up involving 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

Signposting

We will signpost staff, students, and parents to sources of support within school and in the local community including through providing relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the restaurant, common spaces, and toilets.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we increase the chance of student or staff member help-seeking by ensuring they understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Managing disclosures about colleagues

A colleague 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. Disclosures by or about students should be dealt with using our usual safeguarding procedures.

If a member 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 advising and our first thoughts should be of the colleague's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring 'why?'.

All colleagues have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and should be encouraged to self-refer via this service if they need to: Education Support helpline - free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff

Details of Mental Health First Aiders who can signpost further support are available in the staff newsletter.

Promoting Positive Mental Health

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. 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

Our academies have fully resourced Wellbeing Centres to provide this specialist support.

Supporting Staff

The Staff Wellbeing page on the Basildon Academies Staff Portal signposts staff to avenues of support both internally and through external providers. This includes signposting to the Employee Assistance Programme where staff can receive, confidential wellbeing advice and support 24 hours a day. Mental Health First aiders are also sign posted on the staff portal so staff can have daily access to support.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual safeguarding training.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. Our National College & National Online Safety subscription provides online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 developmental RSHE curriculum. The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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 aim to teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Parental Engagement

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information about supporting their children's emotional and mental health.

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 go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy resources accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Appendix A:

All Basildon academies Trust employees are entitled to and will receive the following well-being support:

- Supervision for DSLs.
- Wellbeing Action Plans for those requiring support (Mind resource).
- Paid subscription to the Employee Assistance Programme
- Access to Senior Mental Health Leads in schools.
- MHFA in schools.
- Dedicated spaces for staff to work and take breaks.
- Free access to tea, coffee and breakfast each day.
- Positive Mental Health Policy.
- Staff Wellbeing Group.
- Flexible Working & Leave of Absence Policy.
- Staff incentives, e.g. access to a free gym, annual flu jab vouchers, free eye tests.
- Line management support.
- Return to work process.
- Staff risk assessments for reasonable adjustments.
- Trust HR & Finance Departments available in person to all staff.
- Secure onsite car parks.
- Non-teaching pastoral teams.
- Awareness raising ('Kindness Is Everything').
- Employed Cover Supervisors.
- Access to Central Admin teams & admin support.
- Lessons QA are not graded, culture of typicality.
- Clear consequences programme
- Data support, inc. report writing through Pupil Progress, Bromcom, CPOMs, Edukey.
- Wide and varied CPD package – universal, targeted, bespoke CPD.
- NPQs, ECT & ITT programmes to support career development.
- Comprehensive support for ECTs, with dedicated mentors, time for instructional coaching, regular meetings
- No expectation of answering emails outside of working hours. Email templates – no obligation to reply out of hours.
- Regular staff surveys.
- Culture of peer-to-peer praise.
- Open-door culture.
- Occupational Health Referral Scheme.
- Family friendly Policy.
- Apply 9 principles of DFE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter.
- New employee Induction programme.
- New Staff Welcome Pack
- Staff Handbooks.
- Calendared staff well-being events.