

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

Approved by:

Chair of Governors: T Boving Foster

Headteacher: P Buckland

Date: 5th March 2021

Review date: March 2022

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1. Aims

This document describes the school's approach to tackling mental health issues and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and resilience 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 or carers

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#) which now specifically considers the issue of mental health as an independent factor. It also takes into account [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(2018\)](#) and in addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing \(2015\)](#).

It also takes into account the DfE recommendation that all schools and colleges should have a Designated Mental Health Lead in place by 2025. This recommendation can be found in the Government's response to [Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper \(2018\)](#)

This policy also takes into account the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) which states that a person with a mental health difficulty is protected if their condition leads to a long-term and substantial (meaning more than "minor or trivial") adverse impact on their ability to carry out their normal day-to-day activities. This will include students with conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, self-harm and disordered eating. Under the Equality Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against students with a mental health condition that amounts to a disability, and 'reasonable adjustments' may need to be made to ensure they can access education. The general principle of 'reasonable adjustments' is that wherever reasonably possible, schools should make practical adjustments to enable a student to continue their education.

3. Definitions

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)

Mental Health Crisis: The mental health children's charity Young Minds reports that 4.4% of people aged 15-16 have diagnosable anxiety disorders. They also note that within the same age group cases of depression have doubled between the 1980s and now. The charity concludes that 3 children in every classroom have a mental health problem. NHS England's 2017 survey of young people found that "One in six (16.9%) 17 to 19-year-olds were found to have a mental disorder with one in 16 (6.4%) experiencing more than one mental disorder at the time of the interview. This age group also had the highest rate of emotional disorder (14.9%)." The same survey found that in "17 to 19-year-olds with a mental disorder, nearly half (46.8%) had self-harmed or made a suicide attempt."

Good Mental Health in young people can be defined as people who have the ability to:

- Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- Use and enjoy solitude
- Become aware of others and empathise with them
- Play and learn
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Face and resolve problems and setbacks and learn from failure

Disorders of **poor mental health** include:

- Emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression
- Conduct disorders, e.g. antisocial behaviour
- Hyperkinetic disorders, e.g. ADHD
- Developmental disorders, e.g. delay in acquiring certain skills
- Attachment disorders
- Other mental health disorders including eating disorders, habit disorders, PTSS

Common mental health concerns amongst young people include:

Anxiety- Some people will experience levels of anxiety from time to time. Most people can relate to feeling tense, uncertain fearful for example before an exam. These in turn can lead to sleep problems, loss of appetite and ability to concentrate. This kind of anxiety can be useful because it makes you more alert and enhance performance. However, if anxiety overwhelms a child they may not be able to deal with daily activities. If the anxiety stays as a high level the young person may feel powerless, out of control and sometimes this can lead to a panic attack.

Examples:

- Phobias
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Generalised Anxiety disorder, (GAD)
- Post -traumatic stress disorder, (PTSD)

- Panic Disorder

Depression- In its mildest form depression can be being in low spirits, it doesn't stop you leading a normal life but it makes things harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe (Clinical Depression) it can be life threatening. Some young people need medication to alleviate their symptoms.

Examples include Manic Depression, Seasonal Affective Disorder and Bipolar Disorder. These depressive illnesses may be recognised by:

- Change in normal pattern of behaviour
- Withdrawal from institutions (school), social activities and friendship groups
- Lowering of academic achievement and attendance

Eating disorders- While on the surface disordered eating appears to be all about food and weight it is often the outward expression of emotional problems. Eating disorders include but are not exclusive to Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge -Eating Disorder. Disordered eating affects the physical and emotional well-being of an individual and also leads to changes in behaviour. Very often masked by the eating disorder there is usually an underlying reason this can be a coping mechanism and this is a way of gaining control.

Young people may display the following behaviours:

- Loss of concentration
- Skipping meals
- Disappearing to the toilet after meals
- Preoccupation with body image, dieting.
- Excessive exercise
- Secretive behaviour
- Becoming irritable and withdrawing from social activities particularly those involving food.

Self-Harm- Self Harm describes a wide range of behaviours that people use to cope with difficult feelings and distressing life experiences. Some people have described self-harm as a way to express suicidal feelings and thoughts without taking their own life.

Examples:

- Cutting
- Burning
- Severe scratching
- Biting
- Scalding
- Pulling out hair
- Picking at skin or re-opening wounds

4. Lead members of staff

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

- Our Designated Mental Health Lead is Mr Allen Martin, Assistant Head, Student Welfare. Mr Martin is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead. You can contact him by email at amartin@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk.
- Our Pastoral Support Officer, Miss Josie Breeden, who supports students throughout the school with mental health concerns. (jbreeden@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)
- Mr Colin Munro is the school SENDCo and supports students with SEN needs including those students with SEMH concerns. He can be contacted on cmunro@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk
- Mr Nick Henderson, the Duty Pastoral Officer who supports students before and during the school day, including break and lunchtimes. (nhenderson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)
- The Headteacher, Mr Buckland and Deputy Head, Dr Mawson who are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. (pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk and emawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)
- Heads of Year who take responsibility for the pastoral and academic welfare of their particular year groups.

5. Role of the Designated Mental Health Lead

The Mental Health Lead will be responsible for the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing. They will also forge effective links with NHS mental health services.

Duties and responsibilities:

Whole school approach

Developing and overseeing the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, including:

- How it's reflected in the design of behaviour policies, pastoral support and the curriculum (including in Citizenship and RSE)
- How staff are supported with their own mental wellbeing
- How pupils and parents are engaged

Working with pupils with mental health needs

- Knowing what national and local mental health services are available, and signposting these to pupils and parents
- Developing links with local mental health services
- Supporting the identification of at risk pupils and pupils exhibiting signs of mental ill health
- Establishing and following a clear process if a concern is raised about a pupil's wellbeing
- Referring pupils to NHS services when appropriate
- Coordinating the mental health needs of pupils within the school
- Overseeing the delivery of pupil interventions, where these are being delivered at school and evaluating the outcomes of these interventions on pupils' education and wellbeing

Supporting other staff

Making sure staff can:

- Recognise signs and symptoms of mental health needs in pupils, and
- Know what to do should they have a concern

Supporting staff in contact with pupils with mental health needs by:

- Raising awareness and giving all staff the confidence to work with these pupils
- Sharing information about pupils with mental health needs with other members of staff where appropriate, so that there can be support throughout the school environment

6. Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Within the School

- The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as a significant part of our Citizenship and RSE provision
- Student voice plays an important part in addressing mental health and wellbeing concerns both in terms of the school environment and the opportunity students get to feel like their voices have been heard
- Mental health is also thematically addressed in form periods, Head of Year assemblies, SLT assemblies and through the sixth form lecture programme. This includes the marking of World Mental Health Day
- Guest speakers and agencies are invited into school on a regular basis and supporting information is shared from organisations like Eden Mind and the Barnardo's Link programme. This information is displayed around school and sent to pupils and their parents. Campaigns that include practical activities such as workshops to promote mental well-being are particularly effective in promoting the awareness of good mental health and these are advertised regularly
- Every year, sixth formers are trained in Mental Health First Aid and are then able to support younger students in general and specifically through the buddying programme

7. Internal Support for Students (see Appendix 1)

- Mental health concerns about a student can be raised by both teaching and support staff through CPOMS as a first option, or through the safeguarding referral form. These forms are available in reception, the staff room and the canteen. This information is then disseminated by the Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) to Heads of Year, tutors and other key members of staff
- Parents can directly contact any member of the pastoral team, but are encouraged to access form tutors initially
- Students are welcome to contact any member of the pastoral team including tutors, HoYs and the DMHL directly.
- Within school, there are a number of people who can provide mental health support. Heads of Year are highly experienced and knowledgeable and can work with students to tackle the earlier stages of mental health problems. Students with SEMH conditions are supported by the SENDCo and through the

use of PLPs (Personal learning Plans) where appropriate. Both the Pastoral support Officer (PSO) and Duty Pastoral Officer (DPO) have a caseload of students that they see on a regular basis and who they support with medium and long term mental health worries

- Ultimately, the DMHL decides if a mental health concern can be adequately tackled through single agency intervention. If this is not the case, they may instigate an Early Help Assessment or refer the student to an external provider.

8. External Support and signposting for Students (see Appendix 1)

The school uses a wide variety of external providers to support students with mental health concerns. These include:

- GPs- Your GP is usually the first person to contact regarding concerns about a child's mental health.
- CAMHS- Child and Mental Health Services. GPs and School can refer students
- Carlisle and Eden Mind- Local wing of national mental health charity
- Barnardo's Link Project- Local support from national charity
- Kooth- Online, free counselling for young people
- Young Minds- General mental health and knowledge
- Childline- Free counselling for young people online or by phone
- Samaritans- Suicide phone-line (116 123)
- Papyrus- Prevention of youth suicide
- Stem 4- Supporting positive mental health in teenagers
- Beat- Leading eating disorder charity
- There are a number of excellent apps available to support students that are struggling with mental health. For example: *Thrive, Cove, Feeling Good, Catch it, My Possible Self, ThinkNinja*

9. Support for Parents and Staff

- 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 go 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
 - When possible, offer workshops for parents to attend regarding mental health concerns and practice.
- 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 to enable them to keep students safe. Key staff members such as Heads of Year, Senior Leadership, the PSO, SENDCO and DPO will receive enhanced safeguarding training and training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be supported where possible

- Parents and staff members may also struggle with their mental health. Caregiving and teaching can both be emotionally demanding jobs and it is important to ensure that care is taken around personal wellbeing. In the first instance, staff should talk to their line manager. More general concerns about mental health can be raised in the Staff Welfare Committee. Both staff and parents should be encouraged to seek out their GP as the NHS offers a variety of therapeutic interventions to assist with mental health problems.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Allen Martin, Assistant Head, Student Welfare. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Child protection and safeguarding
- SEN
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- RSE

Appendix 1: Reporting Mental Health Concerns Flowchart

