



## Community Wellbeing Policy

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## **Rationale and Purpose**

At Oathall school, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage all stakeholders to be open and we want everyone to have their voice heard. At our school, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our school, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

### **1. Scope**

**1.1** This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole school community. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including associate staff and governors as well as parents/carers.

**1.2** The policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Policy, The Health and Safety Policy and The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**1.3** The aim of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our staff and students.

We intend to achieve this by:

- Raising the profile for the whole school community of the importance of positive mental health and well-being, including staff, students and the wider school community
- Helping children to understand their emotions and experiences better
- Ensuring our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries
- Helping children to form and maintain relationships
- Encouraging children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem
- Helping children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks
- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in themselves, colleagues and students
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Providing support and/or signposting to students suffering mental ill health, their peers and parents or carers.

### **2. Key Staff Members**

**2.1** All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Student Wellbeing lead

- Staff Wellbeing lead
- Heads of Year
- Deputy Heads of Year
- Assistant Heads of Year
- Staff Mental Health First Aiders.

**2.3** Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the appropriate staff member in the first instance.

**2.4** If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to a designated safeguarding lead in person, as well as recorded on the school's confidential reporting system (MyConcern). See Safeguarding Policy for further detail.

### **3. Staff Wellbeing**

**3.1** At Oathall we recognise the value of good management practice, with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff, and workplace unions by:

- Fostering a supportive work environment
- Operating in a fair and consistent manner
- Promoting a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff can develop a healthy mind
- Paying attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress
- Following agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health and well-being problems, including occupational health support
- Ensuring that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work
- Carefully planning and agreeing work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate
- Managing pressures, which may affect staff, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible and review regularly by gaining staff feedback
- Conducting an annual survey of staff, including a section on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

#### **3.2 All staff need to:**

- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem, if possible, to a clearly identified line manager, or staff wellbeing lead
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace
- Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered e.g. Health Assured helpline, occupational health and mediation meetings to assist employees to return to normal working relationships
- Where possible, be alert of any indication of changes of behaviour in

colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.

#### **4. Student Wellbeing**

**4.1** All students have timetabled Personal Development lessons. This aims to support students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they require to keep themselves mentally healthy.

**4.2** The tutor programme has wellbeing as a consistent feature of its weekly programme including reflection time.

**4.3** The assembly programme acknowledges key annual events such as Mental Health Awareness week and Empathy Day.

**4.4** We have a range of support available at Oathall for any students struggling, including that listed below:

- Part of the Mental Health Schools Team for Mid Sussex
- Oathall Wellbeing Network (OWN)
- Tutor Wellbeing representatives
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Google classrooms
- Wellbeing focus in tutor time
- Dedicated reflection time
- Digital and fixed displays
- Pastoral team
- Commitment to achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

#### **5. Signposting**

**5.1** We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. This is shared via letters to parents, via the pastoral team for students and via briefings for staff as well as being visible on the mental health and wellbeing section of the school website.

**5.2** In key areas of the school displays, leaflets and other resources can be found. These areas include the learning resource centre, pastoral offices and on displays in large corridors. These are also shared via Google classrooms.

#### **6. Recognising Warning Signs**

Our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students who need it, when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate, using school referral procedures.

Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption.

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education
- Family and relationship problems.

## **7. Managing disclosures**

**7.1** A student 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.

**7.2** If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health and wellbeing or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

**7.3** Staff should listen rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

**7.4** All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file, by documenting on SIMS/PARS. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation

## **8. Confidentiality**

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a student, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the student. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell
- What the staff member is going to disclose
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the student's consent first, such as in the case of students who are at immediate risk. Protecting a student's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures if we judged a child to be at risk.

## **9. Whole School Approach**

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

### **9.1 Working with parents and carers**

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

### **9.2 Working with agencies**

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- Family Support Workers
- Behaviour support works
- Educational Psychologist
- Other Schools
- Counselling services
- CAMHS
- Medical professionals

## **10. Training**

Staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files.

We will post all relevant information, and additional information, on our school website so staff can learn more about child mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPL throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

## **11. Support Services**

A regularly updated list of support services is maintained on the college website.