



# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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## 1.0 Policy statement

At *Windlesham School* we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to 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.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Windlesham School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. In this policy, 'parents' includes carers.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, listed in Appendix A.

## 3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with those with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to those with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and staff and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

## 4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff (tutors/class teachers)   ▪ SENDCO + SLT
- Designated Safeguarding Lead   ▪ PSHE Coordinator

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the SENDCo or the Safeguarding Lead.

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

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary. If a member of staff is concerned about another member of staff they should, in the first instance talk to a member of the SLT team or the SENDCo

## 5.0 Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through [Brighton CAMHS](#) or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

#### 6.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and our peer/buddy mentoring programme.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/planning-pshe-education>

Embedding this guidance in our curriculum at all ages levels to promotes pupils' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils experiencing difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as assisting pupils to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

#### 7.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (staffroom noticeboards, leaflets in front office) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website and social media), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils, parents, staff and governors understand:

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

#### 8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

##### **Windlesham's School Based Support for all pupils:**

- A comprehensive PHSE/RSE curriculum across the school
- The class/form staff whom play a particularly important role with guiding pupils in their personal development. Staff encourage pupils to pursue an active and balanced life and to develop positive friendships. When identified as necessary, the year group teaching assistants and teachers run interventions, for pastoral pupils with needs.
- Practical support in class for pupils with specific learning needs reinforces pupil's self-esteem and confidence.
- Other strategies include:
  - Worry boxes in forms
  - pastoral staff briefings
  - Circle time/friendship groups
  - open door policy with parents

Windlesham is committed to a collaborative approach to supporting pupils, including the school's staff, parents and external agencies and other experts.

##### **Local Support**

In Brighton, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the [BHISS schools wellbeing service partnership](#), a group of providers specialising in children and young

people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

For Pupils and Parents:

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/bhiss-schools-wellbeing-service>

For Staff and Governors:

<https://mindedhub.org.uk/>

Windlesham's school based support for all staff: SLT or the SENDCo.

## 9.0 [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 SENDCo.

Possible warning signs which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- 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
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## 10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents and carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

With a policy of high adult to pupil ratios at Windlesham, we are able to ensure timely and effective identification of pupils who could benefit from targeted support. We can subsequently ensure appropriate support is available including:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Brighton City Council Children's Services, [Brighton CAMHS](#) and other agencies and services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Be familiar with the process utilised by the Brighton and Hove Council of identifying and assessing children in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents and carers. These might initially include, agreement on an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of school based interventions that have been proven to be effective as appropriate to the child's need and age.
- Provide pupils with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. These include reminders about our Helping Hands, Form Teachers and Worry Boxes;
- Provide pupils with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those pupils who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it. This is achieved through directed playground supervision or in Friendship clubs.
- Where appropriate, identify, assess, and support of pupils as young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the [Children & Families Act 2014](#).

## 11.0 Managing disclosures

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, and these concerns present a safeguarding issue the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including Date

- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with any of the safeguarding leads; Mrs Fox, Mr Ingrassia, Mrs Kiernan and Mrs Older.

## 12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the pupil or another relevant member of staff such as SLT or SENDCo. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the pupil. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk by the parents, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed as per our school safeguarding policy.

## 13.0 Whole school approach

### 13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents of a mental health concern of a pupil, there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.? (one member of SLT should be present)
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

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 which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should 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/agreed are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan is created if appropriate.

### 13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to strategies and services promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems; (see Appendix B)
- Regularly highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, social media newsletters etc.);

- Signposting parents to external services that may help parents or carers develop their parenting skills, such as the [Triple P Parenting courses](#).

#### 14.0 Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support guidance. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and may be guided in conversations by appropriate staff, the pupil who is suffering, and/or their parents.

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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs 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

#### 15.0 Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive yearly training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff (the SENDCo) will undergo the [Government's Teaching about Mental Wellbeing training module](#) and disseminate to the staff body.

We will host relevant information on our internal digital platform for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

The [MindEd](#) and [Whole School Send](#) learning portals provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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

#### 16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is July 2024. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Mrs Kiernan, SENDCo. Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.



## Appendix A – Related School Policies

1. [Safeguarding Policy](#)
2. [Behaviour Policy](#)
3. [Anti-Bullying](#)
4. [Online Safety](#)
5. [PHSE](#)
6. [RSE](#)
7. [SEND](#)
8. [First Aid](#)

## Appendix B

1. The [Family Information Service](#) (FIS) – Brighton
2. [Triple P Parenting Courses](#) – Brighton
3. [Brighton and Hove Schools Wellbeing Service](#) (BHISS)
4. [Teaching about Mental Wellbeing](#) the Government Training Module
5. [Whole School SEND](#) free online training for staff
6. [MindEd](#) for Professional and Volunteers