



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Contents

1.0 Policy Statement.....	3
2.0 Policy Scope and links to other policies	3
3.0 Policy Aims.....	3
4.0 Key staff members.....	5
5.0 Teaching about mental health and wellbeing.....	5
6.0 Supporting students, referring on, and signposting.....	6
7.0 Identifying needs and warning signs.....	7
8.0 Managing disclosures.....	7
9.0 Confidentiality.....	8
10.0 Whole school approach.....	8
10.1 Working with and supporting parents/carers.....	8
10.2 Working with other agencies and partners.....	9
11.0 Supporting peers.....	9
12.0 Training.....	10
13.0 Policy review.....	10
14.0 Appendix 1.....	11
Appendix 2.....	12

1.0 Policy Statement

At Harbour Vale School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing to all students, parents/carers and members of staff and governors. In addition, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all our students and staff. Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful and we want every student to have their voice heard. At Harbour Vale School, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges and that each of us may need help to cope with these at times. We understand that any one of us may need additional emotional support. At Harbour Vale School, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility; we all have a role to play. 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 Policy Scope and Links to other Policies

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Harbour Vale School's approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Personal Social Health Education (PHSE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed, or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

3.0 Policy Aims

We aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing to all students, parents/carers and members of staff and governors
- Promote a secure and stable environment and support the wellbeing of all our students and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental health issues
- Remain informed, inspired, and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE and Public Health England
- Ensure a whole school approach to development and delivery
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including students and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community
- Connect with other schools within the SAST to share good practice
- Schedule mental health and wellbeing as a regular agenda item on Student Voice, Staff, Senior Leadership Team, and Governor meetings

We will:

- Create an approach based on the 8 key principles identified in '*Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing*' (Public Health England, 2015)
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health in students
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support
- Develop resilience amongst students 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
- Ensure that this mental health and wellbeing policy complements all other current school strategies and policies
- Review the Mental Health Strategy at Harbour Vale School annually
- Ensure there are clear learning opportunities on our curriculum regarding mental health and wellbeing across all key stages
- Provide, complete, and record compulsory and optional CPD training with The National College for all staff, including certificates in *Understanding Mental Health*, *Understanding Anxiety and Stress in Children and Young People*, and *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Taking a Trauma Informed Approach to Improving Outcomes*
- Ensure our mental health and wellbeing policy is available on our website

4.0 Key Staff Members

At Harbour Vale School, we aim to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of all students. Staff will complete CPD training to ensure they are being supported adequately meaning that students receive the right support. Staff are also able to access supervision through the Educational Psychologist and the head of safeguarding. However, certain members of staff have a specific role in the process. These are:

Role	Staff Name
Designated Mental Health Lead	Kelly Knight
Deputy Designated Mental Health Lead	Karen Blatch
Mental Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors	Karen Blatch and Sam Dawes
SENDSCO	Jayne Cottingham
Designated Safeguarding Leads	Kelly Knight, Jayne Cottingham, Maria Butterfield
ELSA	Sam Dawes and Maria Butterfield
Student Voice	Natalie Willis
PHSE Lead	RoseAnn Carlin
Music Therapist	Hazel Dennis

5.0 Teaching about mental health and wellbeing

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 PHSE curriculum. We will follow the guidance issued by the PHSE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and wellbeing safely and sensitively – <https://phse-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' mental health and wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies to keep themselves safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges (see section 13.0 for Supporting Peers).

6.0 Supporting students, referring on and signposting

When a student has been identified as having a cause for concern, it will be important to assess those needs and consider how they are best met. In some cases the provision in school will be sufficient but on other occasions they may need to be referred on to other agencies. A referral will be made by either the DSL, SENDCO or DMHL using **Appendix 1** to make a quality referral. Once the young person is receiving support either through school, CAMHS or another organisation, an individual care plan will be drawn up by either the DSL, SENDCO or DMHL. The development of the plan should involve the student, parent/carers (if appropriate) and relevant professionals.

The plan will include:

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

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 (notice boards, classrooms, etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters and website, etc.) we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. The aim of this is to ensure students and their parents/carers understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Reasons for accessing it
- What is likely to happen next

Targeted Support within school:

- Mental health and Wellbeing Ambassadors
- Reflection with tutor groups – PHSE
- ELSA
- Music therapy
- Student Voice
- Noticeboards, website, newsletters
- Emotional and wellbeing resilience in enrichment

There are also a lot of support networks available for children and young people in the local community – see **Appendix 2**

7.0 Identifying needs and warning signs

All of 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 a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team or the Designated/Deputy Designated Mental Health Lead, as appropriate.

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 worn in summer
- 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

8.0 Managing disclosures

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on MyConcern and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it is necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy. The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

Any member of staff concerned about a student will take this seriously and talk to the SENDCO/Designated Safeguarding Team or the Designated/Deputy Designated Mental Health Lead.

9.0 Confidentiality

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

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

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.

10.0 Whole school approach

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

10.1 Working with and supporting parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers there are questions we will consider prior to doing so:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place?
- Who should be present?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

After meeting with parents/carers, we will be mindful that 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 parents/carers to reflect and come to terms with the situation. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage. We will ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed and an individual care plan is created or updated.

We aim to support parents/carers as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and always offering our support. To support parents/carers, we will:

- Signpost parents/carers to other sources of information and support that may be helpful
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of who the school contact is if they have any concerns about their child
- Give parents/carers guidance about how they can support their child's positive mental health
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents/carers
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum

10.2 Working with other agencies and partners

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

- The school nurse
- CAMHS
- Paediatricians
- Counselling services
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Home schools
- Alternative provision: Rylands Farm
- Local support agencies: The Rendezvous

11.0 Supporting peers

When a student 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. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the young person who is suffering and their parents/carers with whom we will discuss:

- What 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 might 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

12.0 Training

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. A nominated member of staff (**Karen Blatch**) will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent. Regular staff updates will be given in senior leadership team, staff, and governor meetings by the designated mental health lead.

Training opportunities for staff will be considered as part of our performance management process. Compulsory and optional CPD training will be completed and evidenced via courses with The National College, these will include certificates in:

- *Understanding Mental Health*
- *Understanding Anxiety and Stress in Children and Young People*
- *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Taking a Trauma Informed Approach to Improving Outcomes*

13.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of every academic year. The next review date is 05.09.2023.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Karen Blatch – karen.blatch@harbourvale.dorset.sch.uk

Appendix 1 – Making a good quality referral

Submitting a good quality referral will often result in families and young people receiving the right service, first time. To do this well a good referral should try to understand as much of the following as possible:

- What's the problem? Who does it affect and how (sleep, hygiene, nutrition, relationships, home, education, employment)?
- What's the duration?
- What's the severity; according to Child/Young Person and parent/carer and referrer?
- What's been done so far and by whom? Was it helpful?
- What other plans, if any, have been made? Who else is involved?
- What, if any, other problems are there within the Child/Young Person's home or school/work environment?
- What, if any, findings (history/examination/symptoms and signs) might be of relevance e.g. drugs, alcohol, risky behaviour, weight and height, evidence of cutting?
- What risks to the Child/Young Person's safety are there? E.g. Abuse, significant self-harm, unaccompanied minor etc.

Appendix 2 – support networks are available for children, young people and parents and carers locally and nationwide, including:

www.childline.org.uk

www.familylinks.org.uk

www.samaritans.org

www.studentminds.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.themix.org.uk

www.annafreud.org