



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1. Policy Statement

At West Norfolk Academies Trust we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows pupils' 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. Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching staff and governors – outlining our approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing at West Norfolk Academies Trust. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3. Policy Aims

The Schools Mental Health Policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils 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 pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4. Key Staff Members

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

- Pastoral Staff
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- SENCO
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mental Health Support Team Practitioners
- PSHE Coordinator

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

If there is a concern that the pupil 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.

5. Supporting Staff

- Staff are encouraged to talk about their mental health at West Norfolk Academies Trust schools.
- Mental Health is referenced in our performance management cycles and as part of regular CPD sessions.
- Trust schools have wellbeing and workload representatives that facilitate a positive ethos amongst staff by using shout out boards, wellbeing displays and organising bespoke wellbeing training days.
- Leaders make decisions that reduce workload where appropriate, after consultation with staff.
- Staff are given time to discuss their workload with Senior Leaders at specific meetings to consider views on workload and wellbeing
- Leaders respond to staff views, utilising a graduated response, to supporting individual colleagues that request help.
- Support may involve supervision from line managers, counselling from trained mental health staff, a referral to occupational health, request for a stress management plan, flexible working and release time to attend special events or to complete tasks.

Graduated Response Plan Examples



6. Individual 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 MHST, CAMHS or another organisation, then an Individual Learning 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
- Pupil strengths and barriers
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency

Staff may need a written plan to support their mental health at work. This may be a separate stress management plan, support plan or an addition to performance management targets.

7. Teaching about Mental Health

- The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves, and others, physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.
- Each year pupils learn to explore themes central to positive mental health to develop self-esteem, healthy relationships celebrating differences, dreams and goals.
- We also have scheduled focus events as part of our enrichment map which promote awareness of mental health.
- As a Trust, we are supported by the Mental Health and Support Team from the NHS who provide support for staff and children to ensure our approach is embedded.

8. Signposting

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

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils 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

9. Sources or Support at our School and in our Local Community

- We have a Qualified Senior Mental Health Lead at each school who coordinates a graduated response to support and signpost staff and families to local support routes quickly.
- For 2025-2027 we are part of a Mental Health Support Team pilot from the NHS with access to mental health practitioners and a clinical psychologist who will work with pupils and families.
- We have an experienced SENCo and SENCo Support Staff who provide support for pupils who have identified additional needs and organise meetings with family, school staff, health workers to make targets to help a child with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- We have trained classroom practitioners in mental health first aid who can identify issues quickly and seek support. They can also counsel pupils, staff and families.
- **We have a Pastoral Lead teacher** who works with pupils and families regularly using resources in a space suitable for pupils needing nurture and talking time.
- **Interventions with offer**
 - Language and communication support
 - Talking time
 - Anna Freud Wellbeing measurements
 - Sensory Support
 - Fresh start phonics
 - Pastoral and emotional literacy
 - Zones of Regulation
 - Yoga – mindfulness
 - NHS Mental Health Support Team
 - Access to Educational Psychology Team including SEMH Team

Local Support

In Kings Lynn, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS 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.

<https://www.nhs.uk/Services/clinics/Services/Service/DefaultView.aspx?id=300235>

National health service in Norfolk have a comprehensive website which has full information for staff, families and pupils easily accessible materials online

Just One Number

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/our-services/just-one-number-and-parentline>

Ormiston Point One

A referral and information service

<https://www.ormiston.org/what-we-do/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

10. Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 Senior Mental Health Lead.

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
- 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 hostile or aggressive behaviour

11. 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/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with EPSS, school nurses, mental health support and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of pupils who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Council Children's Services, and CAMHS (Thurlow House in Kings Lynn) and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Plans who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree targets for a pupil passport or IEP as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;

- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

12. Managing Disclosures

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

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on CPOMS 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 via CPOMS so Designated Safeguard leads are informed and involved.

13. Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the pupil.

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

Ideally, consent should be gained from the pupil first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

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.

Parents must always be informed, but pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

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

14. Whole School Approach

14.1 Working with Parents/Carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents 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 – pupils, staff, parents etc.?
- 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 on **Provision Mapping**.

14.2 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 promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

15. 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. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

1. What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
2. How friends can best support
3. Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
4. 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

16. Training

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 pupils safe. A nominated member of staff will receive Senior Mental Health Professional training

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The Mentally Healthy Schools learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/mental-health-needs/>

Mind Ed is another website supported by NHS and DFE where e-training can support staff knowledge.

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

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 pupils.