

Positive Mental Health Pupil Well-being policy

Statement of Intent

At Ashmole Primary we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using both whole school approaches and specialised, targeted interventions for individuals.

We recognise that every member of our school community has mental health which needs looking after, in addition to promoting work practices and strategies to promote positive mental health and well-being for all, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health, whether this be mild, moderate or severe. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding and RSE policies in cases where a pupil's mental health and well-being overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

This policy aims to:

- Raise the profile for the whole school community of the importance of positive mental health and well-being, including staff, pupils and the wider school community
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in themselves, colleagues and pupils
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health, their peers and parents or carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

Mrs Rushma McLaren –Designated Safeguarding Lead and Well-being Lead (Trust)

Miss Eleni Costas – Deputy Head Teacher (Wellbeing Lead) and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Ang Toal – Senco and KS2 Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Chris Tofallis – Head Teacher and Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead or Safeguarding lead or deputy in the first instance.

If there is a concern that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to a designated safeguarding lead or deputy in person. See Safeguarding Policy for further detail.

Promoting Staff Wellbeing

Ashmole Primary are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff.

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.
- Understanding the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required.
- 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.
- Carrying out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.
 - 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 a survey of staff, including a section on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

Please see staff well-being policy for further guidance.

Teaching about Mental Health

The personal, social, health, (PSHE) education curriculum incorporates statutory relationships and sex education (RSE) statutory requirements. The curriculum has a specific strand for Health and Wellbeing in line with the PSHE resources and RSE statutory requirements.

Pupil, staff and parent feedback, as well as local and national evidence based research will be used regularly to feed into all teaching of mental health and wellbeing.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Our website will include up to date information and resources on Mental health and well-being.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils and parents understand:

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

Recognising Warning Signs

School 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 communicate their concerns with any Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy immediately.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- Loss of interest in hobbies

When assessing the problem, the following will be considered:

1. The duration of the changes
2. The severity
3. The impact
4. The complexity
5. The context

Managing disclosures

A pupil 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.

If a pupil 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.

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

All disclosures should be recorded using the safeguarding procedures. (see safeguarding policy)

We should be open from the outset with pupils regarding the issue of confidentiality. You should always inform the pupil that you will not be able to keep what they have disclosed confidential as you need to ensure their safety and the safety of others. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then you should discuss with the pupil who we are passing these concerns onto: who we are going to talk to, what we are going to tell them and why we need to tell them.

Supporting Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues. We should be accepting of this and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information where possible. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always follow up with parents, after disclosures have been discussed, to allow them to ask further questions as parents often have many questions as they process the information.

In order to support all parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health and wellbeing issues on our school website or other avenues.

- 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

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. 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 either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the pupil who is suffering and their parents.

Pupil Counselling

The Primary has access to school counsellors.

Referral process:

- **Referral by SENCO/ Deputy**

Pupils may be referred by the member of the Leadership Team where a need has been identified. Permission of parents/carers must be obtained.

Counselling Sessions:

Initial Meeting

Once permission has been given the counsellor will arrange an initial meeting to ensure that counselling is appropriate. The counsellor will then decide how long the module of counselling should be. Normally this will be for half a term but may be longer if the need is such.

Length of each session

Normally the counselling sessions will be for 20 minutes. Counselling will be of a multi-disciplinary approach based on the need of the individual pupil.

Confidentiality

Matters discussed will be confidential but all pupils will be made aware that the Designated Safeguarding Officer will be informed of any issues where there is a risk of harm to the individual or to others. In such cases the DSO will inform the Head Teacher and parents.

Reasons for Referral

Referral to the counsellor may be for any of the reasons outlined below and for any other reason where such a referral is deemed appropriate by staff and the counsellor:

- Family issues
- Bereavement
- Stress
- Bullying
- Poor social skills
- Anxiety over school work
- Poor attendance (where the poor attendance is symptomatic of an underlying concern)
- Attempted suicide
- Self-harm
- Poor self-image

The counsellor will discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Officer individual cases where there is a concern about self-harm or risk of suicide and in such cases referral to a more appropriate service will be considered.

Staff counselling

Referral Process

Ashmole Primary provides a number of support measure including internal and external counselling, access to a counselling helpline, Qwell and occupational health. If staff are experiencing any difficulties and require access to any of these services, please contact your line manager or HR.

The Head Teacher may suggest a referral to the counsellor.

Reports

The counsellor will not provide reports regarding pupils to either members of staff or parents/carers unless the Head Teacher has requested it. In these cases, the report will only be released once the Head Teacher has read and approved the report for release.

Bereavement

A number of students at Ashmole are affected by bereavement. Our school will also inevitably have to deal with the death of a pupil or member of staff and structures should be in place to support pupils and staff in such situations.

We are all responsible for ensuring that we support pupils in helping them manage their grief. Ensuring supportive measures are in place for staff is also essential. Empathy, kindness and compassion are fundamental traits that we as a school value and these traits are undeniably essential in helping students and staff cope with their grief.

Specialised counselling will be offered to pupils and staff who may need it. A referral will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

In the case of the loss of a pupil or staff member, staff and pupils to be informed and appropriately supported:

- Staff to be informed as soon as possible.
- The relevant pupils to be informed as soon as is practically possible with time to reflect on the event.

- Where appropriate, the Head Teacher or a member of the Leadership Team to communicate with parents via letter to inform them of the event.
- Pastoral team to lead in supporting pupils with their grief.
- Any support for staff directly affected will be organised by their Line Manager.
- If appropriate, a suitable memorial or celebration to be organised.

September 2023

To be reviewed: September 2024