NEWCASTLE
UNDER
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SCHOOL

Positive Mental Health Policy

This policy relates to Newcastle-under-Lyme School, including the EYFS. This policy is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website.

1) **Policy Statement**

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

At Newcastle under Lyme School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom throughout the UK, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

2) Scope
This policy describes the School's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
Safeguarding Policy,
Anti Bullying and Anti Cyber Bullying Policy
Equal opportunities Policy
Special Needs Policy and EAL Policy
RSE Policy
Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy

3) The Purpose of the Policy:
- To promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils

- To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- To alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- To provide support to staff
- To provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

4) 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 J A Simms: Deputy Head Pastoral / Designated Safeguarding Lead / Mental Health Lead / Mental Health First Aider
- Mrs K Thomson: Head of Prep / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mr I J Bousfield   Assistant Head Pastoral / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health First Aider
- Mr A Poole: Head of 6th Form / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs N Erian: Assistant Head Prep / PSHE Coordinator (Prep)
- Mrs K Walker: Head of Learning Support
- Sister G Ellis: School Nurse
- Mr L Wilkes: School Counsellor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to Head of Year or Assistant Head in Prep in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or DDSL. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

5) Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:
- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

6) Promoting Positive Mental Health

The skills, knowledge, attributes and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum and Form Time curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

7) Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within the local community is outlined in Appendix C.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas of the School and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

8) Warning Signs

Staff should be alert to signs and indications that a pupil might be experiencing mental health or emotional well being issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Deputy / Assistant Head Pastoral or Head / Deputy Head of Prep.

Possible warning signs 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 secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

9) 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 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 our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded. This record should include:
- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the DSL / DDSL who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Deputy Head Pastoral / Head of Prep.

10) Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:
- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil with an external source without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though in situations where a pupil may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, information must always be shared with the DSL / DDSL.

Parents should normally be informed (although the decision to inform parents is sensitive and should be discussed with the DSL / Head/ Deputy Head of Prep). We should always give pupil the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL / DDSL must be informed immediately.

11) Partnership with Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the School about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting should finish with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting will always be kept on the child's confidential record.

12) 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 them 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 by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:
- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- That they are not responsible for the mental health of others and should not take this pressure on themselves
- 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

13) 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 in order to enable them to keep students safe.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host relevant training sessions for all staff to promote learning and understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

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 to developing situations with one or more students.

	J A Simms
Policy Reviewed at SMT:	September 2023
Next Review Due:	September 2024

Appendix A: Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues[1]

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class.
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Below, we have sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk), Offers support and advice and links to further services and apps.
 Mind (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) Minded (www.minded.org.uk).

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support
SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk
National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk
Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Books

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Carol Fitzpatrick (2012) *A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support
Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Books

Christopher Dowrick and Susan Martin (2015) *Can I Tell you about Depression?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Anxiety, Panic Attacks and Phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support
Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Books

Lucy Willetts and Polly Waite (2014) *Can I Tell you about Anxiety?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Carol Fitzpatrick (2015) *A Short Introduction to Helping Young People Manage Anxiety*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Obsessions and Compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they do not turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support

OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Books

Amita Jassi and Sarah Hull (2013) *Can I Tell you about OCD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Susan Conners (2011) *The Tourette Syndrome & OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents and teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Suicidal Feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support

Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/

Books

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Terri A.Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer and Scott Poland (2015) *Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention*. New York: Routledge

Eating Problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support
Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children

Books
Bryan Lask and Lucy Watson (2014) *Can I tell you about Eating Disorders?: A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2012) *Eating Disorders Pocketbook*. Teachers' Pocketbooks

Appendix B: Guidance and advice documents

Mental health and behaviour in schools - departmental advice for school staff. Department for Education (2014)

Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future - departmental advice for school staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2015)
Teacher Guidance: teaching about mental wellbeing (2020).

Keeping children safe in education - statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Department for Education (2023)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. Department for Education (2014)

Healthy child programme from 5 to 19 years old is a recommended framework of universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing. Department of Health (2009)

Future in mind – promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - a report produced by the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce to examine how to improve mental health services for children and young people. Department of Health (2015)
NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in primary education
NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education

What works in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and responding to mental health problems in schools? Advice for schools and framework document written by Professor Katherine Weare. National Children's Bureau (2015)

Appendix C: Sources or support in the local community

Group / Organisation	Details and Contact Information
NSPCC	www.nspcc.org.uk. Information, links and advice
Childline	www.childline.org.uk. Information and advice, and free call service: 0800 1111
Young Minds	www.youngminds.org.uk. A mental health support charity, with support for parents too. There are online resources and also help line / advice for parents and pupils. Parents' Helpline: 0808 802 5544
Action for Children	Support Staffordshire's children with their emotional and mental health. https://www.staffordshire-ewb.actionforchildren.org.uk/
Changes	Changes is a peer support service promoting the recovery of young people in mental distress. The service is a self-referral service which covers children living in Stoke, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stafford http://changeshere4u.org.uk/stay-well-children-and-young-people-online-support-mental-health-mental-wellbeing-wellness-stoke-newcastle-staffordshire-every-mind-matters-self-isolate-stay-home-save-nhs/
The Mix	https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support Support for young people regarding self-harm including apps and tools, a one to one chat option, telephone helpline and crisis messenger
NHS Student Mental Health	Support for children around anxiety, low motivation, sleep problems or self-esteem issues. The site includes links to NHS choices Mood Zone and students against depression and advises older children on where they can turn to for support. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health/
Stem 4	Support for young people and free apps for them to use providing them with a range of ways to help manage anxiety and the urge to self-harm. https://stem4.org.uk/
University of Oxford Self Harm Parent Guide	The University of Oxford have also produced a guide for parents and carers to support their child or young person in dealing with self-harm https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/news/new-guide-for-parents-who-are-coping-with-their-child2019s-self-harm-2018you-are-not-alone2019
SCC Exam Stress Guide	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Learning-options-and-careers/Happiness-and-Wellbeing/Beating-exam-stress.aspx
The Dove Project	Provides bereavement and loss counselling in North Staffordshire for children aged 4 and above https://www.thedoveservice.org.uk/
Winston's Wish	A childhood bereavement charity which works with children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling. www.winstonswish.org.uk