

# Sandal Magna Community Academy

## Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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## 1.0 Policy statement

**At Sandal Magna Community Academy, 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.**

It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. The department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils succeed: schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

***Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.***

***(World Health Organisation 2018)***

At Sandal Magna Community Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health for every child, parent / carer and staff. We pursue this using both universal, whole school and specialised approaches for identified vulnerable pupils and families.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining **Sandal Magna Community Academy's** approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including the Safeguarding Policy.

### 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 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 recognise that staff themselves may have mental health issues, and that they will be supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Instil a culture of staff and student welfare, where our community is aware of signs and symptoms. Ensure effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare of all those 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:

- Executive Headteacher- Mrs L Sennett
- Designated Safeguarding Leaders-Mr C Elliott, Mrs K Shepherd, Mrs N Rashid, Miss R Abernethy
- SENCO – Miss R Abernethy
- Mental Health lead and Mental Health First Aider for children and staff – Mrs J Pratt and Miss R Abernethy
- Relationships leader- Mrs K Shepherd
- Pastoral Staff/Parent Support – Ms N Rashid

**If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student or parent, in the first instance they should speak to a designated safeguarding lead, who may then involve the Mental Health 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.

## 5.0 Individual Wellbeing Profiles

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 CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual wellbeing profile should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals. If individuals need longer term support of a higher level, or are currently working with outside agencies on a longer term basis, the child may be placed on school's SEN register after consultation with parents. As appropriate, the wellbeing profile will 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 Whole school approach

### 6.1 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?
- Who should be present – students, 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. **Staff are encouraged to refer trauma informed practice in order to support pupils and parents and keep dialogue between home and school open.**

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/agree are added to the pupil's record on CPOMS and an Individual Wellbeing plan created if appropriate.

### 6.2 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, assemblies 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.

## 7.0 Training – trauma based 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 students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent. Our qualified Mental Health First Aider is Becky Abernethy and Julie Pratt.

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.

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

## 8.0 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 will be highlighted further in whole school assemblies. Additional lessons or sessions may be planned to suit the needs of individual pupils or classes.

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

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>. Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

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

## 9.0 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 (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure that members of our school community 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

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

### **School Based Support for children and families –**

The school has a team which includes an **allocated social worker and Children's First Hub link worker** who can be contacted for consultation about any child's mental health worries.

We have an **embedded reflective approach** to behaviour management in school which is based upon restorative practice and ensures records of behaviour can be tracked over time.

A '**Zones of Regulation**' group or individual based intervention can be planned to intervene when children need support to self-regulate and recognise their emotional state or needs.

Through **Future in Minds** program, children who have been identified to receive further help with their mental wellbeing can access individual or group support for a short period of initial intervention.

We work with a **variety of outside agencies** to plan events or groups to support our diverse community. Examples may include planned seminars such as sleep seminars and Wellwomen clinic talks around mental health awareness in the South Asian Community. These may vary due to community needs.

### **STAFF support**

All staff are welcome to discuss any matters regarding their mental health with the Mental Health First Aider or their line manager/SLT, without fear of judgement. As appropriate, staff may be advised to visit their GP for further support or given time to talk with the Mental Health First Aider. All staff have access to services **SAS** which offers a comprehensive support package for Mental Health, including counselling and CBT.

We will conduct staff voice surveys to monitor workload and provide an anonymous way for staff to highlight any issues.

*Additional support is available in forms of a confidential helpline and counselling sessions at <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/teachers-mental-health>*



## Local Support and Signposting

In Wakefield, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support. These include key links below and further support may be drawn upon to support the needs of children and families.

**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.

**Barnados We sail** - can be accessed by parents or carers with a child who has a disability

**Turning point**-can be accessed by anyone needing support with drugs or alcohol addiction

**CFIT**- children family and inclusion team can be contacted to support a child or family on a more individual basis

## Useful websites for further information

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/Childline>

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

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

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

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

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/your-guide-to-support/guide-to-camhs/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-services-cypmhs/>

## 11.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student or staff member 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 a safeguarding lead, who may then involve the Mental Health First Aider.

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/ usual standards in work
- 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

## 12.0 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/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic abuse.

School works closely with school nurses 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 students 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; CFIT, Child and Future in Mind
- Working closely with Wakefield Council Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Neglect Tool kit children 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 an Individual Wellbeing Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing interventions, 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 will 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.

## 13.0 Managing allegations

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental, drawing upon trauma informed practice as appropriate.

All allegations should be reported directly to a safeguarding lead and recorded confidentially on CPOMS so that safeguarding leads can make the appropriate decision for the child's needs to be met.

## 14.0 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 student, as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. 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 student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students who are in danger of harm.

## 15.0 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 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 student 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
- 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

## 16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

The next review date is **December 2022**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.