

LAUNCHPAD



Alternative Provision Service (Encompassing the 3 PRU Bases, Launchpad Tuition, and Launchpad Alternative)

Student Mental Health Policy 2021

Vision

To provide a high quality, personalised educational experience that meets learners' needs and leads to success for all.

Mission

A positive and inclusive community where young people are encouraged to achieve high standards of progress and succeed in a supported, safe environment.

Our Values / Principles

Individuals Aspirations Raised
New Experiences
Safety and Support
Personalised Programmes
Individuals Feeling Valued
Respect
Excellence in Learning

Approved by: PRU management Committee **Date:** 15/03/2021

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by: March 2022

Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

“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 Organisation)**

At Alternative Provision, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our school communities. Wellbeing is valued and we actively promote it. We pursue this aim using universal, targeted and specialist approaches aimed at vulnerable students. In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. According to MIND, in an average classroom, three students will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health difficulty. One in ten young people between the ages of 5 and 16 will have an identifiable mental health difficulty at any one time. By the time they reach university this figure is as high as 1 in 6. Around 75% of mental health disorders are diagnosed in adolescence (see Appendix A for more data around mental health and wellbeing). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health. We also recognise the link between physical activity and positive mental health and wellbeing, and we encourage our schools to be ‘active schools’.

What is this Policy for?

This document describes Alternative Provision’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. The policy is about student mental health but of course staff mental health and wellbeing is inter-related and the two go hand in hand. Positive wellbeing affects schools culture. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including support staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies

- E-Safety policy;
- Anti-bullying Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND policy;
- Staff Wellbeing Policy;
- RSE Policy.

Alternative Provision is committed to ensuring the wellbeing students. It is expected that all students are able to contribute to own their own wellbeing as well as contribute to the wellbeing of others.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent mental health and wellbeing provision by:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in all students
- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health difficulties
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health difficulties
- Providing support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- Promoting physical activity and resilience

Lead Members of Staff

- Safeguarding Manager
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in each unit
- SENDCo
- Mental Health/Wellbeing Lead in each unit
- PSHE Lead in each unit

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health and/or wellbeing of a student should speak to the student in the same way they would support students with any kind of concern. If they are willing to share information, it is important to notify the student that this information may need to be passed on to a member of the safeguarding or mental health and wellbeing team for further action. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the CAMHs Assessment Response Team or emergency services if necessary.

Supportive documentation

It is helpful to document the support given to students with mental health difficulties. There are a number of documents that could be used depending on the nature of students' mental health difficulties, including:

- Risk Assessments – Used to manage any risks associated with students' mental health difficulties, including risks to themselves and others;
- Individual Intervention Plans – Used to support students with more complex mental health difficulties that overlap with, or are linked to, a diagnosable medical condition that may require medication.

Any supportive documentation should be drawn up involving the student, parents/carers and relevant health professionals, and should centre on the role that the school can play in supporting students' mental health difficulties.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the age and specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE DfE guidance for 2020 to ensure that we teach students about mental health and wellbeing, and how it can fluctuate between both positive and negative. Where possible we try to embed mindfulness into curriculum or enrichment time. We also ensure staff understand how important resilience is and provide opportunities to develop this.

Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is all available on the PACE and Launchpad website.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, reception areas and toilets, and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

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

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the mental health and wellbeing lead, SENDCo and the relevant safeguarding staff.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of self-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 secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Concerns

- Do not speak about your conversation or concerns with other students or casually to a member of staff.
- Access support for yourself if you need it via a senior colleague or your line manager.
- Are there any safeguarding concerns? If yes, follow safeguarding policy

High Risk

- If you consider the young person to be at risk then you should follow safeguarding procedures and report your concerns directly to the DSL

Low Risk

- If you feel that the young person needs a period of 'watchful waiting' communicate this to the key worker/Teacher in Charge/ SENDCo

The DSL will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents/carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor/nurse
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Arranging a referral to CAMHS – with parental consent
- Giving advice to parents/carers/teachers and other students
- The teacher should pass on the information to the Teacher in Charge who will instigate the appropriate time period of watchful waiting (up to 4 weeks). Staff should ensure good communication with any agencies involved
- If symptoms persist, refer to CAMHS.

Confidentiality

We must be honest with regards to confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

- Who are we going to talk to?

- What are we going to tell them
- Why do we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent/carer, such as students who we believe to be in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL, as this helps to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the student. This ensures continuity of care in their absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. Staff should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. If you believe there are safeguarding concerns, you must follow that referral route.

Parents/carers must always be informed if it is deemed necessary and appropriate by the Head of Service/Teacher in Charge or Safeguarding Manager and students may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents/carers. We should always give students the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them. Of course, we need to consider the level of urgency and if the child is at immediate risk of significant harm.

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. We should always aim to seek the student's consent to share information; however, information must be shared when the student is believed to be in danger of harm.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers 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?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?
- We also need to consider staff safety concerns.

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's difficulties and many may respond with anger or fear or become upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect. We will always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too e.g. helplines and forums. Alternative Provision will 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/carers often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting will be finished with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting on the student's record will always be kept on CPOMs.

Working with all Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's mental health and wellbeing. In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health difficulties on our school website

- Ensure that all parents/carers 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 and Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health and wellbeing in their children through our regular information events
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health and wellbeing topics that their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers

When a student is experiencing mental health difficulties, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how and can take on more of a supportive role than is appropriate. 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 student experiencing difficulties and their parents/carers.

We will consider:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can offer support
- Boundaries between support from friends and support from adults
- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend 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.

Training

Staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health difficulties as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe. Further 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. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Teacher in Charge of each individual unit who can also highlight relevant sources or support and/or training.