

**NEW PARK ACADEMY**

**FIRST CREATED: May 2019 – EDITION 1**

**Student and Staff Mental Health and  
 Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

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Designation	<b>EFS Champion</b>

## **Student and Staff Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

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## 1. Legal Framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, including but not limited to, the following:
  - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
  - Employment Rights Act 1996
  - Employment Relations Act 1999
  - Equality Act 2010
  - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- 1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Induction of New Staff Policy
  - Attendance Management Policy
  - Staff Absence Management Policy
  - CP Policy

## **2. Policy Statement**

At New Park Academy, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and school advisors and providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for all members of staff. Our open culture allows students' and staff 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. We want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is important to pupil achievement and the school's performance. We are committed to making sure that this Wellbeing Policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of their stress.

With this in mind, this policy has been created to outline the steps that will be taken by the school to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of our students and staff so we maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

All members of staff will be made aware of the warning signs that can indicate whether a person is having trouble managing stress. All members of staff will be vigilant for these signs in their colleagues, as well as themselves. Any issues raised will be thoroughly investigated in a professional, courteous and confidential manner.

## **3. Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and advisors – outlining New Park's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

#### 4. **Policy Aims**

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues by offering annual Mental Health First Aid session for staff.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students, their colleagues and themselves and offer access to appropriate support
- 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 and staff with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and staff 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;
- Instil a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.
- Encourage staff to form a Staff Mental Health Steering Group that will actively seek to implement this policy

### **Staff Wellbeing**

#### 5. **Warning signs for Staff**

- 5.1. All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that may indicate that a person could be having trouble managing stress.
- 5.2. The **headteacher** will arrange training to help staff manage workplace stress.
- 5.3. Some of the **behavioural indicators** that are caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Difficulty sleeping
  - Changes in eating habits
  - Increased smoking or drinking
  - Isolation from friends and family
  - Increased absences
- 5.4. Some of the **physical indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Tiredness
  - Indigestion and nausea
  - Headaches
  - Aching muscles
  - Heart palpitations

- 5.5. Some of the **mental indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Indecisiveness
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Memory loss
  - Feelings of inadequacy
  - Low self-esteem
- 5.6. Some of **emotional indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Anger or irritability
  - Anxiety
  - Hypersensitivity
  - Feeling drained and listless

## **6. Responsibility of the Advisory Board to the Staff**

The Advisory Board will

- Ensure the effective implementation of this policy.
- Recognise mental health issues non-judgmentally and seek to support staff mental health through risk assessments, surveys and early support.
- Ensure staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Ensure that all school policies are assessed for workload impact
- Ensure all staff are aware of support from external support service

## **7. Responsibility of the Headteacher to the Staff**

The headteacher will

- Create a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- An area is available to staff to talk confidentially and undisturbed other than staff room
- Endeavour to try and cover lessons to allow staff time-out after serious incident
- Be responsible for implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools to effectively manage stress.
- Aim to develop a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job specifications.
- Aim to include all staff in the school's decision making process.
- Organise extra support for staff at times of increased stress, such as during Ofsted inspections.
- Ensure that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Be responsible for authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave.

## 8. Responsibility of the SLT to the Staff

SLT will

- Plan and monitor a system of mentors to provide additional support for staff where and when appropriate.
- Encourage all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- Provide information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensure that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods.
- Ensure new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require. This includes the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Gather information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy, such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - Sickness and absence data
  - Staff turnover
  - Exit interviews
  - Referrals to the counselling service
  - Referrals to other mental health services
  - Grievance cases
  - Harassment cases
  - All senior management will act in a supportive and constructive manner when dealing with cases related to wellbeing.
  - All senior members of staff will attend events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health
  - The **HR and Finance Officer** will be responsible for monitoring all staff absences.

## 9. Staff responsibilities

- 9.1. All members of staff are responsible for acting in a way that maintains a healthy work/life balance.
- 9.2. All members of staff will act in a way that promotes a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- 9.3. All members of staff will, where possible, ask for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- 9.4. All members of staff will attend events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.

## 10. Stress reduction strategies for Staff

- 10.1. A member of the Advisory Board will be assigned as a wellbeing lead, taking overall responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing of staff.
- 10.2. The **headteacher** will arrange regular opportunities for meetings where any concerns can be raised.
- 10.3. The **headteacher** will undertake a wellbeing audit by distributing anonymous surveys to all members of staff at least twice a year. Any proposed changes will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 10.4. The school follows a sickness absence plan which promotes a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.

10.5. There will be allocated funds for a wellbeing budget. All members of staff are welcome to make suggestions for the use of this fund. The **headteacher** will have the final say as to how the fund is spent.

## 11. **Reporting Procedures for Staff**

11.1. If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about their wellbeing, they may approach any member of staff they feel comfortable with if they do not wish to contact SLT directly

11.2. **Staff are able to report 'staff concerns' on the school CPOMS system which alerts SLT**

11.3. The chosen trusted colleague can gain information from SLT about the support that is available; this includes both within the school and outside sources. The person seeking advice may remain anonymous. Information about a confidential counselling service is also displayed in the staff room

11.4. The headteacher will treat all cases confidentially. If there are more generic concerns expressed by a spokesperson, no names need to be mentioned

11.5. In some cases, such as those that involve a direct impact on day-to-day activities, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation.

11.6. Any complaint will be investigated.

11.7. The **headteacher** will decide whether any further action will be taken.

## **Student Wellbeing**

### 12. **Warning Signs in Students**

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 member of the SLT and/or the school counsellor

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
- 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



### 13. **Key Staff Members for Students**

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:

- SLT
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- SENCO
- Mental Health First Aid Champion

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance this should either be raised at debrief at the end of the day, raised confidentially with a member of the SLT and/or discussed with the school counsellor, the Mental Health Champions (Karen Seymour at High School, /Nicola Lawless at Juniors).

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.

### 14 **Individual Care**

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, this needs to be documented in the wellbeing record. The individual risk assessment may also need to be amended to reflect additional needs and support that is required. 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
- 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

## 15 **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 PSHEe curriculum and our peer mentoring programme.

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.

## 16 **Signposting for Students**

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 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 students understand:

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

## 17 **Sources or support at school and in the local community**

### 17.1 **School Based Support - list the full range of support available to students.**

We work with a wide range of agencies from health and social care to ensure we can signpost services to parents, and ensure children get the wrap around care they and their families need. We support the completion of Early Help Assessments which are needed when parents feel they require support in the family home. This support can be offered in school or at home, depending on parental preference. If this has not been agreed in a meeting, parents can ring the general office or pass on the request to the tutor team who will pass it on.

We can also draw on support from the Educational Psychology Service who may be asked to reassess a young person when staff feel academic progress is delayed, or an unusual learning pattern has been observed.

School will also make referrals to SALT (Speech and Language Therapy Service) or Occupational Therapy where needed.

Parents are able to receive help and support in general form by the family link worker Karen Seymour, the headteacher, and other support staff.

Parents are able to apply for assisted travel via the SEN department. This is supported by school. Pupils are all entitled to a free bus pass and this is arranged in school.

### 17.2 **Local Support**

In Salford, 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

## 18 **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 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 mental health difficulties
- Working closely with Salford Children's Services, Salford CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying and assessing children and young people 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
- Agreeing on an action plan 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
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as

specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and mental health difficulties can be dealt with as soon as they occur

- Providing 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
- Providing young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- Identifying, assessing and supporting young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

## 19 **Managing disclosures**

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.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially and sent to the DSL who will save the information electronically in a confidential area, 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 on a need to know basis only (see also CP policy)

If a Peer Mentoring Programme is in place, any disclosures made will also map with this process.

## 20 **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. 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 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 student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but students 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 may not need to be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

## 21 **Whole school approach**

### 21.1 **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 – 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.

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, points discussed and actions agreed are added to the pupil's record.

## 21.2 **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 a range of professionals who are 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.

## 21.3 **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

## 22 **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.

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

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.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD can be discussed as part of the PMR reviews, with the line manager or the Deputy Head teachers, Philippa Peploe & Laura Clegg who are responsible for CPD and who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## 23 **Policy Review**

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

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Karen Seymour

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.