

Mental health and wellbeing principles – appendix

Queen Elizabeth's Academy

September 2024

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Associated documents:			
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2018 Staff Wellbeing Strategy 2018		Mental Health in Childhood, APPG report, May 2018 – pp74 recommendations Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE Nov 2018	
Links to:			
https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2018/10/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection.pdf		https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2019/05/Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Principles.pdf	

Contents

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Key contacts | 2 |
| 2. QEA culture diagram | 3 |
| 3. Commitment statement | 4 |

1 Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Chair of Governors	J Krogulec	01623 623559
Academy Principal	D Percival	01623 623559 Dpercival@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk
Designated Mental Health Lead	R Stewart	01623 623559 Rstewart@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk
DSL	F Garlick D Percival	01623 623559 Fgarlick@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk Dpercival@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk

2 QEA Culture diagram

Inspired by **Luke 10:29 – 37** we give our all to all in appreciation to God who gave his all in Jesus, offering learning without boundaries and care without limits so that all our students can experience life in all its fullness.

These protocols will ensure that our staff and students receive the support, both from within school and outside of school, that they rightly deserve. Allowing our community to flourish, be safe, and be respected in a secure and nurturing environment that promotes togetherness, truthfulness and empathy.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Commitment 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)

In our Academy our Christian vision shapes all we do. We adhere to 9 core values that provides the backbone to our pastoral systems in the academy and ensures that we embody our motto “Living and Loving Together Forever.” Inspired by [Luke 10: 29-37](#) we give our all to all in appreciation to God who gave his all in Jesus, offering learning without boundaries and care without limits so that all our students can experience life in all its fullness.

In addition we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil 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 and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues. We have created a safeguarding culture at Queen Elizabeth’s that ensures effective vigilance and swift action is the order of the day, every day.

Scope

This document 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.

The commitment aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

Donna Percival – Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Fiona Garlick- Designated Safeguarding Lead

Charlie Pyle- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rachel Stewart- Mental Health Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the DSL 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/DDSL through My Concern. 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led by the Safeguarding or Pastoral lead/HoH.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives 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

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RSHE curriculum and pastoral programme.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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 will 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The main point of contact for this is Rachel Stewart.

We will display relevant sources of support in the pastoral office will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum and pastoral programme. 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

An example of this is the link with the online support platform Kooth- who visited the Academy at the start of the academic year to deliver a presentation to all students.

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 through My Concern.

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

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?' Staff have received safeguarding training on managing disclosures and should always record concerns via My Concern, remembering that no concern is too small to report.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing via My Concern and held on the pupil's chronology. This written 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

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 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. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

Disclosures should always be referred to the Safeguarding Team via My Concern; this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil at the time of disclosure unless the staff member is concerned about how the child will respond. Remembering though, to never promise confidentiality.

The Safeguarding Team will ensure that parents are informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them. In the event of any concerns about safeguarding within the respite period, action should be taken swiftly. A respite period is not always appropriate and should be determined case by case. Decisions should not be taken by staff in isolation and the Safeguarding Team will undertake professional dialogue and analysis of the situation before respite is agreed upon.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed. Swift referral through the MASH or a previously allocated Social Worker will take place.

Working with Parents

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 information 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're 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. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential chronology on My Concern.

Working with All 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:

- 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 Commitment easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children in meetings held
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

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 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
- How friends can best support
- 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

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 pupils safe. Training is provided face to face, through Educare and the National College.

Staff are able to access additional training modules through Educare and the National College.

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 pupils.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Kirstie Dixon, our CPD lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Sitting alongside this document is the Mental Health Provision Development Plan.

Contact Donna Percival to request access to this document.

Review

This Commitment will be reviewed annually.

Additionally, this commitment will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this document, this should be addressed to Rachel Stewart our mental health lead via phone 01623 623559 or email rstewart@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk

This document will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.