



Walton Primary Academy Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

April 2021

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Policy statement

At Walton Primary 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.

Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff and governors – outlining Walton Primary Academy's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies. These include Safeguarding, Anti – Bullying, Behaviour, Medical Needs, SEND and Relationships and Health Education. The link to the Behaviour Policy is particularly important as mental health needs can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state. These changes can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which can be an indication of an underlying problem.

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 gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling 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.

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:

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- SENDCO
- Mental Health First Aid Champion
- PSHE Coordinator
- Inclusion Leader

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the SENDCO or Inclusion Leader. 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.

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. We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

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 the SENCO or Inclusion Leader.

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

If staff have information that raises concerns about a child's social emotional or mental health then this should be recorded on a SEMH Concern Form and passed to a key staff member. **As previously stated this policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy. If any behaviours are a safeguarding concern then safeguarding procedures must be followed.**

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.

We ensure early identification of students who would benefit from targeted support. The school uses resources to assess and track wellbeing. These include GL emotional literacy assessment, boxall profile and emotional literacy scales. Targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils may include: circle time approaches, managing emotions resources e.g. the five point scale, therapeutic activities including art and relaxation techniques.

Specific help is provided for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and mental health issues. Pupils may be referred for emotional

literacy support sessions delivered by the school ELSA. If in school targeted support is not felt to be enough to address the child's SEMH needs, then a referral will be made to Future in Mind which is a school programme that provides support through CAMHS.

We ensure young people have access to specialist services (CAMHS and the SEMH team), so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur. School identifies, assesses, and supports young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Behaviour Response Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having social, emotional and mental health needs that cause challenging behaviours a Behaviour Response Plan will be written. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Identified triggers for the young person
- Examples of behaviours scaled as low, medium and high
- Strategies for each level of behaviour

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

Working with parents/carers

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.

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.);
- 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.

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 to 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 should be discussed with key team members who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is September 2022

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