

Mental Health Policy

This policy outlines our approach to promoting staff and student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection, Transgender, Equal Opportunities and PSHE policies.

Durham High School is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff, recognising that promoting positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We foster a culture that is supportive, caring, and respectful. All students are encouraged to be open about their own mental wellbeing, no matter how small and to be tolerant and supportive of others' mental health issues.

We will endeavour to:

- Help students to understand their emotions and experiences better;
- Ensure students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries;
- Help students to form and maintain positive relationships;
- Encourage students to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem;
- Help students to develop resilience.

We aim to create a healthy environment by:

- Adopting a whole school approach to Mental Health and providing support to any student that needs it;
- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff;
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community;
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements;
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth;
- Making every student feel valued and respected;
- Giving students the opportunity to participate in decision making;
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms;
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students and be active listeners who do not try to fix the problem but help students to become problem solvers;
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

Staff

Staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular Safeguarding training. Training records will be held centrally. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with students.

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads (Linda Ibbott & Katherine Anderson) and Deputy DSLs; (Simone Niblock, Julia Tomlinson, Clare Wheeler, Judith Lonsdale and Kathryn Hall (EYFS);
- Deputy Head (Pastoral): Linda Ibbott;

- Mental Health Leads: Clare Wheeler and Judith Lonsdale;
- Pastoral Staff: Class teachers in Junior House and Form Tutors and Heads of Year in Senior House;
- SENCO: Angela Lee;
- Chaplain: Rev Brett Vallis.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to the class/form teacher who will discuss with the HoY or DSL who may, in turn, refer to the Mental Health Leads and/or outside agencies.

PSHE

Our PSHE curriculum is developed to give students the skills, knowledge, and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. We regularly review our PSHE curriculum to ensure it meets the aims outlined in this policy.

Specific topics:

- Year One - Looking after each other. Who keeps us safe;
- Year Two - Recognising our feelings;
- Year Three - What keeps us safe;
- Year Four - Managing our feelings, our strengths, skills and interests;
- Year Five - Identity, puberty and personal hygiene;
- Year Six - Giving and receiving constructive criticism, becoming more independent, how friendships change;
- Year 7 - Emotional Health in the transition to KS3, Growing Up and Puberty, Food and Nutrition;
- Year 8 - Mental Health, Eating Disorders, Legal and Illegal Drugs. Introduction to Healthy Relationships;
- Year 9 - Managing emotions, mental health, depression and anxiety, Self-image;
- Year 10 - mental health, coping mechanisms and self-harm;
- Year 11 - Exam-related stress and anxiety

Assemblies

Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience discussions are carried out in both whole school and section assemblies. We actively promote Mental Health Awareness week in May and encourage students to talk to each other and staff #It'sOkNotToBeOk. #SpeakYourMind.

Additional Support

We have a range of support available in school and in the community for individuals:

School Counsellor – students have access to our School Counsellor, Hazel Saunders, by appointment through the Mental Health Lead (Clare Wheeler) and with parental consent. The initial three sessions are free, then cost of subsequent sessions are charged to the parents on a termly basis.

Mental Health Leads – trained staff are available to provide individual support (Clare Wheeler – Sixth Form and staff, Judith Lonsdale – Key Stages 3 & 4).

The DSLs may make referrals to any of the support networks in the local community:

- Arch Recovery College
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Childline

- Community Mental Health Teams
- Eating Disorder – TEWV Community Service
- Every Mind Matters
- Mind
- NHS
- Papyrus
- Samaritans
- Talking Changes
- TEWV Crisis Line – (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Crisis Line)
- Time to Change Hub
- Young Minds

Identification

Staff will receive regular training to recognise the warning signs of common mental health problems, to take them seriously and refer appropriately including:

- Physical signs of harm;
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits;
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn;
- Changes in mood;
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide;
- Drug and alcohol abuse;
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer;
- Negative behaviour patterns;
- Absenteeism and/or lateness;
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education;
- Family and relationship problems.

Managing Disclosures

If a student discloses concerns about herself or a friend, staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner and refer as above. Confidentiality cannot be promised. Should it not be possible to gain the student's consent first, disclosures will be shared if we judge a child to be at risk. All disclosures will be recorded on CPOMS and only shared with the external authorities if it necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy. Parents will be informed unless doing so would place the student at risk. The CPOMS record will contain the main points from the conversation and agreed next steps which may include sessions with one of the Mental Health Leads, the School Counsellor or referral to an outside agency. For students engaging with the Mental Health Leads on a regular basis, we will endeavour to have an "exit strategy" to avoid fostering dependence and with the aim of building self-help and resilience.

Working with parents

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school;
- Ensure that parents are aware of which members of staff they can contact if they have any concerns about their daughter;
- Give individual parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health;
- Signpost parents to further support.

Peer Support

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider any peers that may need additional support in a one-on-one or group setting.

Staff Mental Health

We recognise our responsibility to support staff who may be experiencing adverse mental health issues, whether work or home related. Support can be offered by:

- Staff wellbeing support sessions / staff supervision;
- Crona - HR package is made available to all staff;
- Hazel Saunders: School Counsellor;
- Support staff mental wellbeing and mental health through appropriate INSET;
- Access to Staff Mental Health Lead: Clare Wheeler.

Covid-19

The school understands that the ramifications of the pandemic will cause additional mental health problems for staff and students. Appropriate support includes:

Students:

- Pastoral calls to vulnerable students if there are further school closures;
- Assemblies, PSHE lessons and tutorial sessions to reassure and allay fears;
- Staff made aware of those impacted by bereavement and/or illness;
- Staff trained to be aware of the potential issues students may have.

Staff:

- The ability for staff to follow flexible working patterns where possible;
- Support offered to vulnerable staff by Line Managers.

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