Mental Health Guidance - Lockyer's Middle School

Guidance Statement

Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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)

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that:

"In order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy." There is good evidence to support this assertion and Ofsted has highlighted that children and young people themselves say that they want to learn more about how to keep themselves emotionally healthy. Moreover, schools have a duty to promote the wellbeing of students."

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people:

- *to feel confident in themselves*
- *be able to express a range of emotions appropriately*
- *be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others*
- *cope with the stresses of everyday life*
- *manage times of stress*
- *be able to deal with change, learn, and achieve*

Public Health England go on to remind us:

"Although schools and colleges play a significant and valuable role in helping to promote student emotional health and wellbeing, their contribution should be considered as one element of a wider multi-agency approach."

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole-school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses eight aspects with "leadership and management that support and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing" at the centre:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands.
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other, and seek help when they need to.

3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners .
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This is intended to be guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff, the Academy Committee, and parents/carers.

Alongside this guidance, our school 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

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- **Kate Whittaker** - Senior Mental Health Lead, Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL), Lead Practitioner for Success and Wellbeing
- **Antonia Dufek** - Headteacher, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Thomas Mockridge** - Deputy Headteacher, Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead
- **Jasmine Adams** - Inclusion Leader, SENDCO.
- **Emma Adlem** - Pupil Wellbeing Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead
- **Louise Evans -** PSHE Lead
- **Karen Montague and Charmaine Knight -** Lead First Aiders

Any member of staff, parent or carer who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the DSL and /or Pupil Wellbeing Lead in the first instance.

For further information and useful links, please refer to our school website.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Pupil Wellbeing Lead or the SENDCO.

Positive Mental Health
Our school believes in taking a proactive stance for positive mental health in our community and this is the driving force behind all that we do. We recognise the link between enjoying good mental health and physical exercise / nutrition.

To create positive mental health in our young people, we must also look to those who parent them. Parenting young people who struggle with mental health issues can be a lonely and difficult task. Our school will always work alongside parents and outside agencies to ensure that the adults with primary care for the young person are mentally and physically healthy.

We also recognise the significance of the increase in use of technology and social media and an increase in wellbeing issues. Although we have little control over the use of technology in the home, we aim to empower parents and keep them up to date with trends in technology and legalities. A monthly support poster is sent out to all parents, identifying potential risks and suggesting ways in which to reduce risks based around various social media platforms.

Through all of the above, all members of our community will show a holistic understanding of our young people and will conduct all dealings with compassion and kindness.

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 developmental PSHE curriculum.

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 PSHCE 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. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix B.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. 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

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 with our Mental Health Lead.

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 secretively
- 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 will show compassion and kindness.

Staff should listen, rather than advise, and their first thoughts should be of the young person's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' As for safeguarding concerns, the TED (Tell me, Explain how, Describe how…) approach will be employed.

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. See *Appendix A* for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

Confidentiality

Staff should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If they deem that it is necessary to pass concerns about a young person on, then they should discuss with the young person:

- Who they are going to talk to
- What they are going to tell them
- Why they need to tell them

Staff should never share information about a young person without first telling them. Ideally, they 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 young person is in danger of harm.

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 young person, 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 leaflets 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 groups and forums especially those run by CAMHS or Early Help.

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 steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

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:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health guidance easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a young person 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 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

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. The MHST (Mental Health Support Team) will also provide termly training linked to identifying mental health concerns and ways in which we can support them. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.[2]

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 pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight 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 the CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

Strategy Review

This strategy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in 2026. Additionally, this strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. This strategy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Date: September 2026

Appendix A

Referral to CAMHS:

When making a referral, the Pan-Dorset C-CAMH service expect that:

- The referrer has met the child
- The child and/or family have given consent for the referral to be made
- The referrer has made some assessment of the child/ young person and family's motivation to engage in a therapeutic service
- First-line interventions e.g. support from school, community-based parenting support, local youth groups have been tried and the difficulties remain unchanged and/or have worsened
- If there are any safeguarding concerns, the referrer has completed an assessment and/or made a referral to MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub).

The preferred referral route is to use the online form found at:

www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/CAMHS

but written referrals will also be accepted. Once received, the referral will be reviewed by a screening team.

Appendix B

At Lockyer's Middle School, we offer the following systems to help promote positive mental health:

- 1:1 or group sessions
- Group support according to need run by an appropriate adult
- Pastoral Support
- Bereavement support from a trained MOSAIC volunteer
- Merit prizes linked to personal development

We also liaise with outside professionals including:

- Education Psychology Service
- CAMHS
- East Dorset Early Help
- Safer Schools Team
- Community Paediatricians
- School Nursing
- Alternative Provisions and Specialist Provisions
- Mental Health Support Team
- Youth Worker

Appendix C
Useful resources

Support for feelings around suicide;

Papyrus- Prevention of Young suicide - including 'how can I get help?' and a help line. (www.papyrus-uk.org)

Hector's House - Suicide support, links and advice, signposting for helplines, with a particular focus on supporting young men. (www.hectorshouse.org.uk)

Heads Together - promoting the benefits of talking about difficult thoughts and feelings as well as lots of other Mental Health resources. (www.headstogether.org.uk)

Building Self-esteem and Confidence;

Dove Self-Esteem Project - Confident Me, a set of free, evidence-based resources for teachers and schools to run body confidence workshops, aimed at 11-14 year olds. (www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html)

Human Utopia - Primary school aged courses aimed at inspiring children to be 'their own unique selves'. (www.humanutopia.com)

Self Esteem Team – Run talks in secondary schools promoting positivity and self-esteem. (www.selfesteemteam.org)

Counselling support;

Kooth- anonymous online counselling for secondary age young people, access to forums on relevant topics that are overseen by the Kooth team & advice and tips on staying mentally healthy (www.kooth.com)

Parental support;

Young Minds – A charity promoting awareness of and information about mental health difficulties in young people, with online information and resources for young people and parents and a parent helpline. (www.youngminds.org.uk)

CAFCASS - Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, look after the interests of children involved in family proceedings. www.cafcass.gov.uk has information for young people and parents/ carers.

Bis-net Behaviour Support Service – Offering a range of workshops for parents and carers. (www.bis-net.org.uk)

Gingerbread – A charity for single parent families, running online forums, advice and single parent groups. (www.gingerbread.org.uk)

Family Lives- Parenting and family support including online resources, forums and helpline. (www.familylives.org.uk)

Helping families to access local services;

Home Start- A family support charity helping families with young children offering home visits, groups, and helping families to access local services. (www.home-start.org.uk)

Families facing abuse and domestic violence support and systems;

SAFE (Stop Abuse For Everyone)- Helpful information and resources. (www.safe-services.org.uk)

Child Assault Prevention UK- (www.safestrongfree.org.uk) Work to understand how to reduce children's vulnerability to child abuse and build safer communities.

Operation Encompass - Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse by reporting to schools before the start of the next school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening, in confidence to the school's key adult. (www.operationencompass.org/)

Mental Health awareness/guidance, useful websites;

Young Minds – A charity promoting awareness of and information about mental health difficulties in young people, with online information and resources for young people and parents and a parent helpline. (www.youngminds.org.uk)

Mind – Provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem, including information about mental health, guides to support services, online community and links to local Mind support. (www.mind.org.uk)

Mental Health Foundation – Information about looking after your mental health. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Time to Change – Movement to end mental health discrimination. (www.time-to-change.org.uk)

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training- Helps to identify need, and when further support may be necessary. (www.mhfaengland.org)

Gender Diversity;

Stonewall & Young Stonewall – Campaigning for everyone to feel free to be who they are. (www.stonewall.org.uk / www.youngstonewall.org.uk)

LGBT Foundation – A charity providing a wide range of support services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, including a helpline and email support. (https://lgbt.foundation/)

Mermaids - Support gender diversity and trans-gender children, with support and resources for young people, parents/carers and professionals. (www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)

Proud2Be - Support LGBTQIA+ people and their families; Through campaigning, delivering training, facilitating a youth project, a volunteer programme and groups and events