



# STREATHAM & CLAPHAM HIGH SCHOOL

## Mental Policy

Person(s) responsible for this policy		Deputy Head Pastoral, Pastoral Leader	
Last review by	G Cross	Review date	June 2022
Date of next review		September 2023 or sooner if required	

### Statement of Philosophy

*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)*

At SCHS we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

### 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical and Safeguarding policies in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a The Policy Aims to:

1. Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
2. Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
3. Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
4. Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
5. Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

### Lead Members of Staff

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

Gill Cross	Deputy Head Pastoral, DSL
Jane Hayes	Assistant Head (Prep), DSL
Mary Evans	House Mistress, Deputy DSL
Rachel Grant	House Mistress, Deputy DSL
Millie Simpson	Assistant Head (Sixth Form) Jan 2023
Jane Flannagan	House Mistress

Kate Renshaw	House Mistress	
Laura Ruffman	House Mistress	
Mike Spooner	House Master	
Carin Hoad	School Nurse	
Carole Small	School	counsellor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, the Deputy DSLs, the Head, the School Nurse, the relevant local authority or the Emergency Services via 999. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Gill Cross, DSL.

### **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student'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**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the DfE 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, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students 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 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 communicate their concerns with Simon Smith our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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/Games 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 student 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 student 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 student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'
- All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS. This record should include the main points from the conversation
- This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead who will offer support and advice about next steps.

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- 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 student 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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL, Gill Cross. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

As a guiding principle, parents are informed to help maintain the collaborative nature of the overall support for the student. Students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case and circumstances allow, then the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately and this must be recorded on CPOMS.

### **Referral to School Counsellor**

SCHS has within its staff a school counsellor. Pupils are able to attend counselling in the following ways:-

- Self-referral - Pupils can refer themselves to the school counsellor.
- Tutor referral – Form Tutors can make recommendations to the relevant House Mistress/Master who will make a referral to the counsellor.
- Parent referral – Parents are welcome to request that their child attend counselling. A request for counselling should be made to the Tutor or House Mistress/Master.
- The content of the counselling sessions remains confidential between the school counsellor and the pupil unless the welfare or safety of the pupil is considered to be at risk of significant harm. The school counsellor may, with the pupil's agreement, provide parents or schools' staff with a general progress report.

All requests for the counselling service should receive a response within 5 working days. The school should be aware that counselling is not always an appropriate response in an emergency situation and that a referral to a General Practitioner (GP) or other Child Protection policy action may be required.

New referrals will be discussed with the counsellor each week and the waiting list reviewed. The priority for each pupil awaiting counselling should be re-assessed and if there is any new relevant information about a pupil, who is engaged in counselling or on the waiting list, this should be shared.

It is important to manage the schedule of counselling sessions for pupils and liaise with the counsellor to ensure that a pupil does not regularly miss the same lesson and that sessions are sensitive to the school's timetabling constraints.

The school counsellor will be available in the school at the agreed time each week and will be contactable for urgent referrals; this makes the school counsellor accessible to all members of the school community, helps develop relationships and reinforces the view that counselling is a normal part of a school's provision for its pupils and staff.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. 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 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 steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on CPOMS.

### **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 on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Supporting Peers**

- When a student 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.
- 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves eg. Counsellor
- 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 to enable them to keep students safe.
- We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.
- 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 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 our CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

### **Policy Review**

- This policy will be reviewed annually.
- Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Gill Cross our DSL via email [g.cross@schs.gdst.net](mailto:g.cross@schs.gdst.net).
- This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.