

## Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Last Review: March 2024  
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Committee: Inclusion

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## **1.0 Policy statement**

At JCoSS, 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 aim to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the JCoSS approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

## **3.0 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.

## **4.0 Key staff members**

This policy aims to ensure all staff share in the responsibility of promoting the positive mental health and wellbeing of students. However the following key members of staff have specific roles in leading this area of school life:

- Deputy Headteacher, Pastoral
- Assistant Headteacher, Behaviour and Attitudes
- Assistant Headteacher, Safeguarding and Systems,
- Safeguarding Team
- Pastoral Staff – Heads of Year, Deputy Heads of Year, Student Support Managers
- SENCO
- Kvutzah (PSHE) Coordinator
- Emotional Wellbeing Practitioner
- School Counsellors

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should log on CPOMS or speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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.

## **5.0 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, assemblies, form time activities and the peer education and peer mentoring programme.

Incorporating these messages into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we aim to use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

## **6.0 Signposting**

We aim to 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, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (social media, website, Microsoft teams), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

## **7.0 Sources of support at school and in the local community**

JCoSS has a pastoral team dedicated to the nurture and care of each student. Each year team comprises of the Head of Year and the Deputy Head of Year supported by the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour and Attitudes and the Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding.

The school has different spaces across the school, the "hub", a Wellbeing Garden (under development), a space outside the Head of years' offices and a lunch time wellbeing drop in club. All these are areas dedicated to the wellbeing of students and staff.

All local authorities have CAMHS provision, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. Where referrals are made this is based on the residential borough of the student.

Barnet <http://www.behcamhs.nhs.uk/contact-us/contact-barnet-camhs.htm> Tel: 0208 702 3300

Brent <https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/service/brent-child-and-family-clinic/> Tel: 0203 317 5050

Herts <https://www.hpft.nhs.uk/contact-us/> Tel: 0300 777 0707

Appendix 1 outlines the support services provision at JCoSS for Mental Health and wellbeing

Appendix 2 outlines the support provision for students

## **8.0 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead using the school referral system.

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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## **9.0 Managing disclosures**

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal CPOMS file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the Safeguarding Team.

If a Peer Mentoring Programme is in place, any disclosures made will also map with this process.

## **10.0 Confidentiality**

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents will be informed in the vast majority of cases, unless doing so is deemed to place a student at risk of harm but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

## **11.0 Whole school approach**

### **11.1 Working with parents/carers**

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

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. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record if appropriate.

### **11.2 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. We aim to:

- Ensure parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Ensure 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.

## **12.0 Supporting Peers**

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student 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

### **13.0 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 post relevant information on Microsoft Teams for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal and The National College 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 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 their line manager or the Deputy Headteacher, Pastoral, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

### **14.0 Policy Review**

**This policy works alongside the following supporting documents produced by the Department for Education:**

Keeping Children Safe in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Mental Health and Wellbeing provision in Schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-wellbeing-provision-in-schools>