Meadowhead School
Academy Trust

Mental Health Policy

**This is a policy of Meadowhead School Academy Trust.
Meadowhead School is a Foundation School
And a member of the
Meadowhead Community Learning Trust**

Staff Responsible: **Kate Miller**

Reviewed: **April 2021**

Statement of Intent

At Meadowhead School we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both whole school approaches and specialised, targeted interventions for individuals.

"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 2013)

We recognise that every member of our school community has mental health which needs looking after. In addition to promoting work practices and strategies to promote positive mental health and well-being for all, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health, whether this be mild, moderate or severe. 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 and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

It is known that good mental health starts in childhood, 75% of adult mental health problems start before someone is 18 years old (Action for Children 2020). We as a school want to make a positive impact on the mental health and well-being of our young people, as well as building resilience and reducing stigma around mental health. Part of this will be equipping our young people to be able to articulate their emotions and have the right vocabulary to talk about their own mental health. This will enable our young people to look after their mental and physical health, build positive relationships, and ask for help if needed and to set and follow their own academic and personal goals and reach their full potential. If children's emotional needs are unmet, the impact on teaching and learning will be considerable.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including associate staff and governors as well as parents/carers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy in cases where a student's mental health puts them at risk of harm and the SEND policy where a student's mental health is identified as special educational need. If the mental health concern is linked to an issue such as bereavement or bullying, the student might not be added to the SEND register but support will be sourced for the student from within school and external agencies. If the concern becomes an ongoing issue then the student will be considered for the SEND register.

This policy aims to:

• Raise the profile for the whole school community of the importance of positive mental health and well-being, including staff, students and the wider school community
• Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
• Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in themselves, colleagues and students
• Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
• Provide support to students suffering mental ill health, 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:

- Mrs Kam Grewal-Joy – Headteacher
- Miss Kate Miller – Assistant Headteacher/SENDCo and Designated Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Helen Weeks – Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mr David Sheppard – Assistant Headteacher and Student Development Lead
- Mrs Jane Walker – Safeguarding Officer
- Mrs Natalie Shea – Ethics Faculty Leader
- Mrs Lucy Smith – Learning Support Mentor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Head of Year or Pastoral Manager in the first instance. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to a designated safeguarding lead in person and documented on CPOMS.

If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting Medical Room Nurse or first aid staff, contacting the emergency services if necessary and contacting the child's next of kin.

Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the student's Pastoral Manager, the SENDCo or Safeguarding Officer.

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 Ethics Curriculum, form time and assembly programme.

For example, students discuss strategies for managing their mental health in the Y7 Ethics Unit, "Staying Safe", the Y8 Ethics Unit "Taking Care of Yourself" and the Y11 Ethics unit on "Stress and Exam Pressures".

More details can be found in the school's Relationship, Sex and Health Education policy here: Relationships, Sex and Health Education - Meadowhead School

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students 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 shared on the school website; through tutor time; Ethics lessons and through parent bulletins. It can be viewed on the school website here: Mental Health and Well-being - Meadowhead School

Health Care Plans and Risk Assessments

It is helpful to draw up either a support plan or risk assessment for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. The plan should always involve the student, the parents, the pastoral team, Senior Leadership Team and relevant health professionals, where possible.

Supporting Parents

In order to support all parents, we will:

• Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health and wellbeing issues on our school website, social media and in parent bulletins
• 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 positive mental health and well-being policy easily accessible to parents
• Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children

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. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The COVID -19 outbreak has had an impact on everyone's daily life and it is important to remember that everyone reacts differently to events and changes that they have never faced before. These changes can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves, displaying feelings of loneliness, frustration, anxiety and boredom. Due to the crisis it is likely that our nervous system is on alert with low level fight or flight responses primed. Mental health of all members of the school community will have been affected by changes and uncertainties imposed by the situation and responsive measures should take this into consideration. Continuing positive relationships between teachers and students will be integral to reforming the supportive school community.

- During school closure and for students who are isolating when school reopens, tutor time will be presented virtual and will be an opportunity for a wellbeing check-in with form tutors.
- During school closure, those students who are vulnerable due to their mental health will be invited to attend school if appropriate
- During school closure and for those students isolating when school reopens, all lessons will be taught via Microsoft Teams to allow students a structured day and the opportunity to interact with their teacher and peers
- Pastoral Managers and the Safeguarding Officer will be in school every day during closure so they are available to any student who needs support whether in school or at home.