



THE Boswells SCHOOL

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

A member of the Chelmsford Learning Partnership

Committee Responsible	Local Governing Body
Lead Staff Member	Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour Welfare and Safety)
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1.0 Policy statement

At The Boswells School 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 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 Boswells School's 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 the school's Leadership team 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 take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff
- Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leads
- Senior Leadership team
- Mental Health Lead
- SENCO
- Mental Health First Aid Champion
- Psychology Intervention Manager
- Mental Health Lead
- E-Safety Lead
- Attendance Officer
- Pastoral Behaviour Support Manager

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the child's tutor.

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. The Safeguarding lead (or the Deputy in their absence) and Headteacher should be informed immediately.

5.0 Risk Management Plans

When a student has been identified as having a serious cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through EMWHS or another organisation, it is recommended that a Risk Management Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the student, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the student's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

Safety Plans

When there is a risk of a student harming themselves on school site.

6.0 Teaching about mental health

The School is committed to teaching all elements of the RSE 2020 statutory guidance.

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 Personal Development curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this 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 will 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. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

7.0 Signposting

We will 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, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), 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

The school has a dedicated email address for students, staff and parents to email any safeguarding concerns. It is not a replacement for steps required to be taken in an emergency.

8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

There is a huge amount of support which is on offer at the school including:

- Daily contact with a Tutor – available to all

- All staff have received training in Mental Wellbeing and Suicide Awareness therefore they are looking out for the signs in all curriculum lessons and communicating concerns to the Pastoral team on a daily basis for students in all year groups
- Access to the Pastoral team / office – students can attend before school, break, lunch and afterschool
- Access to the school library to receive support with Home Learning from 8am until 5pm – available to all
- Access to the ‘hubs’ which are staffed by members of the SEND team from 8am until 4.30pm – this is open to anyone who has requested support or is on the SEND register
- Appointments with our Psychology Intervention Manager – this is following discussion with members of the Pastoral team which make a referral
- Weekly access to the School Nurse – requires a referral from a member of the Pastoral team
- Counselling with an external provider – accessed through referrals made by the Pastoral team in conjunction with parents

In addition to this there are a number of projects and workshops we refer students based on demand and availability of resources. Such as the ‘Reach turnaround project’ (External) and ‘Anxiety Group’ (internal).

9.0 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 Pastoral Team.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

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| ▪ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental | ▪ Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope |
| ▪ Changes in eating / sleeping habits | ▪ Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather |
| ▪ Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn | ▪ Secretive behaviour |
| ▪ Changes in activity and mood | ▪ Skipping PE or getting changed secretly |
| ▪ Lowering of academic achievement | ▪ Lateness to, or absence from school |
| ▪ Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide | ▪ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause |
| ▪ Abusing drugs or alcohol | ▪ An increase in lateness or absenteeism |

10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to EMWHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence, Parental drug/alcohol misuse or Adverse Childhood Experiences Trauma.

We work closely with Essex Child & Wellbeing Service and school nurses in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of Emotional Health and Wellbeing problems;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety or emotional distress.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective,

According to the child's needs;

- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as referring in to CYPP (Child & Young Person Practitioner) specialist services, including EMWHS, so that emotional and social problems can be dealt with.
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11.0 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 on CPOMS and assigned to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

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

If the disclosure identifies immediate harm or suggests a criminal offence has been committed the member of staff should take the child directly to a member of the Pastoral team.

12.0 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 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 must always be informed, 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. This option will only be allowed if it is deemed the student is not at immediate risk.

If a student 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.

13.0 Whole school approach

13.1 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 student's record and a Risk Management or Safety Plan created if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

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

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from poor 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

15.0 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. We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health & emotional wellbeing.

<http://www.boswells-school.com/305/safeguarding>

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 the Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour, Safety and Wellbeing) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Communication with Staff:

- The weekly Pastoral bulletin will provide all staff with updates of highly vulnerable students
- Where a child has specific needs in the classroom related to their emotional wellbeing communication will be sent directly to subject teachers.

Staff Wellbeing:

- A Staff welfare committee designated to share ideas of how the school can support staff wellbeing visits.
- Staff surveys cover elements of wellbeing and take place at least twice annually.
- Staff have access to supervision.
- All members of staff have access to the Employee Assistance Programme.