



# **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

**Date Passed to Governors: July 2024**

**Approved/ Adopted by Governing Body:**

**Date Policy Reviewed: July 2024**

**Date of Next Review: September 2025**

## 1.What is this policy?

### School Policies on Related Issues (To be read and followed alongside this document)

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy and procedures

#### **This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 - (DFE Statutory guidance)

Longfield Academy seeks to achieve excellence with care. Our policy promotes sustained engagement in lessons, effort, rewards, behaviour and allows learning to flourish. If students are to achieve and enjoy their education, they need to feel safe and secure at school. Positive mental health and wellbeing is fundamental in achieving these aims.

A school's mental health policy explains and sets out the school's commitment to its students' mental health. It should outline how the school supports its students, its ongoing commitment to staff training and how it will work with the wider community to promote wellbeing. It should include and have regard for statutory guidance including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2023 and 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' 2019.

The Government's Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision Green Paper (Department of Health, Department of Education 2017) included a focus on early intervention and prevention and the central role for schools. A key theme is that there will be incentives for every school or college to identify a Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health to oversee the approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The school has an appointed Designated Senior Mental Health Lead (DSMHL). This is Claire Howlett. The DSMHL is part of the safeguarding team and coordinates the provision of mental health support services in school.

Young Minds charity reports that **one in six children** aged five to sixteen were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2020. That is roughly **five children in every classroom**.

Mental health issues can impact a student's emotional wellbeing as well as their educational attainment. Developing a Mental Health Policy is a first starting point in establishing a whole school approach that not only addresses student mental health but also shows a commitment to students, parents and the wider community that Longfield is committed to creating a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, it signals to students that the school is understanding of mental health concerns and encourages them to come forwards with their difficulties.

A mentally healthy school sees the mental health of its students, staff and parents as everybody's responsibility.

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school and trust policies such as Anti – Bullying, Choices and Safeguarding.

## **2.How will this policy be communicated?**

This policy can only be impactful in practice if it is a regularly updated document. It must be accessible and understood by all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways:

- Posted on the school website.
- Available on SharePoint.
- Signposted to all new staff during their school induction.
- Integral to safeguarding updates and training for all staff.
- Reviews of the policy will include input from staff, students, and other stakeholders, helping to ensure further engagement.

## **3.Policy Aims**

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in our school community, including students, parents, staff and governors.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Alert staff to the early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide the correct support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their families for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness from 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 the signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

#### **4.Concerns About Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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

- Rebecca Wheatley – Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of Behaviour and Welfare (SLT)
- Claire Howlett – Designated Senior Mental Health Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Angela Cleasby – Deputy Head of Behaviour and Welfare and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Diane Griffiths – SENDCo
- Justin Tattersall- Assistant Head Teacher: Personal Development
- Sarah Kelly – School Governor, Safeguarding (including E-safety) & Welfare

Staff could become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

These changes may include:

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Decline in personal care.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn, loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed.
- Changes in activity or mood
- Decreasing academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure or hopelessness.
- Reluctance to take part in PE or getting changed secretly.
- Reluctance to remove coat or long sleeves in warmer weather.
- Secretive behaviour
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Difficulty in regulating emotions, shows a lack of emotion or displays emotional outbursts.
- Increased irritability
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear to be non – accidental (if someone self-harms in school a risk assessment needs to be put in place. This should contain details of when and how parents should be contacted e.g. in the case of escalating self – harm).

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should record their concerns on CPOMS in the first instance. If there is a

concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the schools safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed.

Risk Assessments are in place for identified students, assessments are signed by parents and pupil and shared with staff via share point.

Parents should be contacted for all mental health safeguarding concerns including all incidents of self-harm or self-injury unless a risk assessment is in place and there is an alternate agreement.

On occasions where further support is needed the Designated Senior Mental Health Lead will triage the student and complete a referral to the most appropriate support, this could include CAMHS, Mental Health Support Team, Children's Wellbeing Practitioner, Darlington MIND, 0-19 Darlington or The Listening Post.

## **CAMHS**

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service** – provides outpatient assessments, support and treatment for children and young people up to the age of eighteen who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health problems.

[Community mental health service in Darlington for children and young people - Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust \(tewv.nhs.uk\)](https://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/news/2021-04-27/welcome-mental-health-support-team-mhst-darlington)

## **The Getting Help Service**

The Getting Help Service provide school-based assessments and support for students with mild to moderate mental health problems. An Education Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP) and a Children's Wellbeing Practitioner (CWP) from the team work within Longfield three days a week.

<https://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/news/2021-04-27/welcome-mental-health-support-team-mhst-darlington>

## **MIND**

### **Darlington Mind**

Darlington Mind is a local registered charity providing mental health support in Darlington, South Durham and Hambleton and Richmondshire in North Yorkshire. They provide a wide range of support services for both adults and young people which including one to one counselling, emotional wellbeing, and resilience support. Darlington Mind is currently engaged in all of the eight Darlington secondary schools

and one of the sixth form colleges, provided counselling support to pupils. Longfield has two Darlington Mind counsellors, who are in school three days per week.

[Darlington Mind - for better mental health and wellbeing](#)

### **The Listening Post**

The Listening Post is a listening and mentoring project that seeks to help young people with low level mental health and well-being issues in order to prevent them escalating into something more long-lasting. Longfield have two Listeners based in school on a Friday and Wednesday.

<https://www.dacym.co.uk/listening-post/>

### **0 – 19 Darlington**

The team which includes school nurses work with young people and families to empower and enable them to make informed decisions about health and support them in transitioning safely and happily into adult life.

[Growing Healthy Darlington - Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust \(hdft.nhs.uk\)](#)

## **5. Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy safe are included as part of our Life Curriculum and embedded throughout our daily Personal Development sessions, assemblies and school learning community in line with the DfE RSE guidance.

The expectations for the end of key stage 4 are that students learn:

- How to accurately assess the areas of strength and development, and where appropriate, act upon feedback
- How self-confidence, self-esteem and mental health are affected positively and negatively by internal and external influences and ways of managing this
- How different media portrays idealised and artificial body shapes; how this influences body satisfaction and body image and how to critically appraise what they see and manage feelings about this
- Strategies to develop assertiveness and build resilience to peer and other influences that affect both how they think about themselves and their health and wellbeing.
- The characteristics of mental and emotional health; to develop empathy and understanding about how people's daily actions can affect people's mental health.

- About change and its impact on people's mental health and wellbeing and to recognise the need for emotional support during life changes and/or difficult experiences
- A broad range of strategies – cognitive and practical – for promoting their own emotional wellbeing, for avoiding negative thinking and for ways of managing mental health concerns.
- To recognise signs of common mental health and emotional health concerns, (Including stress, anxiety and depression), what might trigger them and what help, or treatment is available.

[www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

## **6.Managing Disclosures**

At times, a student may choose to tell a member of staff about concerns they have about their own emotions and well – being. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

All staff should respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgmental way. Staff should listen rather than advise and their first thought should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMs which will be read and actioned by the appropriate member of the safeguarding team.

If there is risk involved the student should be physically taken to a member of the safeguarding team.

### **6.1 Confidentiality**

Staff should not promise a student that they will keep any information they disclose confidential. However, they should reassure the student that they are working to keep them safe, and will need to let other appropriate people know in order to do so.

### **6.2 Informing Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers will usually be informed when their child has made a disclosure. Staff must be sensitive when sharing with parents/carers as it can be upsetting to learn of their child's issues and staff should give parent/carers time to reflect where possible. A

record of the discussion must be recorded on CPOMs. Staff should always highlight further sources of information where possible to offer support to the parent.

However, if a child gives a reason to believe that there may be an underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed and Rebecca Wheatley (Designated Safeguarding lead) or a deputy in their absence should be informed immediately so that a referral can be made.

## **7. Working with Parents/Carers and The School Community**

We recognise the family plays an important 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 by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, social media platforms, ParentMail etc.)
- Make the school policy easily accessible to parents and carers
- Keep parents informed about the topics that children and learning about in school.
- Sending parental updates to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

## **8. 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. The Senior Mental Health Lead has received professional Mental Health First Aid training. We will publish relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health and this policy will be provided to all staff as part of their induction. Training opportunities for staff who require a more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be provided throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Rebecca Wheatley and Claire Howlett who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.



## **9.Meeting Student Need**

We recognise that to best support students who have difficulties, managing their mental health it is important to provide a structured environment with clear expectations of behaviour, well communicated social norms and routines, which are reinforced with a consistent behaviour policy. This is paired with an individualised and graduated response when the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health or other needs or vulnerabilities.

As a school we consider how best to use SEND and Pupil Premium resources to provide support for children with mental health difficulties where appropriate. We are aware of how mental health problems can underpin behavioural issues and how to support students effectively, and work with external services where needed. This links directly with our duties under the Equality Act 2010, recognising that some mental health issues will meet the definition of disability. Details of this provision are found in the SEND policy.