

H4 Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

The Purcell School promotes the emotional health and wellbeing of the school community. The school aims to recognise emotional concerns and intervene early to prevent mental health disorders developing. All members of staff share a pastoral 'duty of care' towards students, and recognise that promoting mental health and wellbeing falls under their overarching safeguarding responsibilities. Some staff hold additional specific pastoral responsibilities and are therefore particularly well placed to recognise the need for early intervention. These include tutors, Head of Sixth Form, Houseparents, residential house staff, SEN staff, Safeguarding Team, medical staff and the school counsellor. The school counsellor offers individual therapeutic sessions for students as well as group sessions aimed at building personal emotional resilience, self-awareness and self-confidence. Appointments with the counsellor can be made directly via self-referral or through the school nurses, Tutor, Houseparent (HP), DSL or any other member of staff.

Timely communication and information sharing about concerns is critical to supporting students' emotional health and wellbeing. To this end:

- Staff will build strong relationships with parents/guardians, based on accurately maintained contact details, such that parents are confident and have the means to share concerns with the school, as they arise.
- Key pastoral staff (HPs, Counsellor, Nurses, DSL, Director of Boarding) meet weekly to discuss pastoral issues, and to ensure that the needs of individual students are supported.
- Training in the use of *MyConcern* as a reporting and recording tool is given to all staff on induction, and regularly thereafter.
- Staff briefings include updates from medical and SEN staff, as well as the DSL, where information is shared appropriately in order to support individual students as well as the emotional wellbeing of the school as a whole.
- Training is given to staff to support their awareness of emotional wellbeing. This includes access to training provided by eg YMHA, MindEd, NSPCC etc.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Schools' Child Protection policy.

The revised edition published Nov 2018 of DfE advice Mental Health and Behaviour in schools can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

1. Introduction

Children who are mentally healthy have the ability to:

- Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- Use and enjoy solitude
- Become aware of others and empathise with them
- Play and learn
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Resolve (face) problems, setbacks and learn from them - show resilience

Mental health problems can affect anyone and can be a temporary response to a painful or difficult event or experience, or can develop into a debilitating and persistent disorder.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to help ‘build a picture’ of the emotional and mental wellbeing of students.
- To ensure staff have access to appropriate training and resources to be able to support students who have specific mental health conditions.
- To ensure that staff are confident about how to share information, raise concerns or ask for information they need in order to support students, specifically through the use of the *MyConcern* system.
- To enable students to build resilience by encountering age-appropriate challenges, learning from mistakes, building support networks and developing the skills needed for emotional wellbeing.
- To enable students to understand their own feelings and those of others, and to build the language with which to communicate feelings, including emotional distress.
- To enable students to access information about and support for specific mental health conditions.
- To enable appropriate support to be implemented for students with known mental health conditions and to have protocols in place in manage risk.

Methodology

- The mental and emotional wellbeing of students within an overarching safeguarding context forms part of the safeguarding induction for all staff.
- The structure for supporting students is explained to new and existing staff via staff Inset time, including presentations from key personnel such as the Nurses, DSL, SEN Lead.
- All staff understand the need to not offer or promise confidentiality to students. This is especially important in responding to disclosures from students in regard of self-harm, suicidal ideation, disordered eating etc. Instead staff are trained to guide students as to how they will share information and with whom, in order to appropriately support their safety and wellbeing.
- All staff are trained in reporting concerns, observations, updates etc via the *MyConcern* reporting tool such that this contributes to building an overall picture of the wellbeing of individual students who may be experiencing difficulties, and that this can be monitored over time.
- Open communication between parents and the school exists at every level; parents can email houseparents, tutors, music staff, medical staff, SLT and are encouraged to share concerns at

an early stage.

- The notion of shared networks of support is central to supporting emotional and mental wellbeing. Consent is sought from students (appropriate to the age and Gillick competence of the student) such that adults and agencies involved in the care of a student can work effectively together. For example, care plans informed by CAMHS, psychiatrists or doctors may be shared with parents, houseparents, SEN and DSL teams, academic staff, catering teams, in order to best support students in school.
- Staff inset time is given over to training about specific mental health conditions and pastoral issues, as appropriate to staff roles.
- Staff recognise that there may be additional pressures associated with exceptional musical achievement and aspiration and are committed to building student resilience through a variety of means. This includes:
 - Provision of a range of opportunities for auditions and performance, appropriate to age and experience; supported and overseen by the Director of Music
 - Recognition of the need for communication about potentially ‘high pressure’ moments in the school musical calendar
 - Support for a holistic approach to wellbeing via access to the school counsellor and physiotherapist alongside routine medical provision
 - Pastoral alertness to ‘overloading’ and the need for prompt action by tutors, musical and house staff to address this.
 - Provision of appropriate ‘downtime’ and opportunities for recreation and rest.
- Topics related to emotional and mental health form part of the PSHEE curriculum. Tutorial time gives the opportunity to discuss issues which affect mental health and how to support good mental health. This can also be followed up in houses. Opportunities are taken to link to national initiatives such as Mental Health Week.
- The school’s ethos emphasises the obligation to listen to students, collectively and individually. Thus, students grow the confidence to talk about themselves and their concerns, including their feelings and emotions, in an atmosphere which is respectful, safe and supportive.
- Students can access further information and resources to support good mental health or address concerns in a variety of ways. These include house and school notice boards, the medical centre, the counsellor. An online wellbeing hub for students is planned.
- Students with known mental health conditions are supported, as necessary, with personal care plans and risk assessments. These are informed by and shared with, as appropriate; house teams, DSL, medical centre, SLT, parents, student. Careful thought is given to meeting the best interests of the student (especially in respect of the boarding environment) within a context in which the needs of the wider student population must be considered and met.

Policy author / reviewer:	Policy date / review date:	Next review due:
Libby Searle	January 2020	January 2021
K Cayley	September 2021	September 2022
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