



# WELLINGTON SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

*This policy refers to both Wellington Senior School and Wellington Prep School*

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## **Introduction**

At Wellington School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families and members of staff and Governors. Our open culture allows pupils' 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.

This policy is a guide to all teaching and support staff outlining Wellington School's approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

## **Policy Aims**

The aim of the policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and pupils. At our school, we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our pupils feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.

We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all pupils.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our pupils' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making where possible.
- Celebrating each pupil for who they are and making every pupil feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any pupil who needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental ill-health in pupils.

## **Key Staff Members**

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

Mental Health Lead, Jo De Warren Penny.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads:

- Sam Dean (Head of Upper School),
- Alex Kemp (Deputy Head Pastoral),
- Simon Costello (Head of Boarding),

- Jason Swarbrick (Head of Lower School)
- Lucy MacAlister (Head of Sixth Form)
- Victoria Richardson (Head of Prep School).

Pastoral Team

Head of Learning Support, Duncan Hughes

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil, then in the first instance they should speak to the pupil's tutor or Head of Year who will discuss the individual details with the Head of Section (HOS). The HOS will consult with the Mental Health Lead.

If a pupil presents as a medical emergency, then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services and parents when required.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

Our PSHEE curriculum is developed to give pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. We will regularly review our PSHEE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they are meeting the aims outlined in this policy. Where appropriate we will also use small focus groups and year group seminars to target key issues.

### **The role of the Mental Health Lead at Wellington School**

The role of the Mental Health Lead (MHL) will continue to develop and grow as the school adapts to circumstances that impact on the school community.

The MHL is a source of support for the whole school and will make themselves available to discuss issues as they arise. The MHL is a member of the Safeguarding Team and will raise any issues as they arise in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures.

In the event of a crisis, the MHL will assess and advise on the immediate actions to be taken by the school in regard to the pupil's mental health. This advice will be fed back to the DSL and the Safeguarding Team who will make a decision regarding appropriate next steps.

In other circumstances the following is advised –

If staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health then this would normally be shared as a pastoral concern, in order for Tutors and Heads of Year to be fully aware of the situation and for them to start the process of supporting the pupil on an individual basis. If staff feel that there are further issues which require extra support, this should be shared with the HOS's.

Once it is deemed appropriate for the MHL to get involved, they will discuss the case with the relevant staff member and arrange a suitable time to meet the pupil. The pupil needs to consent to this contact in the first instance. A decision in regards to involving parents at this point in time will also need to be made by the HOS.

During the initial meeting the MHL will outline the bounds of confidentiality to the pupil.

The MHL will share relevant information with the Tutor, HM's, DSL and HOS's to ensure all support available is put in place. On some occasions, with the permission of the pupil, this information may be shared with other relevant staff members.

After 2/3 sessions the MHL will share a summary and plan with staff and parents. If it is felt that other services outside of school are required, the MHL will signpost and advise the best way forward.

If there is some brief intervention that the MHL can offer then this will be offered within the school. However, much of this support will need to remain short-term to ensure all pupils who require support are able to receive this.

### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise the warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to pupils when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the DSL's as appropriate.

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

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased social isolation.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption.

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism.
- Punctuality.
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems.

Finally, staff should be aware that other factors can impact a pupil's mental health, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

### **SIGNPOSTING**

We are fortunate in Somerset to have a positive service locally which can assist with Mental Wellbeing issues – Young Somerset – [www.youngsomerset.org.uk](http://www.youngsomerset.org.uk)

This service is able to offer support and guidance for pupils and families which falls outside of Statutory services.

There is an equivalent service in Devon – [www.youngdevon.org](http://www.youngdevon.org)

There are also a number of online services available that offer resources and information on Mental Health:

[www.youngmind.org.uk](http://www.youngmind.org.uk)

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

[www.rcpsych.au.uk](http://www.rcpsych.au.uk)

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

[www.charliewaller.org](http://www.charliewaller.org)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)

The Following websites have access to online support -

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)