



**PACE** مدرسة بيس البريطانية ذ.م.م  
**BRITISH SCHOOL L.L.C.**  
**SHARJAH**

# POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

## Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 (WHO, 2018).

At PACE British School we want staff and students to be resilient in every area of their school and wider life. We want all members of our community to have faith in themselves and those around them to realise that any of life's obstacles can be challenged by working together, to ensure the path we follow is the correct one.

Young Minds definition of emotional resilience and good mental health includes the following:

- The capacity to enter into and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- A continuing progression of psychological development
- An ability to play and learn appropriately for their age and intellectual level
- A developing moral sense of right and wrong
- The capacity to cope with a degree of psychological distress
- A clear sense of identity and self-worth
- The ability to “bounce back” in the face of adversity

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. All staff have the option to attend mental health training. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. One in six children, in Lancashire schools, 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 affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

### The Policy Aims to:

- Promote good mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues

Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

### Lead Members of Staff

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

- Sue Davis Mental Health Lead
- Sara El Masri/Nadiya Mohammed Mental Health SEN
- School Nurse

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or the

Head Teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedure for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first-aid staff and contacting emergency services if necessary.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

**We take steps to create awareness across the whole school community of the importance of emotional wellbeing and mental health, including its impact on academic performance.**

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 development of our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort with teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help as needed for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We will promote awareness about mental health and wellbeing through assemblies each year.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support available within our school and the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it, can be found within the local offer page reference on our website.

Our continuum, which describes symptoms and signposts (appendix 1)

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms, staff rooms and toilets; we will also regularly highlight the sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student self-help seeking by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How they should access it
- Why they should access it
- What is likely to happen next

## **Warning Signs**

School 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 communicate the concern with the Pastoral Support Officer. Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family or becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather

- Secretive behavior
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## Managing Disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to disclosure. If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgmental. Staff should listen, rather than advise, and our first thought should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring 'why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on our initial concerns form and sent to our DSL.

The written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps.

This information should be shared with the DSL who will provide and store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about the next steps.

## Procedures for Highlighting a Concern

**Ask assess act** - where a young person is distressed the member of staff should ask them what support they need and want, assess the risk of harm to self or others and try to reduce any risk that this presents.

**Listen non-judgmentally** - give them time to talk and gain the confidence to take the issue to someone who could help further.

**Give them assurance and information** - tell them how brave they have been gently explaining that you would like to help them, do not promise confidentiality as it could be a child protection matter

**Enable the young person to get help** - work through the avenues of support, explain that you would like to share their problem with someone else so that they can get the best help, encourage them to speak to someone and offer to go with them

**Encourage self-help strategies**

**ALL CONCERNS MUST BE LOGGED**

**Do not speak about your conversation or concern with other pupils or casual to a member of staff. Access support for yourself if you need it via your line manager**

**High-risk** if you consider the young person to be at risk then you should follow child protection procedures and report your concerns directly to the PSO The Head of Pastoral/Pastoral Support will decide on the appropriate course of action this may include

- Referral to the SEND
- Contacting parent's careers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. School Nurse, a Doctor or Mental Health Nurse
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Giving advice to teachers, parents and other pupils

The Head of Pastoral Care.

The member of staff should pass on the information

The member of staff should pass on the information to the Pastoral Support Officer who will instigate the appropriate time period of watchful waiting (up to 4 weeks).

**Low-risk** if you feel that the young person needs a period of watchful waiting, communicate this to the Head of Pastoral Care.

The member of staff should pass on the information

The member of staff should pass on the information to the Pastoral Support Officer who will instigate the appropriate time period of watchful waiting (up to 4 weeks).

## Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the use of confidentiality. If we think it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and or a parent (students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm).

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Head of Pastoral Care helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who would be the most appropriate and helpful person to share this information with. This must be logged in the pupil's confidential record.

Parents must always be informed and the student may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives reason to believe that there may be any underlying child protection issues parents should not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

## Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions on a case-by-case basis:

- Can the meeting happen face-to-face? This is preferable
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, students or members of staff
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away, where possible, as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing.

Sharing sources of further support can also be helpful e.g. parent helplines and forums. We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### Working with all parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to deal with any concerns about their own child or a friend of the child
- Make our mental health school policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

## Supporting peers

Wellbeing Ambassadors in Years 7-10 will be trained to promote good mental health.

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 healthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep all students 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.

We will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can be best support

- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friends need help
- 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

## Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular updates about recognizing and responding to mental health issues. The relevant trained staff in school will ensure that the pupil ICP includes all relevant information. Staff that require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of a performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students. Pastoral Support Officers will be required to complete the mental first aid training. 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 Mr. John, the CPD coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

### Working with staff

PACE British School recognises the education of young people as a 'work of love' which requires deep commitment and service from all school staff. The school acknowledges the challenge for all staff in carrying out this work of love and is committed to nurturing them throughout their careers. This includes sharing responsibility for their wellbeing and so all policies have been written or reviewed with this in mind.

Staff will be regularly trained about how to maintain a good mental health and how to recognise signs where this is not the case in themselves and others.

A budget will be in place to help support wellbeing activities for staff in school.

Staff are invited to complete the MIND Wellbeing Action Plan with their line manager. Staff returning from a stress related illness must complete this.

All pastoral staff will have regular supervision from the school counsellor.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils, parents and staff will be surveyed annually and an action plan will be written to respond to the results.

The Change team will report termly to governors at the School Community Committee and the Resources Committee.

The Change team meet termly to:

- work through the school's wellbeing action plan
- review policies
- analyse surveys
- discuss solutions to identified gaps
- identify ways to improve the wellbeing of the school community

The Change team are:

- **Mr. John Bagust** - Principal
- **Ms. Kush Bains** - Vice Principal
- **Ms. Kay Turner** - Head of Secondary
- **Mr. Rajiv Jethiji**- Head of Primary

Signed: 

*Last amended: August 2025*

*Policy Review Date: August 2026*