This policy covers all academies/schools within Arden Multi-Academy Trust

Name of Policy	Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy	
Lead	Martin Murphy, Chief Executive Officer	
Governor Committee	Business & Personnel Committee	
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Amendments		

MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organisation, 2018).

The Trust aims to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at those in need of additional support.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health issues. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue (Young Minds, 2017). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the Trust's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our 'Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions' Policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue and our SEND Ppolicy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

▪ Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils;

▪ Increase understanding and awareness amongst pupils, staff and parents of mental health issues;

▪ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental health issues;

▪ Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues;

▪ Ensure that appropriate advice and support is given to pupils (and their peers and parents/carers) suffering with mental health issues;

▪ Seek to ensure that appropriate referrals for pupils are made to external agencies for support with mental health issues.

Lead members of staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit will include members of SLT and the pastoral team.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a DSL in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to a DSL. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to Solar, CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the DSL team or Head of Year in liaison with parents and, where appropriate, the school nurse and/or the pupil's GP.

Risk assessments

It is helpful to draw up a risk assessment for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up with involvement from the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

• Details of a pupil's behaviours and/or condition;

• De-escalation strategies and/or special requirements and precautions;

• Medication and any side effects;

• What to do, and who to contact if concerns arise or in an emergency.

An example template is included in Appendix 1.

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE and pastoral curriculums. The specific content of lessons, assemblies or tutor time activities will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of relevant sources of support within Trust schools and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas. We will advertise drop-ins with the school nurse and DSL team regularly within school. We will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils being correctly sign-posted by ensuring pupils understand the following:

▪ What help is available

▪ Who it is aimed at

▪ How to access it

▪ Why to access it

▪ What is likely to happen next

Warning signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 their concerns with a member of the DSL team. Possible warning signs include:

▪ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

▪ Changes in eating/sleeping habits

▪ Increased isolation from friends or family, 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 behaviour

▪ Skipping PE or getting changed secretively

▪ Lateness to or absence from school

▪ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

▪ An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff. All staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil 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-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise, and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be discussed with a member of the DSL team and recorded on CPOMS under the category advised by the DSL. The DSL will speak to the pupil and parents regarding the concern and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We will be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a pupil then we will discuss with the pupil:

▪ 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 pupil without first telling them, although an age-appropriate approach is required here. Ideally staff would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. This includes when a student is under the age of 16 and is in danger of harm. If a pupil gives staff the reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues the DSL team must be informed immediately. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually a member of the DSL team, as this helps to safeguard staff's own emotional wellbeing as individuals are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It ensures continuity of care in their absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support.

Working with parents/carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we will to be sensitive in our approach. 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/carer time to reflect.

We will highlight any further sources of information and give leaflets to take away where possible, as parents can find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will always provide a clear means of contacting schools within the Trust with further questions. Each meeting will finish with agreed next steps and a record of the meeting will be kept on the child's confidential record.

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

▪ Highlight sources of information and support about relevant mental health issues;

▪ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help regarding this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;

▪ Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents;

▪ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings;

▪ Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about at school and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting peers

When a pupil 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 unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be guided by conversations with the pupil 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset;

▪ Warning signs that their friend may need further adult help.

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.

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 DSL team who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Risk Assessment Template

Student Name:	Student Photo
Year Group: **Date:**	
Form Group: **Review Date:**	

Behaviours displayed/level of risk	De-escalation strategies to use	Any further information:
Low Level		
Medium Level		
High Level		

Attendees at Meeting		
Name:	Signature:	Date:
Name:	Signature:	Date:
Name:	Signature:	Date:
Name:	Signature:	Date: