

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles

Walton Academy – September 2024

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## Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Chair of Governors	Mrs L Crerar	<a href="mailto:LCrerar@gov.diverse-ac.org.uk">LCrerar@gov.diverse-ac.org.uk</a>
Academy Principal	Mrs J Leonard	01476 563251 <a href="mailto:jleonard@walton-ac.org.uk">jleonard@walton-ac.org.uk</a>
Designated Mental Health Lead	Mrs K Dolby	01476 563251 <a href="mailto:Kdolby@walton-ac.org.uk">Kdolby@walton-ac.org.uk</a>

## The Walton Way

We strongly believe that staff and pupils should receive the support they are entitled to, both in school and out of school.

A positive safeguarding culture is embedded throughout the academy ensuring our pupils have opportunities to seek out support and take advantage of the outstanding offer that we can facilitate.

### Staff training

- Annual training by all staff
- Online learning modules
- Termly updates and reminders

### Pupil awareness

- Dedicated pages in planners
- Tutor board notices
- Assemblies and tutorial programme
- PD curriculum/Next Steps Days

### Policy and Practice

- Updated and shared annually
- Accessed on website, in staff room and on SharePoint

### Mutual Respect

- Focus on building relationships with pupils
- Tutorial programme enabling discussion time

### Clear reporting protocols

- Access to MyConcern
- Nagging doubt forms
- Regular staff reminders

### Open Door Policy

- Positive atmosphere
- Approachable staff
- Non-teaching pastoral/SG staff for increased availability
- Open minded - It could happen

### Managing Allegations

- Dealt with with dignity
- Experienced staff
- Work with outside agencies

### High Expectations by all

- Staff teaching standards
- Behaviour and conduct standards of pupils
- Clear and concise

## **Our Commitment Statement**

*Mental health is a state of well-being 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. (World Health Organization)*

We aim 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 and targeted approaches aimed at our most vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues. At Walton Academy, our safeguarding culture is embedded within everything that we do.

## **Scope**

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

The commitment aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils 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 pupils. Staff with a specific responsibilities to oversee and support pupils are:

Kim Dolby – AP, DSL and Mental Health Lead

Head of Year Team x5

Pastoral Mentors x 5

Academy Counsellor x1

Safeguarding Team x8

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

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led by the safeguarding team or relevant Head of Year.

## **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

## **Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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 PHSRE/PD curriculum and tutorial programme.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs and age of each cohort. 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 are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The main point of contact for this is Kim Dolby.

We will display relevant sources of support in the vicinity of the Pupil Services office and will highlight key topics within the tutorial/assembly programme. A good example of signposting pupils to key support networks is the involvement we have annually with Kooth Counselling. They come onto academy site and deliver assemblies for all cohorts offering their service. We have also explored other options and organisations, including SHOUT to support our pupils.

## **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 through My Concern.

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 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 pupil 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 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?' Staff have received safeguarding training on managing disclosures and should always record concerns via My Concern, remembering that no concern is too small to report.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing via My Concern and held on the pupil's chronology. This 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

Pupils have access to MyVoice which enables them to log their own concerns, either about themselves or of other pupils.

## **Confidentiality**

We should 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 should 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. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

Disclosures should always be referred to the Safeguarding Team via My Concern; this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil at the time of disclosure unless the staff member is concerned about how the child will respond. Remembering though, to never promise confidentiality.

The Safeguarding Team will ensure that parents are informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them. In the event of any concerns about safeguarding within the respite period, action should be taken swiftly. A respite period is not always appropriate and should be determined case by case. Decisions should not be taken by staff in isolation and the Safeguarding Team will undertake professional dialogue and analysis of the situation before respite is agreed upon.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed. Swift referral through the MASH or a previously allocated Social Worker will take place.

## **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, the pupil, other 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 information 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 aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too 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 the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential chronology on My Concern.

Parents 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 we will:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our Mental Health Commitment easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children in meetings held
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PHSRE/PD lessons 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 provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

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 Opportunities

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.

Staff are able to access additional training modules through National College.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for 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 Frances Gilbert, our CPD lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

<b>Policy lead</b>	Mrs K Dolby (AP : BA)
<b>Policy renewal date</b>	September 2024
<b>Policy approving body</b>	<b>To be completed by CQR Team</b> [Insert as appropriate e.g. Executive Leadership Team/Trustees/Sub-Committee]
<b>Date of approval</b>	[Insert date policy approved]
<b>Adopted on</b>	[Insert date uploaded to website/Staff Portal]