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Designated SLT Link: Julian Young
Archway School has a duty to monitor the operation and effectiveness of policies. Designated authority: Governors' Welfare & Discipline Committee



Positive Mental Health Policy

Policy Statement

Good 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 contribute to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Aims

At our school, 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. In order to help support our staff and manage their wellbeing we will aim to ensure that all colleagues will be supported and provided with high quality training acknowledging that everyone is an expert and professional in their field and ensure that we are constantly reviewing how we enable staff to maintain their work life balance.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Principles

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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff and students 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 or carers

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental wellbeing of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Lead first aider
- Heads of Key Stage - pastoral leads

- PSHE Co-ordinator

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the pastoral lead in the first instance. If there is a concern that the student is in danger of harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Headteacher or the designated governor. If the student presents with a mental health crisis 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 CYPS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by pastoral leads.

Individual Risk Assessments

A risk assessment for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health should be written. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals. This may include:

- Details of a student'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 in supporting the student

Teaching about Mental Health

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 developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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 ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which promotes understanding and reduces stigma.

Accessing Support

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common and staff rooms and 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 student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- How to access it
- What is likely to happen next

We recognise that seeking help for a mental health problem can be very difficult and staff will be proactive in encouraging and supporting students to seek out help.

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 their concerns with pastoral leads.

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, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Changes in behaviour, for example becoming sullen, defiant or irritable
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Use of 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
- 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 a 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-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file. 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

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

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards the issue of confidentiality. If 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

Ideally we should never share information about a student without discussion and receiving their consent, though there are certain situations when information must be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent (for example in the case of students who present a danger to themselves or others).

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the pastoral leads and DSL 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 it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

If it is necessary to inform the student's parents, the student should be given all possible support to do this in a safe and supported manner. This may include accompanied by a trusted member of staff and in a setting agreed with the student.

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

Staff concerned about colleague's mental health, wellbeing or indications of increased stress should inform the appropriate member of the SLT of their concerns.

Further References:

Anti-Bullying Policy

Attendance Policy

Behaviour Policy

Equalities Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Preventing Extremism & Radicalisation Policy

Safeguarding Children Policy

SEN Policy

Substance Misuse and Medicines Policy

Supporting Students at School with Medical Conditions