Positive Mental Health Policy

ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Approved by the Senior Leadership Team: September 2026

Review date: September 2028

Background

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).

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We feel we are a very nurturing school, but there is always more we can do. We also have George Adams who completed the Senior Mental Health Lead programme in the summer of 2022.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill-health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By the age of 14, half of all mental health problems are established in a person. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with our 'Supporting children with medical conditions' policy, the SEND Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill-health
- Provide support to pupils with mental health issues and signpost staff to support services

Key Members of Staff for Mental Health and Inclusion

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health and inclusion of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Name	**Role**
George Adams	Pastoral, Safeguarding, Child Support & DDSL
Luke McCoy	Assistant Head Teacher
Sophie Vigar	Assistant Head Teacher & SENDCO

Senior Mental Health Lead role

All staff should champion mental health, but it is important to have named staff to ensure that the topic of wellbeing remains prominent. These roles will be to:

- Champion mental health for the school community, not to be directly responsible for it
- Promote wellbeing materials
- Be a 'listening ear'
- Act as a signpost for other services or professionals
- Relay ideas and information to senior staff that could further improve wellbeing in school
- Have oversight of school improvement plans to ensure that mental health promotion has a key place
- Help to reduce barriers to mental health in school by promoting positive language in relation to mental health

Supporting pupils

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a member of staff above 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead. 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 and managed by the above staff.

Supporting staff

Staff can opt to speak to their line manager, or the Senior Mental Health Leads who can support them and/or signpost them to services available.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, advising who it is aimed at and how to access it via this policy.

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 developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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.

We will use guidance and resources from the PSHE Association and Mentally Healthy Schools website:

https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/

Warning signs
School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil, member of staff or a parent/carer 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 concerns with our SENCo, DSL or our Mental Health Lead/Champion. 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
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour

Plus for pupils:
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Lowering of academic achievement

Managing disclosures

A pupil, staff member or parent 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, staff member or parent 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 person's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures regarding pupils should be recorded on CPOMS. This 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

Information about pupils should be shared with a member of the SLT, who will offer support and advice about next steps. The person who brings the information also has the right to know the outcome for the pupil, or parent (where appropriate). This may just be an assurance that help was sought, or that the child is now receiving some support in school.

Any records kept of support provided to staff or reasonable adjustments agreed with staff will be stored in confidential staff files.

Confidentiality

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

- 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/adult 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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with the DSL or a deputy DSL as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing because 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.

Parents must always be informed if a child is self-harming, talking of self-harm, saying they are being bullied, bullying others, or expressing low mood. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents on their behalf or together with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL or deputies must be informed immediately.

Working with families

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents or carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. 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:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Make our positive mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Sources of Support

Sources of support for children with mental health needs, outside of school professionals, may include:

The Hampshire CAMHS website has many useful guides which may support professionals, parents and carers.

https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/

New Forest CAMHS 023 8074 3000

Simon Says (Bereavement support) 023 80647550
Hampshire Educational Psychology Helpline 01962 876239

Websites for support

Some good websites for staff or parents who wish to learn more about mental health are:

For children:

https://www.minded.org.uk/

https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/

https://www.annafreud.org/training/

https://www.cwmt.org.uk/ (for older children and young people)

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in care/emotional-wellbeing-of-children-in-care/

https://www.adoptionuk.org/campaigns

https://www.simonsays.org.uk/ (for children who have been bereaved)

https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/child-bereavement-service-general (for children who have been bereaved)

For adults:

https://www.italk.org.uk/ (for adults)

https://www.solentmind.org.uk/ (for adults)

Staff can access support from the Education Support Line:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-services/occupational-health/schools/employee-support

https://giveusashout.org/

Concerns for the immediate welfare of a child

If the school's DSLs are unavailable, then contact the Children's Services Professional Line on 01329 225379, or complete the Inter Agency Referral form:
https://forms.hants.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process 7e6115a7-b0ba-484d-991f-084c1248ac72/AF-Stage-52cf8e73-0daf-47d4-bb55-0fdad856d3e6/definition.json&redirectlink=/en&cancelRedirectLink=/e