



**Lakelands**  
Academy

# **Students Positive Mental Health Policy**

## **Next Review Summer 2022**

## Policy 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)*

At Lakelands Academy, 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 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 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.

### Scope

This document describes the academy'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 the medical needs 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 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 health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Sophy Bellis - designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Kirstie Mansfield – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Rhiannon Jones – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sophy Bellis - mental health lead
- Michelle Smith - lead first aider
- Andy Parkhurst - pastoral lead
- Gerard Pyburn - CPD lead
- Rhiannon Jones - Head of PSHE
- Debbie Simmonds – link governor

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 Designated Safeguarding Lead, one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, the head teacher or the designated governor. If the student 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/BeeU is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Sophy Bellis, mental health lead.

### **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive 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 academy can play

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of the developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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.

[PSHE Association Guidance](#)<sup>1</sup> will be followed to ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### **Signposting**

Staff, students and parents will be made aware of sources of support within the academy and in the local community. Relevant sources of support will be displayed in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and sources of support will be highlighted to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Highlighting sources of support, increases the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

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

---

<sup>1</sup> [Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)

## **Warning Signs**

Academy 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 Sophy Bellis, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

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
- 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 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 their 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 mental health lead, Sophy Bellis, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **Confidentiality**

Staff should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary to pass concerns about a student on, then staff should discuss with the student:

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

Staff should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally staff will receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. (Where there is a significant risk to the student, and not to share information might increase that risk).

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Sophy Bellis. This helps to safeguard staff members' own emotional wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the student. It also ensures continuity of care should they be absent; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. This should be explained to the student.

Parents must always be informed if there has been a disclosure of self-harm or suicidal ideation, though students may choose to tell their parents themselves, first. Staff should always give students the option of informing parents for them, or with them.

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

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, staff need to be sensitive in their approach. Before disclosing to parents the following questions should be considered (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, 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 or even denial during the first conversation. Staff should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

Staff should always highlight further sources of information and give parents/carers leaflets to take away where possible to help them come to terms with the news that has been shared with them. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Staff should always provide a clear route to contacting them with further questions and consideration should be given to booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting

should finish with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting should be kept on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

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

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on the website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make the mental health policy accessible to parents on the website
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE (via Parentmail) and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Supporting Peers**

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 unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, staff 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 with whom staff 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 help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, staff 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 to enable them to keep students safe.

Lakelands Academy will signpost staff who wish to learn more about mental health to sources of training. The [MindEd learning portal](http://www.minded.org.uk)<sup>2</sup> provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)

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

Where the need to do so becomes evident, twilight training sessions will be held 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 Gerard Pyburn our CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals where needed.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2022.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Sophy Bellis, our mental health lead via phone 01691622543 or email [head@lakelandsacademy.org.uk](mailto:head@lakelandsacademy.org.uk)

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.