



Ribston Hall High School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Date of Policy: December 2019

Date of next review: December 2020

Person responsible: Headteacher

Policy Statement

At Ribston Hall, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing with all students, their families and members of staff and governors through a whole school coherent strategy. We have recently achieved the GLL Mental Health Champions Award. This recognises our commitment to the emotional wellbeing of the whole school community. Our open culture allows students and staff voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected, both directly and indirectly, by mental health and emotional wellbeing issues.

Purpose

Mental Health and psychological wellbeing are fundamental to broader health and wellbeing. The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Around 10% of children and young people have a clinically diagnosable mental problem and yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age. Good mental health and wellbeing allows all members of our school community to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them.

This policy seeks to enable students and staff to be happier and more motivated by supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

Policy Aims

All schools should offer a learning environment that promotes and enhances positive mental health and emotional wellbeing with a consistent approach.

National guidance supports the view that:

"A healthy school ensures that when pupils are unhappy, anxious, disturbed or depressed there are open channels for them to seek or be offered support, without stigma and with appropriate confidentiality." " A healthy school actively seeks to promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and helps pupils understand their feelings, and build their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn."

At Ribston Hall we aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Continue to promote positivity around emotional wellbeing and to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support for themselves and when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students and staff with mental health issues with effective signposting to external agencies for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and staff and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure that all staff take responsibility to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Heads of Year
- Wellbeing Support Staff
- Assistant Head/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Headteacher
- School Counsellor
- Inclusion Co-ordinator/Mental Health First Aid Champion
- PSHE Coordinator

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the relevant member of the pastoral team.

If a member of staff is concerned about their own mental health or that of a colleague, they can seek advice from the Headteacher or a member of the Wellbeing team.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves, and others, physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. Embedding mental health education into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, this universal support will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

The School calendar is carefully designed to reduce pressure points at certain times of the year for staff and students. This includes the timings of internal examinations, assessments and marking for staff.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school and through our communication channels, we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

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

Identifying needs

Staff may become aware of signs which indicate a student or colleague are experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these should alert the relevant member of the pastoral team. Early intervention is paramount to success.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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

Support at school

It is important that young people and staff have access to pastoral care and support. At Ribston, we provide a graduated pathway of targeted support for individuals via trained pastoral staff, our SENCo, our safeguarding team, our Wellbeing team, our full-time School Counsellor, peer mentors and the School Nurse.

We provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Students regularly access our Wellbeing staff or their Head of Year, as the need arises. These staff provide a range of targeted interventions that have proven to be effective, according to the individual's needs.

For more complex needs a referral can be made to our School Counsellor who is a BACP accredited psychotherapist. This offer is open to all students and staff. Our Counsellor will offer an initial assessment followed by regular weekly sessions, again dependant on need. The School Counsellor will liaise with parents, Heads of Year and outside agencies as the need arises. The Counsellor provides formal supervision for staff on a regular basis.

We have a close working relationship with a Primary Mental Health Worker from CYPS who meets with us monthly to advise on individual students and is able to offer guidance. She also delivers sessions for staff and small groups of students on specific topics.

We will shortly be engaging in the Trailblazers Programme which is a new national programme to help make mental health support for children and young people more available when they need it.

Referral and Support to External Agencies

Some students or staff may need referral to specialist services, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be addressed at a more appropriate level. We recognise some individuals are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to mental health services, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic abuse. We ensure timely and effective identification of those who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services.

We work in collaboration with various external agencies to ensure the appropriate level of support for students with mental health issues. These include:

- CYPS
- GP
- School Nurse
- TIC+
- Early Help
- Educational Psychologist
- Occupational Health

We recognise the family plays a key role in supporting and influencing those with poor emotional health and wellbeing. We will work in partnership with families to ensure the very best outcomes for our students.

Training

We ensure all our staff are trained to have a level of understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing issues and know how to make referrals to a designated member of staff. All staff will receive regular training regarding recognising and responding to mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in addition to regular child protection training, in order to enable them to keep students' safe.

All staff have completed the Youth Mental Health First Aid half day training to support their work in this area. Our School Counsellor has regular, timetabled sessions for supervision with key pastoral members of staff.

The Mental Health Lead has attended several GHLL training events, been involved with the G15 Mental Health Project in addition to completing the NTDi Strengthening the Circle three-day training programme (funded by Health Education England). Further training includes, Understanding Mental Health in Schools and the Mental Health First Aid for Schools Champion.