



## **Ribston Hall High School**

### **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

<b>Date of Policy:</b>	June 2021
<b>Person(s) responsible:</b>	Headteacher / Wellbeing Lead
<b>Date of next review:</b>	June 2023

#### **1. 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 Ribston Hall, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing with all students, their families and members of staff and governors.

In 2019 the school achieved the GHLL 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.

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.

#### **2. 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.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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, and logged using CPOMS within school.

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

## 5. 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 school can play

## 6. 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. The parent guide to the PSHE curriculum can be found [here](#).

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.

## 7. 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 the help is for
- How to access it
- Why should they access it?
- What is likely to happen next

## 8. 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

## **9. 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, Safeguarding team, 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 CAMHS 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 are also working in connection with the Mental Health Support Team, Trailblazer scheme. The Mental Health Support Teams' (MHSTs') main role will be to provide earlier care for children and young people who may be experiencing mild to moderate or early symptoms of mental health problems, which tend to be outside the scope of traditional NHS services. Providing this additional resource to support early intervention, appropriate signposting and delivery of focused, evidence-based interventions will improve collaboration between schools and mental health services and enable earlier and more effective mental health support for children, young people, their families and carers. The Trailblazer programme will link a number of approaches, including working across the system to deliver a comprehensive training programme to increase knowledge and understanding of mental health, trauma and implementation of restorative practice, building resilience.

## **10. 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:

- CAMHS
- Trailblazer team
- GP
- School Nurse
- TIC+
- Early Help
- Educational Psychologist
- Occupational Health
- GRASSAC
- SARC
- STREET

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.

## **11. Working with Parents when a Child is Experiencing issues with their Emotional and Mental Health**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we will consider the following (on a case-by-case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is always preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider attendance of 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 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 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 record.

### **Working with all Parents**

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:

- Run regular mental health workshops for parents, on a range of topics that will support them to support their children (In 2020/21 these have included seminars on emotional health and self-harm)
- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- 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 policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **12. 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, 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 student 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

### **13. 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 in 2019 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.

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 students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

### **14. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. This policy will be updated to reflect personnel changes where necessary.

## **Annex A: Directory of support**

Below is a list of websites, and links that can be used by young people and parents to access support. All of these are available via our school website [here](#).

- A-Z directory of local support can be found [here](#).
- A padlet with a range of different ideas and suggestions of support can be found [here](#).