



MENTAL HEALTH POLICY TEMPLATE

SCCU LIMITED

VERSION 1.1

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Version Control

VERSION	REVIEWER NAME	DATE	NEXT REVIEW	COMMENTS
1.0	Policy Pros	April 2023	April 2024	First Draft.
1.1	Policy Pros	Oct 2023	Oct 2024	Minor amendment to one statement and checked URLs.

Introduction

Ensuring that education providers support their student body with their emotional health and well-being is key to promoting their learning and cognitive development whilst in education and influencing their social and mental well-being as adults.

At #NAME, we are committed to ensuring that our students can thrive in an environment where mental health and well-being are promoted as a whole school/college approach and includes where we use joint working in this promotion.

Rationale

Published in 2020, NHS Digital found that:

- Rates of probable mental disorders have increased since 2017. In 2020, one in six (16.0%) children aged 5 to 16 years were identified as having a probable mental disorder, increasing from one in nine (10.8%) in 2017. The increase was evident in both boys and girls.
- The likelihood of a probable mental disorder increased with age, with a noticeable difference in gender for the older age group (17 to 22 years); 27.2% of young women and 13.3% of young men were identified as having a probable mental disorder in 2020.

Therefore, it is recognised that mental health conditions are becoming more prevalent in school and college-aged children and young adults, who are more likely to face unequal chances in life.

Scope

This policy applies to all school/college faculty, including but not limited to governors, headteachers and deputies, teachers, support staff, and third-party support staff whose services include healthcare provision.

This policy should be read by every staff member alongside other relevant policies, including but not limited to the following:

- Safeguarding; and
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND); and
- Equality and Diversity; and

- Behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school/college leaders will:

- Champion efforts to promote mental health within the school/college.
- Take steps to improve their knowledge and understanding of mental health and well-being issues.
- Wherever possible, identify a senior mental health lead as the strategic lead for implementing the whole school or college approach to mental health and well-being within the setting.
- Ensure actions are integrated, sustained and monitored for impact, that mental health and well-being are referenced within improvement plans and policies, and that these plans and policies are reflected through practice.
- Involve students, staff, parents and carers in developing these policies so that they remain 'live' documents that are reviewed and responsive to the evolving needs of the school or college community.

All school/college staff are responsible for the following:

- Reading and abiding by this policy and all school/college policies.
- Ensuring that they embrace the ethos of maintaining an environment where:
 - Every student is listened to
 - Every student is respected
 - Every student with needs and/or vulnerabilities is identified, and
 - Every student is referred and/or supported where required.
- Promoting an environment where inclusivity and diversity are championed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, Pastoral Staff, and School Nurse are responsible for the following:

- Responding to referrals and concerns within their relevant fields.

- Identifying students whose needs fall within their remit and taking action to provide the most appropriate support promptly.
- Promoting the rights of students in their relevant fields.

Policy

Life Experiences, Mental Health, and Well-being Statistics

In the education setting, children and young people may:

- Have experienced the death of a parent; one in thirty
- Have a diagnosed mental health difficulty; five in thirty
- Be living in absolute poverty; five in thirty
- Have self-harmed; seven in thirty
- Have experienced bullying; eleven in thirty

Our Role

Our role in mental health and well-being promotion can be summarised as follows:

1. **Prevention:** As an education setting, we will create and maintain a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely and where we can improve the mental health and well-being of the whole school/college population. We will equip students to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching students about mental well-being through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
2. **Identification:** As an education setting, we will recognise emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
3. **Early support:** As an education setting, we will help students access evidence-informed early support and interventions.
4. **Access to specialist support:** As an education setting, we will work effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning

#NAME will ensure that a programme of social and emotional learning initiatives are embedded that have the potential to help students acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and well-being.

This programme will, at the appropriate stages and in relation to the curriculum, cover the following:

- Relationships Education
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Mental Health

Listening to our Students and Promoting Well-being Through Initiatives

Listening to our student population encourages a feeling of community and assists individuals in asserting some control over their own lives. It is recognised that small engagement activities outside of the curriculum can have a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of students.

At #NAME, we will listen to our students and invite their feedback by:

(delete or add to this list as appropriate.)

- Conducting surveys to capture data on the mental health of its student population to explore how we can promote better mental health and well-being.
- Conduct surveys/workshops to capture data on what our students and their parents or guardians would like us to improve on, whether related to health and social initiatives, training, teaching, or community opportunities.
- Ensuring that parents and guardians are invited to give feedback on how we are performing and how we may improve.
- Inviting students to run and/or participate in clubs and/or groups where they are encouraged to support their peers through initiatives such as workshops, mentoring schemes, and/or educational sessions.
- Providing educational sessions related to mental health and well-being, such as those focusing on resilience, employment, independent living, and finance, or any subject supporting healthy mental growth as young people and adults.

- Providing supplementary clubs and sessions to encourage students to learn about diet, fitness, healthy lifestyle choices, etc.
- Providing support to students in the form of peer support and anti-bullying ambassadors.

Staff Training

Without our staff being supported and having the required knowledge on mental health and well-being, we recognise that improving the experiences of our students would be challenging.

Therefore, #NAME is committed to the following:

- Enabling staff to access training to increase their knowledge of mental health and well-being and to equip them to identify mental health difficulties in their students and know what to do should they have a concern.
- Promoting well-being within our staff body by supporting staff members to take actions to enhance their own well-being and by promoting a work-life balance and ensuring that where concerns are raised, they are dealt with swiftly and fairly.
- Training staff on subjects such as safeguarding, equality and diversity, and SEND so that they can identify concerns and seek support for themselves and our students.

Identifying Needs

Identifying student needs is a key component of promoting mental health and well-being and providing appropriate support.

#NAME is committed to:

- Ensuring proactive monitoring is part of our everyday work so that opportunities to provide support can be identified early.
- Enabling staff to identify concerns early through training and support.
- Have a procedure used throughout the school/college to identify mental health and/or well-being concerns early.

Working With Parents, Guardians, and Carers

The family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's mental health and well-being, and #NAME will, therefore:

- Ensure that parents, guardians, and carers communicate the mental health and well-being support offered.
- Ensure that signposting is initiated for every family with potential needs.
- Work with parents, guardians, and carers to make referrals to the appropriate specialist services or encourage the student to seek help from a medical professional.
- Ensure that where serious concerns are identified, such as safeguarding concerns, those concerns are shared with the relevant bodies so that support can be provided.
- Work with parents, guardians, and carers where home matters may be affecting a student's well-being and take proactive steps to support attendance, stop bullying, and provide support, where required, with the help of external parties and agencies.

Targeted Support and Appropriate Referrals

Delays in identifying and meeting emotional well-being and mental health needs can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of children's and young people's lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

As an education provider with regular access to students, it is our duty to identify those with needs and ensure that they are provided with support as necessary.

Whilst we acknowledge that there are limitations to what we can offer as a school or college, we recognise that signposting and/or referring students in need is critical to our role.

Therefore, #NAME will:

- Refer students with special educational needs to the School Nurse and/or local authority for assessment.
- Refer students with other health needs to the appropriate local service, for example, speech and language therapy.
- Refer students struggling with their mental health and well-being to the School Nurse or directly to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS).

- Refer all safeguarding concerns to the local safeguarding team.
- Where practicable, assist professionals in accessing students within the school/college and, where practicable, provide and support services in-house.
- Develop, as practicable, links with local charities and support services to strengthen our in-house support offer.

Supporting Literature

This policy is based on findings published by:

- The Department for Education
- Ofsted
- NICE
- NHS Digital
- Office of National Statistics (ONS)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should best practice or statutory guidelines change or develop.

Appendix A: Recognising the Signs of Mental Health Issues

The following may affect the mental health of children and young people:

- Traumatic events
- Changes such as moving home or school.
- Factors such as:
 - having a long-term physical illness
 - a parent who has had mental health problems, problems with alcohol or has been in trouble with the law
 - the death of someone close to them
 - parents who separate or divorce
 - experiencing severe bullying or physical or sexual abuse
 - poverty or homelessness
 - experiencing discrimination
 - caring for a relative, taking on adult responsibilities
 - having long-lasting difficulties at school.

Mental Health Foundation, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/children-and-young-people>. Accessed October 2023.

Common warning signs of mental health issues include:

- sudden mood and behaviour changes
- self-harming
- unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain
- sudden poor academic behaviour or performance
- sleeping problems
- changes in social habits, such as withdrawing or avoiding friends and family.

NSPCC, <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/child-mental-health>. Accessed October 2023.

Symptoms of depression in children often include:

- sadness, or a low mood that does not go away
- being irritable or grumpy all the time
- not being interested in things they used to enjoy
- feeling tired a lot of the time.

NHS, <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/children-depressed-signs/>. Accessed October 2023.