



Holmer Green Senior School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy for Students

February 2024

This policy was written in consultation with staff, studentstudents, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

Policy Statement

At Holmer Green Senior School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our studentstudents. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our School we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting student voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for studentstudents going through recent difficulties including bereavement
- The Bridge
- Use of school counsellor
- Outside agencies to help with their mental health conversations

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where students mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Kerri Stone – Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead
- Dayle McGilvray –Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sarah Lary –Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE and PRP curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching 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.

Targeted Support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual students or groups of students which may include:

- Nurture group
- SUSU group
- MIND mentors
- Counselling
- Therapeutic activities
- Sensory room

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Students will have access to signposting in toilets and around school.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

All staff will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead using the safeguarding software (CPOMS) if they have seen a change in a student's:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical appearance
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns via CPOMS..

Working with Parents

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.

- 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.
- A parent website that shares the links with parents of useful articles relating to children of a relevant age

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. Staff cannot offer confidentiality and must always refer to the appropriate person in school.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if a student discloses to a member of staff and students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should may be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support (YOS)
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

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 in order to enable them to keep students safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 to developing situations with one or more studentstudents.

Support for families and students

Here you can find a list of organisations providing expert advice, a listening ear and resources for managing distress.

- **Mental health helplines and charities**

Samaritans. Samaritans provide 24-hour online and phone support to people in distress. Call:

116 123.

Mind. Mind is a charity that provides advice and support for people experiencing a mental health problem in England and Wales. Call: 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)

Rethink Mental Illness. Support and advice for people living with mental health problems. Call: 0300 5000 927 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4pm)

SANE. National out-of hours mental health charity offering emotional support, guidance and information. Call: 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Mental Health Foundation. Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

- **Hearing voices & peer support**

Voice Collective. Support and information for children and young people who hear, see or sense things that others don't.

Hearing Voices Network. Support and information for people who hear voices, see visions, or have other unusual experiences.

- **Children and adolescents**

Childline. Support for people under 19 in the UK. Call: 0800 11 11

Young Minds. Child and adolescent mental health charity. Call: 0808 802 5544 (parents' helpline)

- **Suicide prevention**

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably). Charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. Call: 0800 58 58 58 (nationwide)

Papyrus Hopeline UK. Confidential support for young people struggling with suicidal thoughts. Call: 0800 068 41 41

Approved by Governors: February 2024

To be Reviewed: February 2026