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STOVER SCHOOL

Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls and Boys aged 3 to 18 years

Stover School

Created and Ratified 23rd June 2021

Review date May 2022

1. Introduction

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, 2020)

The NHS 'No Health without Mental Health' policy is that it is a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment. Levels of mental health are influenced by the conditions people are born into, grow up in, live and work in. (NHS, 2015)

For the purposes of this document, a reference to 'parent' will mean a parent of the child, a carer of the child or a guardian of the child.

2. Policy Aims

At Stover School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both holistic, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. Staff are encouraged and signposted to these areas of specialism.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need and the Safeguarding Policy. We understand that pupils at risk of mental ill-health directly or indirectly are more vulnerable to exploitation and other safeguarding risks such as self-harm and suicidal thoughts and action.

As a school we will:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues across all staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of more complex mental health issues across the Health and Well-being Team.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents.
- Provide support to pupils or staff who are indirectly affected by mental ill-health.
- Provide support to staff who are affected by mental ill-health.
- Recognise the limited realistic response that the school can provide to a pupil or staff member and refer to external agencies for further support.

- Wherever possible pupils and parents will be encouraged to work alongside each other and the school, in order to provide a joined-up approach.
- Will proactively work with parents to share information and support available about mental ill-health.
- Will ensure that information can remain confidential where there are no safeguarding concerns and will respect the choice to consenting or not consenting to share, otherwise.

3. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

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

- Helen Notman - Designated Safeguarding Lead, Health and Well-being Lead & Mental Health Lead
- Charlotte Shuttleworth – School Nurse, Mental Health First Aid Trainer & Mental Health Deputy Lead
- Ben Noble – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sharron Humphries – EYFS & Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Debbie Fallshaw – Prep SENCO
- Kerstin Sorensen – Senior SENCO
- Jo Galloway – School Counsellor
- Maria Hind – School Mentor
- Jeremy Stone – Deputy Head
- Mick Mooney - Head of PSHE
- Rev Fiona Wimsett – School Chaplain
- Sarah Loughridge– FA4MH trained and Boarding Mental Health Lead
- Richard Notman - Headteacher

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead, the School Nurse or one of the named persons above in the first instance.

If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, the DDSLs, the Senior Leadership Team or the Headteacher.

If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

4. School Provision

Stover School is able to provide an internal 'early help system' where pupils are triaged through the Health and Well-being Team's weekly meeting. They are assessed and referred

in the following ways:

- 4.1 Watching brief – reviewed the following week
- 4.2 Referred for specific support by the School Mentor
- 4.3 Referred for specific support by the School Nurse
- 4.4 Referred for specific support by the School Counsellor
- 4.5 Referred for specific support by the SEN team
- 4.6 Referred for a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting
- 4.7 Referred directly to external service agencies eg CAMHS

The School Mentor would be utilised for social interaction skills, friendship issues, minor mental health issues and other intervention as determined by the team.

The School Nurse would be utilised for specific health issues and issues associated with mental health such as wound care for self-harm or for safety planning.

The School Counsellor would be utilised for specific mental health issues, including complex issues around themes of loss & change, anxiety, self-harm, relationships and identity.

5. Referrals

Stover School will support with a referral to the external Early Help System and these will be managed by the School Nurse through a SPA referral or through a Right 4 Children.

Stover School will support with a referral to CAMHS where appropriate and this will be led and managed by the DSL with the support of the School Nurse.

6. Care Plans

As with all health care plans, these will remain confidential, unless there is consent given to share. Parents will be informed where a child is not deemed Gillick competent, irrespective of age, for instance where the mental ill-health is causing the child to not be able to make an informed decision. Where deemed Gillick competent, pupils will be encouraged to provide consent to inform their parents. Wherever possible the school will choose to work with families as that can provide much better outcomes.

Parents will be informed if there is a safeguarding risk, unless by telling the parents the child is placed in more significant risk of harm.

The Care Plan should be drawn up with the pupil, the parents (where possible) 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
- The role the family can play
- The role that significant others can play

Where a specific safety plan is required then the school will utilise the additional services of external agencies, for example all suicide prevention plans the school will use Staying Safe Safety plan <https://stayingsafe.net/home>.

7. Teaching about Mental Health

7.1 Staff

Keeping Children Safe in Education stipulates that staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Staff will be regularly updated about common mental ill-health issues, through regular INSET delivery, on-line training and through specific training delivered by the School Nurse.

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training to enable them to keep pupils safe, such as the One-Minute Guides provided by Devon County Council and Babcock.

We will signpost to relevant virtual training and for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#)¹ 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 pupils. 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.

Staff will be encouraged to take part in Mental Health First Aid training delivered by the School Nurse.

Staff with a specific remit will continue to access regular CPD with regards to mental health training.

7.2 Training and Teaching of Pupils

All sixth formers will be encouraged to take part in Mental Health First Aid training delivered by the School Nurse.

¹ www.minded.org.uk

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE & RSHE curriculum. These are delivered in an age appropriate fashion and we will follow the PSHE Association Guidance so that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive fashion that supports rather than harms.

This programme is developed throughout the school and is mapped across the PSHE & RSHE programme. Parents will be made aware of the training that is taking place in school and where they have concerns about the training they will be invited to discuss them with the Health and Well-being Lead or the Head of PSHE.

8. Signposting

Stover School has finite and limited resources in supporting pupils and staff. We need to be realistically optimistic about what we can deliver to support pupils with mental ill-health.

It is essential that staff know the processes for signposting both for internal help and also for external support from other agencies.

8.1 Signposting Internally

We will ensure that staff and pupils know what is available at school and the processes for accessing this help.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, school corridors and toilets (pupils and staff) and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil to seek help for their mental ill-health. They need to know:

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

Stover School has written pupil guides for the more common mental ill-health issues.

8.2 Signposting Externally

Staff may feel more confident in asking for support from the Mental Health Lead or the School Nurse when making recommendations for external agency support.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, school corridors and toilets (pupils and staff). Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil to seek help for their mental ill-health. They need to know:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How they can access it

- Why they may wish to access it
- What is likely to happen next

9. Warning Signs of Mental Ill-Health

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 the Mental Health and Well-being lead. Many of these are similar to warning signs of safeguarding concerns too and must be communicated immediately.

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
- Absconding from home

10. Disclosures

A pupil 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 pupil 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 our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil'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
- Who the information has been shared with

Confidentiality to the pupil cannot be promised, as the information may need to be shared. Staff should explain that they may need to pass on the information because they are worried about the pupil and explain what they would need to pass on.

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent such as when the pupil is deemed to be at a safeguarding risk.

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead, who will confidentially store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. The Mental Health Lead will also provide support to the member of staff for whom the disclosure has been made, as the school has a duty to also protect and safeguard the staff member's own mental health.

Parents must always be informed if the pupil is at risk of significant danger through self-harm (including eating disorders) or suicidal ideation, unless where we feel that this will place the pupil in further harm, whereupon the DSL must be informed immediately. Pupils are encouraged to inform their parents themselves and we should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

11. Working with Parents

We recognise that there are times when there is a need to be reactive in the work that we do with families about mental health, as well as being proactive in our engagement with families about mental health.

11.1 Working Reactively with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, carers or guardians, we need to be sensitive in our approach and it is likely that the Mental Health Lead or the School Nurse will provide this information. Families may well be in the dark and may be upset, fearful and angry about what they have been told. We need to allow time for processing and reflection and should provide a clear way of further contact for further questions and thoughts.

Where appropriate we should signpost to further sources of information and provide useful links for further reading and support, including parent helplines and forums.

11.2 Working Proactively with 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:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and on our social media platforms.

- 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 our mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through the school website and on our social media platforms.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE & RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

12. Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental ill-health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Peers often want to support but do not know how. These pupils may be at risk of being indirectly impacted by mental ill-health of others and Stover School recognises that the peers in this position may not necessarily be the pupil's close friends.

When writing a care plan the pupil may highlight a number of peers that they regard as significant others or it may be that a peer has approached a member of staff independently. Our duty of care extends to these individuals also and in order to keep peers safe we may provide training about the mental ill-health and support to listen to how they are feeling and are coping. Support may be offered individually or in a small group. Peers will be reminded that they should not hold the responsibility for the choices that their friends make and that they should let a trusted adult know when there is a concern.

Some peers may want support at home and may wish for school to be involved in this process. The staff must ensure that they maintain the confidentiality of the pupil in concern.