



Shrewsbury School

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Shrewsbury School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the pupils in our care. The teenage years present a variety of challenges and while many navigate these without additional support a number of teenagers encounter a variety of specific challenges that require additional and sometimes specialist layers of help and intervention. This Policy document is an attempt to outline our approach in this area both in terms of how we promote positive mental health and wellbeing but also the procedures that should be followed when pupils encounter particular mental health challenges. This Policy should be read in conjunction with a range of other school policies including Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Risk Assessment Policy, First Aid Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Boarding Principles and Practice as well as our policies and procedures relating to pupils with particular learning difficulties.

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 his or her community. (World Health Organization)

At Shrewsbury School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every pupil in the School community. We pursue this aim using a variety of 'whole school' approaches combined with specialised, targeted support aimed at vulnerable individuals.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we aim to create as safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health as possible, within the umbrella of this complicated and ever changing landscape

This Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and remove any vestiges of stigma associated with this area of growth and development.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support for staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support for pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mr M.J. Tonks Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ms A.R. Peak Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mr. A.J. Murfin Deputy DSL
- Dr. J.L. Pattenden Deputy DSL
- Mr. H. Farmer Director of Pupil Welfare
- Dr. M. Price School Medical Officer
- Mrs S. Wigley Senior School Nurse
- Wendy Brook School Counsellor
- Mr S.H. Cowper Director of Teaching & Learning and i/c staff training /INSET and CPD

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to one of the above in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate or significant harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with a referral, without delay to either MJT or ARP as the DSLs or the Head Master's office. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for such events should be followed, including alerting the Medical Centre and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the relevant HSM in consultation with a DSL.

Individual Pastoral Care Plans

HSMs are expected to draw up an individual Pastoral Care Plan for pupils whose mental wellbeing is 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
- An assessment of the level of concern

Individual Pastoral Care Plans are regularly reviewed by both the HSM involved and also the DSLs.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are covered in a number of areas of school life. These include specific PSD lessons as well as other subjects within the curriculum. Further details are available in the PSD Handbook or alternatively via discussion with either the Head of PSD or the Deputy Head Pastoral. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the Scheme of Work but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. The tutor programme will also play an important part in educating and supporting pupils where issues of mental health and wellbeing are concerned.

Encouraging positive Mental Health

Shrewsbury School seeks to encourage positive mental health in all its pupils. Our holistic approach to education enables many aspects of school life to encourage and endorse positive mental health. Our rich and vibrant co-curricular programme enables all pupils to identify positive pursuits that they can enjoy and gain a sense of achievement from. The very significant emphasis on sport for all at the school is also an important aspect of our wellbeing provision. The boarding ethos of the school is positive and supportive

and there is no doubt that House life is crucial to the wellbeing of pupils. In particular HSMs and Tutors play a pivotal role in providing pastoral care and support for pupils. Pupil Voice has an important part to play in encouraging positive mental health. Pupils will be consulted both formally and informally using questionnaires. The school Praepostors provide direct feedback to members of the Senior Leadership Team. Issues relating to mental health are also raised at both House and School Council meetings.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Details of these will be available in Houses and from the Medical Centre.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. While acknowledging that some of these warning signs are imprecise they should always be taken seriously and staff observing any such concerns or patterns of behaviour should communicate this to either the relevant HSM or a DSL.

Possible warning signs 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
- Over exertion in sport and/or undertaking additional sport sessions
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing 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 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 for the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring the possible causes of the concern or anxiety.

In line with all our child protection procedures, all disclosures should be recorded in writing and passed on to one of the DSLs immediately. 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

Confidentiality

It is vital that staff are always open and honest with pupils regarding issues of confidentiality. When it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil then members of staff should discuss the following with the pupil involved:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Staff should not share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive pupil consent, although there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Although the precise nature of such a scenario will vary it will generally be in line with our published a Child Protection procedures. In such circumstances staff should share disclosures, without delay with one of the DSLs. If the criteria for child protection thresholds has been met then the DSL, in line with our published Child Protection Policy will inform The Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board. This will ensure early intervention and also helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil and it also ensures continuity of care and it provides an additional layer of specialist support. Parents must always be informed of a disclosure related to a child protection issue. We will always discuss this process with pupils giving them the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents care should be given as to how best to manage this disclosure. Such considerations might include;

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is generally preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, 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, blame or upset during the initial disclosure. 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. It is essential that parents understand how central their role is likely to be in the aftermath of a disclosure. Frequently a pupil will need to spend time at home until appropriate assessments have been undertaken. At this point a case conference will be called to establish how best to proceed. To support parents the school will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to 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
- Offer to keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in school so this work can be supported at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil 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 best to help. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. To help keep peers safe, we will monitor 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 pupil 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

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

Training

As a minimum, all teaching staff and Matrons will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their child protection training, in order to enable them to keep students safe. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will conduct additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our programme of appraisal, annual review and ongoing CPD.

July 2018 (MJT) to be reviewed January 2019