



MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

November 2023

Responsibility	Designated Mental Health Lead
Date of next review by	November 2025

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date: 5.11.2023

Signed:

Head Teacher

Date: 05.11.2023

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1.0 General statement of principles

At The Aspire Academy we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' 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 issues.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining The Aspire Academy's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- 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 when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school (refer to Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy).

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- **Heads of Year:** Claire Windsor-Peplow,
Nicholas Bruton, Joanne Weston
- **SENDCO:** Beata Payne
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Richard
Rainbird-Hitchens
- **Designated Mental Health Lead:** Zoe
Kingston

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the Designated Mental Health Lead, Zoe Kingston.

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.

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

5.0 Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

6.0 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 and Mental Health Awareness curriculum as well as our Mental Health Ambassador programme which includes peer mentoring and support.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>. Incorporating this 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.

Additionally, we 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. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

7.0 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 (noticeboards, classrooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. Within the Mental Health and Wellbeing section on our website we have a comprehensive directory of local and national mental health services that support young people and their families.

The aim of this is to ensure students and their carers understand:

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

8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

See appendix 1 for a detailed school provision map which outlines the universal, additional and specialist interventions provided at school to support pupil's mental health and wellbeing.

Local Support

In Worcestershire, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including **CAMHS (tiers 1-4)** which specialises in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. See appendix 2 for a detailed local provision map of services that support young people and their families.

9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert (insert name of mental health first aider).

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

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| ▪ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental | ▪ Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope |
| ▪ Changes in eating / sleeping habits | ▪ Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather |
| ▪ Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn | ▪ Secretive behaviour |
| ▪ Changes in activity and mood | ▪ Skipping PE or getting changed secretly |
| ▪ Lowering of academic achievement | ▪ Lateness to, or absence from school |
| ▪ Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide | ▪ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause |
| ▪ Abusing drugs or alcohol | ▪ An increase in lateness or absenteeism |

10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people 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 CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Worcestershire Children's First, Worcestershire CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool, children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Worcestershire CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11.0 Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the students profile on CPOMS and shared with the relevant Head of Year, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Mental Health Lead. This should include:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents/carers must always be informed (and in some cases social workers), however students may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided 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 needs 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

15.0 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 to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff (Designated Mental Health Lead) will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. 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 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.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **6/11/23**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Designated Mental Health Lead: Zoe Kingston.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

17.0 Appendix 1 – School-based support

	Universal Provision	Additional Provision (provided by in-house resource)	Specialist Provision (provided by external specialists on site)
Wellbeing	- Weekly whole-school assemblies on topics relevant to health and wellbeing such as smoking cessation and QUIT as well as self-care. - A comprehensive PSHE curriculum which is informed by the latest research on neuroscience, the psychology of emotion and the psychology of relationships that harm and those that heal. - A comprehensive RSE curriculum which specifically teaches young people the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships and where to seek help. It also addresses sexual health and consent as well an awareness of issues relevant to young people such as sexting, revenge porn and CSE.	- The cannabis education group is bespoke psychoeducation programme for young people whose cannabis use is becoming a concern. This group provides a safe and open space for young people to talk about their drug use and learn ways to minimise the harm to their physical and mental health. We also talk about addiction behaviours, other drugs, alcohol and the areas of our brain affected. Referrals to Cranstoun are also made with young people's consent. - Stop smoking support is offered to groups of young people who would like help to reduce or quit smoking. - The Looking out for Lottie simulation is delivered either 1:1 or in pairs by trained member of staff to young people who may be at risk of CSE. This computer simulation allows	- Referrals and visits by the school nurse as and when needed for young people experiencing issues with weight loss or gain, fatigue, diet, nutrition and sleep. - Referrals and visits by the sexual health nurse as and when needed for young people needing support with contraception, STI testing and general sexual health advice. - Referral and visits from Cranstoun drugs workers for young people experiencing issues related to alcohol and substance misuse. - The Purple Leaf Education Programme is delivered by WMRSAC to KS4 pupils over

	• Girls and Lads wellbeing sessions once a month which give girls and boys a chance (separately) to talk with staff in a calm and safe environment. Topics include relationships, personal hygiene, body image, self-esteem, self-care, sexual health, consent and any other topics the young people wish to speak about. • The Wellbeing Garden provides a quiet place for young people to relax and enjoy the outdoors (biophilia) either 1:1 with a member of staff or in small groups. • Wellbeing afternoons once a week for each Key Stage 3 class where the focus is on fun, enjoyment and building healthy and healing relationships amongst young people and staff. Activities include sports, games and trips off-site. • Safeguarding mobile phone - young people can	young people a deep insight into the grooming process and its implications. • The Growing Hope Project (Winston's Wish) follows the seasonal cycle of the year and uses it as a metaphor for growth and change that supports the children in coming to terms with bereavement. We have just signed up for this exciting project and have several bereaved young people we hope to engage in our gardening endeavours. • Small groups of pupils are taken onto the Aspire Bus at certain times throughout the school day to de-stress, chill and socialise. The bus has a 'common room' feel and includes a TV, gaming set up and pool table.	6 weeks. This provides education and information designed to increase access to high quality sexual violence information and support.
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	call or text this number anytime out of school hours if they are in crisis and need to speak with the DSL. • All young people have daily, easy access to a specific emotionally available adult either on the pastoral team or their tutor. • Lunch club provides a safe space for young people who struggle socially. Promotes friendships and general wellbeing as well as supporting emotional regulation in what can be a stressful and unstructured period of the day for some pupils. • The Aspire Plus holiday programme aims to engage all our young people in meaningful enrichment activities in non-term-times. This helps prevent anti-social and criminal behaviour in local communities.		
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Poor Mental Health	• A PSHE programme of study which is informed by the latest research on mental health and ill-health. • Weekly whole-school assemblies on topics relevant to mental health and wellbeing and which raise awareness of issues such as anxiety, stress, anger, addiction and dependency and depression. • A specific subject called Mental Health Awareness for Key Stage 4 students, which delivers more in-depth psychoeducation on topics such as staying mentally healthy online, substance misuse and mental health, self-harm, suicide, and how traumatic life events influence mental health. • There is provision of repeated positive experiences with key emotionally available adults several times a day for every young person.	• 1:1 mental health and wellbeing interventions are offered to young people identified as experiencing a mental health difficulty. These 1:1 sessions are trauma-informed and bespoke to each individual young person and include elements of art therapy, play therapy, mindfulness, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and empathic listening. There are two trained members of staff who see young people separately for 40-minute sessions in their own wellbeing rooms. • Support groups are offered to young people who may be experiencing the following: going into care/in care, affected by imprisonment, grief and bereavement, family substance misuse, adoption, separation/not in contact with parent, questioning identity (LGBTQ). These sessions are offered to specific small groups as and when	• A trainee Art Therapist visits school one day a week and works with young people who have been identified as experiencing a mental health difficult and who respond well to working with the art medium. The trainee art therapist works closely with the Mental Health and Wellbeing lead to develop a programme of support. • Bereavement counselling is offered to identified pupils by trained counsellors working for the local bereavement charity Footsteps. These counsellors visit pupils in school. • Outdoor Adventure Therapy is offered one day a week by the company Spare Krab and lead by Stephan
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	• There is an established culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions which ensure young people feel psychologically safe. • There is a Relationship Policy (for staff) to ensure they interact with young people with kindness and compassion at all times. This includes no shouting, no put-downs, criticisms or shaming. The policy extends to training staff in the art of good listening, understanding and finding ways to convey accurate empathy.	it is needed/appropriate. • Self-harm and suicide prevention interventions are based on advice and resources from the suicide prevention charity Papyrus. Young people who are known to self-harm or who have shared that they are having suicidal thoughts will be supported to complete a safety plan and parents/carers will be involved in this. Other activities include creating a Hope Book and Self-Soothe Box. Referrals to relevant agencies are also carried out.	Natynczuk (Outdoor-Learning and Adventure Therapy Specialist). Stephan takes 2-3 students out every Tuesday for nature-based therapy, adventure, experiential outdoor-learning, and talking therapy designed to improve mental wellbeing and to help young people realise solutions to challenges in their own lives.
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19.0 Appendix 2 – Local Support

Service	Services they offer	Thresholds	Weblinks or referral info
Statutory			
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Levels 1 (universal) and 2 (early help).	If the following symptoms are shown in some but not all environments, then referral to CAMHS should not be considered as the first response. Referral to other agencies should be considered and therapeutic interventions are more likely to be effective if the wider social context issues are being addressed and supported (e.g. bullying, parent/child relationship).	<u>Presenting factors:</u> • Anger outbursts • Anxiety • Beginning to isolate self from peers and activities • Difficulties separating from caregiver • Feeling Fed up • Friend Issues (significant) • Low Self Esteem • Over activity • Parental Anxiety • Sleep Disturbance (difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep) • Superficial Self Harm <u>Contextual factors:</u> • Bullying • Housing and home environment • Inconsistent care arrangements • Inconsistent Parenting • Parental Mental Health needs	• Help offered in school (see provision map). • Refer to Mental Health Database. CAMHS Reach 4 Wellbeing Group Sessions are also available for the following: • A six week anxiety and low mood programme for young people (years 7 to 13) whcnhs.reach4wellbeing@nhs.net

		• Poor parent/child relationship • Poor response to emerging needs • Risk of relationship breakdown • School issues	
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 3 - targeted support	Telephone or face to face assessment in CAMHS followed by guided self-help and evidence-based interventions (group or 1:1) such as CBT by a CAMHS Professional (usually 6 sessions).	Presenting factors: • Complex Trauma • Depressive Symptoms • Eating Issues (change in weight/eating habits, negative body image, purging or binging) • Hyperactivity (levels of over activity and impulsivity above what would be expected and present in all settings) • Increased levels of self-harm • Mood Disturbance • Obsessive thoughts and/or compulsive behaviours (e.g. hand-washing, cleaning, checking) • Severe Anxiety	https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/specialist-camhs/

		- Some thoughts of ending life with no plan or intent. <u>Contextual factors:</u> Those identified in level 1 & 2 plus – - Child in Care - Child in Need - Child with a diagnosed Learning Disability - Persistent problems in all areas of school - Reduced attendance at school - Reduced access to positive social relationships and activities	
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 4 - severe mental health disorders	Face to Face assessment, risk assessment, safety management plan and care plan agreed with young person and family. Group intervention through evidence based groups 1:1 evidence based intervention	<u>Presenting factors:</u> - Complex Trauma - Delusional thoughts (grandiose thoughts, thinking they are someone else) - Increased levels and risk associated with self-harming - Psychotic symptoms (hearing and/or appearing to	https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/specialist-camhs/

	Input from multi-disciplinary team Consideration of support from the urgent assessment and home treatment team	respond to voices, overly suspicious) • Suicidal ideation with plan and intent • Thoughts of harming others or actual harming/violent behaviours towards others and associated mental health disorder <u>Contextual factors:</u> Those identified in level 3 plus – • Family breakdown • Increase in risky relationships • Non-attendance at school • Relationship breakdown • Social Isolation	
Community			
Mentor Link	Mentor Link is dedicated to supporting vulnerable and distressed children and young people by providing	<u>Presenting factors:</u> • Low self esteem • Low motivation or aspiration • Disengagement or at risk of disengagement • Relationship issues • Anxiety or low-level	www.mentorlink.org.uk

	them with a volunteer mentor. Using Safer Recruiting techniques, fully trained adults will offer listening support and guidance to these young people during difficulties in their lives, which may include self-harm, bullying, traumatic bereavement and family breakdown.	mental health issues • Loss or family illness • Poor behaviour or declining attendance <u>Contextual factors:</u> • Family crisis • LAC • Bullying	
Cranstoun Here4Youth	The service works with young people at school, at home, at college or in any environment that they feel comfortable in. Worcestershire Here4YOUth also offers advice, support and guidance for children, young people and family members of any age to cope with someone else's drug or alcohol misuse as part of the Here4YOUth Worcestershire	This service is for anyone up to the age of 18 living in Worcestershire who is worried about their own or someone close to them drug or alcohol misuse.	https://cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/young-people/here4youth-worcestershire/

	re Family Support Service.		
Footsteps Bereavement Charity	Footsteps is a registered charity providing support for bereaved children, young people and their families in Worcestershire following the death of a parent, sibling or other significant person in their life.	Footsteps provides a service totally free of charge to bereaved children and their families in Worcestershire.	https://talktofootsteps.co.uk
West Mercia Women's Aid	West Mercia Women's Aid offer a range of services for Children and young people. <u>Helping Hands (7-12)</u> The aim of Helping Hands is to help increase children's understanding of feeling safe. Specialist support workers will explore a range of topics to contribute to a safe environment. <u>Recovery Toolkit (11-18)</u>	WMWA provides support to children and young people who have been affected by domestic abuse. Our work has a strong focus on self-esteem, self-care and on understanding healthy relationships. This includes support for young people who are themselves experiencing abuse in their teen relationships.	https://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/services/children-and-young-people-services/

	The Recovery Toolkit is an evidenced based 8-week programme for any young person that has witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. The aim of the group is to help them cope and recover from any trauma caused. <u>CRUSH (13-19)</u> CRUSH is a group for young people that are affected by domestic abuse whether it is witnessed, experienced or perpetrated. The purpose of this group is to expand their understanding of unhealthy relationships, the impact of abuse and gender-based bullying.		
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	<u>1:1 Support (5-18)</u> 1:1 support is for children and young people that are unable to attend a group for a specific reason. We are also able to deliver 'one off & bespoke' safety sessions to children and young people attending group.		
West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSAC)	<u>Counselling Support:</u> Through talking or creative play specialist counsellors create a safe space to help young people share their story and look at the effects it has had on them and their life.	Those between 5-18 who live in Worcestershire or Herefordshire and have been affected by any form of sexual violence.	https://www.wmrsasc.org.uk/young-people/counselling-support/