



The High School  
Leckhampton

## Mental Health Policy

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*Appendix A: The Balcarras Trust SEMH Pathway March 22*

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### 1. 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 her or his community'. (World Health Organization, 2012)*

Our aim is to promote positive mental health for all our students and for every member of our staff. We do this using a whole school approach which includes providing mental health education, running well-being programmes, establishing policies and procedures to pick up on any mental ill health difficulties early, educating on signposting and for those vulnerable, specific targeted help where appropriate. Our ethos to promote parity of both physical and mental health is embedded firmly in the fundamental beliefs and values of the school. We will, at all times promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

This is the main mental health policy of The High School Leckhampton.

### 2. Scope

This document outlines the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff, governors and parents/carers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

### **3. Policy Aims:**

- To promote positive mental health in the whole school community
- To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues through PSHE education for students and staff INSET
- To alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- To train staff in how to talk to and engage with a student who might be presenting with a mental health difficulty
- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues
- Provide support to students who have mental ill health as well as their peers and parents/carers

### **4. Staff**

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

- Alice O’Riordan - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Rebecca Vaughan, Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion
- Heads of Houses
- School counsellor
- First aiders
- School nurse

### **5. Procedure**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then standard child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL or the head teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the usual procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff/school nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead.

The school’s Mental Health lead is Alice O’Riordan.

## **6. Individual Care Plans**

There will be a number of different sources of school based support, including pastoral staff, behaviour and learning support, school counsellors etc.

Individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health will be drawn up in collaboration with the pupil, the parents/carers 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

## **7. Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe will be included as part of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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.

Information for teaching material will be guided by validated organisations such as the PSHE Association and stem4.

Parents/carers will be informed of the topics being taught. These are on the school's website and information may be emailed home or raised in the school's newsletter. The school will endeavour at all costs to teach health and emotional wellbeing topics in a sensitive and safe manner which helps rather than harms.

Teacher guidance will be made available on teaching mental health topics.

Support will also be made available to students or staff who may disclose concerns after these lessons. For students this will be through discussion with their form tutor or pastoral staff in the first instance or the mental health lead. Teachers will approach the mental health lead or their manager.

## **8. 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 and safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

There will be regular training of staff of mental health issues and on active listening through INSET training.

The mental health lead in the school will have further training, possibly including Mental Health First Aid.

## **9. Signposting**

Staff, students and parents/carers will be made aware of sources of support within school and in the local community and these will be made available on the schools website, display boards and on the school's VLE.

Relevant sources of support will also be displayed in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Help seeking information will also be made prominent and include

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it

## **10. Risk Indicators**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health difficulties. Staff observing any of these warning signs will communicate their concerns with the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible.

Possible general 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
- Social withdrawal
- Negative changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Increased risk behaviour
- Expressing feelings of failure or loss of hope
- Repeated absence from school

## **11. Managing Disclosures**

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any staff member. All staff will be briefed on how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. This will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures will be recorded in writing and held on the identified student's confidential file (CPOMS). 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

This information will be shared with the mental health lead and DSL who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **12. Confidentiality**

The school will follow rules of confidentiality as within the safeguarding policy.

Students will be informed from the outset who will be told of the information they disclose, what is going to be said and why it needs to be said.

Parents/carers of students under the age of 17 will be informed routinely.

If a student gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, the DSL, Alice O’Riordan will be informed immediately who will implement child protection procedures.

## **13. Working with Parents /Carers**

The school will endeavour to work with parents/carers in a sensitive and supportive manner. If a face to face meeting is arranged, the aim of the meeting will be clear, a point of contact from the school will be named, agreed next steps will be recorded and reviewed together.

In addition, the school will

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on the school website
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to
- Make the school’s mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through regular information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

## **14. Supporting Peers**

The school will support peers who have a friend with a mental ill health difficulty in the following ways

- Manage disclosure - what it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Their role in disclosing signs of relapse
- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## 15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2028.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our mental health lead by phone call or email.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

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### ***Rights Respecting School Statement***

*The contents of this policy have been reviewed taking into account The High School Leckhampton's responsibilities as a Rights Respecting School. In particular, our commitment to the following articles of the Convention of The Rights of The Child:*

**Article 28: (Right to Education):** *The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.*

**Article 29: (Goals of Education):** *Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to love peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.*

**Appendix. A: The Balcarras Trust SEMH Pathway**

This document outlines the support that the school and parents/carers, working together, can access when a student displays Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties that are impacting on their school attendance and/or academic progress.

<b>The School</b>	<b>Parents/Carers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact parents/carers to make them aware of concerns relating to SEMH difficulties evident at school, or affecting attendance.</li> <li>○ Advise on initial strategies that may help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact the school (your child’s tutor or Assistant Head Pastoral) to make them aware of any SEMH difficulties</li> <li>○ Trial initial strategies as advised by school</li> </ul>
<p><b>If difficulties continue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meet with parents/carers to discuss concerns, involve the SENDCo to advise on identification of underlying SEMH needs</li> <li>○ At this meeting, a decision will be made about whether to proceed with a My Plan (see Gloucestershire’s Graduated Pathway of Support, page 3)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete a My Profile/My Journey with the student if attending school</li> <li>○ Hold a My Plan meeting, inviting all parties involved with the student</li> <li>○ Record needs, strategies, and actions on the My Plan and agree a review date</li> <li>○ Trial school-based strategies/actions as recorded on the My Plan (see page 2)</li> <li>○ Meet on the agreed review date to assess progress</li> <li>○ This My Plan process may be repeated for several cycles if good progress is being made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support your child to complete the My Profile/My Journey document if they are not attending school</li> <li>○ Suggest any professionals already working with your child who should be invited to the My Plan meeting</li> <li>○ Encourage any other professionals working with your child to engage with and contact the school</li> <li>○ Attend the My Plan meeting</li> <li>○ Trial strategies/actions as recorded on the My Plan</li> <li>○ Meet on the agreed review date to assess progress</li> </ul>
<p><b>If difficulties continue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At the My Plan review, consider involvement of other agencies for further support</li> <li>○ Consider need for referral to GP, school nurse, CAMHS, TiC+, Early Help, as appropriate</li> <li>○ Set new My Plan targets, provision, and actions</li> <li>○ Set a date for next My Plan review</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trial updated strategies/actions as recorded on the My Plan</li> <li>○ Make / support parents/carers in making any agreed referrals to other agencies</li> <li>○ Keep other agencies informed of progress by forwarding updated My Plan documents</li> <li>○ Invite all professionals involved to the next My Plan review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trial updated strategies/actions as recorded on the My Plan</li> <li>○ Engage with other professionals, as agreed at the My Plan meeting</li> <li>○ Support your child to engage with other professionals, as agreed at the My Plan meeting</li> <li>○ Contribute to referral paperwork to other agencies as required</li> </ul>

**If difficulties continue:**

- Consider the need to progress to a My Assessment and My Plan+ (see Gloucestershire’s Graduated Pathway of Support, page 3)
- Where attendance is impacted, agree a reintegration plan (see page 2)
- Where it is agreed that a My Assessment and My Plan+ are appropriate, referral will be made to the Educational Psychology Service and/or The Advisory Teaching Service, as appropriate

Where SEMH needs impact on a student’s attendance, some of the following strategies may be appropriate to enable them to attend school.

**Low-level barriers to attendance:**

- Student meets with pastoral and/or SEND staff to identify barriers to attendance and factors contributing to SEMH difficulties
- Appropriate strategies are put in place to enable to student to attend school/lessons. Strategies may include, for example:
  - Changes to seating plans in lessons, support for pair/group work
  - Homework support/adjustments, advice to teachers (e.g. do not ask to read aloud in class)
  - Regular check-ins at school with a key adult
  - Suggestions for break & lunchtimes
  - Leaving lessons 5 minutes early to avoid busy corridors
  - Pastoral staff signpost support resources on school website & well-being hub to student and parents/carers ( <https://www.hsl.gloucs.sch.uk/pastoral-support> )

**Medium-level barriers to attendance:**

- Continued use of the strategies above
- Student to liaise with teachers about work missed due to absence
- Pastoral/SEND staff to advise on work to prioritise
- Use of a Time Out facility at school
- A reduced timetable for an agreed short period of time to support reintegration

**Significant barriers to attendance:**

Where a student is unable to attend school for an extended period, parents/carers and all agencies will be involved in discussions about reintegration through the My Plan process. Additional strategies could include, for example:

- Use of the above strategies once reintegration has begun
- Building up time on the school site in small steps (e.g. driving/walking to school site for a brief time, coming in to school to meet with a key adult for a short period, coming into school for a breaktime to meet a peer)
- Weekly check-in from a key adult at school to maintain contact and to advise on schoolwork
- Trial of online learning (this could include tasks from Seneca, MathsWatch, Oak National Academy, BBC Bitesize, for example)
- Use of mentoring for an agreed period to support reintegration
- Use of online tutoring for an agreed period to support reintegration
- An agreed period of online tutoring on the school site
- An agreed period of completing schoolwork in The Individual Learning Department

**Additional resources for staff and parents/carers:**

- **CAMHS (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services) Referral:**

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/self-refer/camhs-referral-form/>

- **TIC+ Parent Advice for School Anxiety and Refusal:**

<https://www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamilies/service.page?id=df3vYMI2C0I>

- **Gloucestershire Educational Psychology Service advice for schools and parents – Guidance to support children and young people experiencing barriers attending school:**

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps/>

- **Gloucestershire’s graduated Pathway of Support flowchart:**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/gloucs/glofamilies/files/poster\\_of\\_the\\_graduated\\_pathway\\_flowchart.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/gloucs/glofamilies/files/poster_of_the_graduated_pathway_flowchart.pdf)

- **Young Minds: School Anxiety and Refusal:**

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>