ATTLEBOROUGH ACADEMY

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Holder	Michala Parks
Approval Board	Attleborough Academy Local Governing Body
Date of Latest Review	Spring Term 2021
Date of Approval	Spring Term 2021
Review Period	Twelve months
Target Review Date	Summer Term 2022 **The Review Period and Target Review Date refer to our internal policy review process. The published policy is current and is the most recent approved version.**
Legislation or Regulation	**Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** **Children and Families Act 2014** **SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)** **Equality Act 2010** **Safeguarding Children & Young People in Norfolk - NSCP (norfolklscb.org)**

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1. **Statement of Intent**
   Attleborough Academy is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Central to this is the core belief in the value of positive teacher student relationships - how staff are feeling will make a difference to their ability to respond effectively and productively to students' challenges (we will support this in the implementation of our Staff Wellbeing Policy). We therefore want to encourage our students to be open, honest and trust that their voices will be heard.

   Attleborough Academy understands that students' experiences and backgrounds are not the same and that they have different life pressures and individual challenges for which they may need help and support to cope. Positive mental health is therefore a community responsibility.

2. **Scope**
   This policy aims to guide staff, parents, carers and Governors. It outlines our approach to promoting student's positive mental health and wellbeing alongside other policies. We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners when necessary.

3. **Aims**
   The aim is to demonstrate our commitment to mental health of our staff and students by:

   - helping students to understand their emotions and experiences better;
   - to ensure they feel comfortable sharing their concerns and worries;
   - to encourage students' confidence and promote their self-esteem;
   - help students to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

   We promote our school values of 'CARE' and encourage a sense of belonging in our community as follows:

   - We encourage positive mental health and wellbeing in students and staff by acknowledging and celebrating academic and non-academic achievements by all.
   - We provide opportunities to develop and reflect.
   - We actively promote our student voice and give them the opportunity to fully participate in decision making.
   - We support staff and students who are struggling with their mental health.

4. **Legislation and Guidance**

   Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
   Children and Families Act 2014
   SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)
   Equality Act 2010
   Safeguarding Children & Young People in Norfolk - NSCP (norfolklscb.org)

5. **Key Members of Staff**

Training	Supporting	Key Staff	Contact Details
LT Mental Health Champion and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Students	Michala Parks	mparks@attleboroughacademy.org
Mental Health Champion and ADSL	Students	Michele Caddamy	mcaddamy@attleboroughacademy.org
Adult Mental Health Champion	Teaching Staff	Caroline Phoenix	cphoenix@attleboroughacademy.org
Adult Mental Health Champion	Support Staff	Kim Evans	kevans@attleboroughacademy.org

6. **Teaching About Mental Health**

   Attleborough Academy's PSHCE curriculum is developed to give students the skills, knowledge, awareness and understanding they need to keep a positive mental health. This includes training and techniques to promote emotional resilience. The PSHCE curriculum is reviewed regularly along with the lesson content to ensure it is satisfying the aims outlined in this policy. Other elements of our full curriculum support these aims to reinforce students' knowledge to help keep them mentally well.

7. **Support at School and in the Local Community**

   We have a range of support available in school for any students who are struggling with their mental health. Our daily 'tutor time' gives students an opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have with their Form Tutor. It also gives the tutor a chance to spot if a student is showing concerning behaviours.

   We try to use early intervention with students to support their mental wellbeing. Once we have a student referred to us or a concern has been raised or a student has asked for support, the following course of action is discussed with the student and their parent/carer. We aim to create a plan that is individualised and could include one or more of the following:

   - Academic mentoring with their Progress Leader;
   - 1:1 with a Student Support Mentor (for a limited number of sessions);
   - Group Workshop with a Student Support Mentor (for a limited number of sessions) which include building confidence, raising self-esteem, teenage talks, think good feel good and the best of coping, Anxiety Gremlin among others;
   - Signposting to self-help sites/apps;
   - Referrals to other agencies.

   Additional support networks are available for children in the local community. Depending on the need of the student and/or family, the Academy can offer referrals to:

   - Point One for 'one to one' counselling;
   - Mancroft Advice Project (MAP) for group sessions;
   - Just One Norfolk;
   - Early Help

8. **Signposting**

   The Academy will ensure that all staff, students and parents are aware of the support that is available via our website and occasional Group Calls (text and email) messages sent. There are designated parts of our website for parental help and self-help for students.

   For Parent advice:
   Keeping Your Children Safe - Attleborough Academy

   For self-help:
   Weblinks - Student Support - Attleborough Academy

9. **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

   Staff have been trained in how to recognise the warning signs of common mental health concerns. Staff have been told that they must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead through our safeguarding system CPOMS.

Staff will report any different behaviour or physical changes that they notice such as:

- Signs of harm;
- Changes in eating habits;
- Increased isolation from friends and family – becoming socially withdrawn;
- Changes in mood – can be difficult to identify from the norm in some teenagers;
- Talking/joking about self-harm or suicide;
- Drug or alcohol abuse;
- Feelings of failure, uselessness and loss of hope;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Unsuitable clothing for the time of year – long sleeved jumpers in summer;
- Negative behaviour patterns.

Other issues that may be warning signs:

- Attendance and absenteeism;
- Persistent lateness;
- Changes in attainment and attitude to education;
- Family/relationship concerns;
- Staff are also aware of the impact on a child's mental health from bereavement;
- Health difficulties.
- Self-Harm (Appendix 1)

10. Managing Disclosures
If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The disclosure will be recorded on the Academy's safeguarding system CPOMS.

11. Confidentiality
When a member of staff feels that it is necessary to pass on a concern about a student then they will let the student know:

- Who they are going to report the concern to;
- What they are going to say;
- Why they need to pass this on.

12. Working with Parents and Carers
We aim to support parents and carers as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering support at all times. To support parents and carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school;
- Ensure that parents and carers are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child;
- Give parents and carers guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health;
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents and carers;
- Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

13. **Working with Other Agencies and Partners**
    Attleborough Academy will work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

    - The school nursing team
    - Paediatricians
    - CAMHS
    - Counselling services
    - Therapists
    - Family support workers
    - Medical Need Team
    - Inclusion Team

14. **Supporting Peers**
    We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support.

    We will provide support in a one-on-one or group setting. These sessions will be guided by the student, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

15. **Training**
    All staff will receive regular updates on mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe.

    We have trained some teaching staff in Mental Health First Aid Lite so can they have an idea of how to support or signpost students. The majority of our pastoral staff are Mental Health First Aid Full trained.

    We have a member of the Leadership Team trained as the Student Mental Health Champion and two other members of staff, one teacher and one support staff, who are both Adult Mental Health Champion trained.

16. **Linked Policies**
    The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

    - Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School
    - Equality Information and Objectives
    - Register of Students' Attendance
    - Safeguarding and Incorporating Child Protection
    - SEND Policy
    - Staff Wellbeing
    - Student Behaviour and Discipline
    - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

APPENDIX 1: SELF-HARM

Self-harm is a sign that a young person is experiencing significant emotional distress. Self-harm may include overdoes (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, burning, pulling hair, picking skin, head banging, self-strangulation. Self-harm is more common than many people realise, around 10% of young people self-harm at some point and this figure is likely to be an underestimate.

Young people with special educational needs may also engage in self-harm. It is estimated that about half of autistic people engage in self-injurious behaviour at some point in their life and it can affect people of all ages Self-harm (autism.org.uk)

Some reasons why students may self-harm

- As a way of communicating distress;
- It can provide distraction;
- As an opportunity for nurture and comfort;
- As a coping strategy;
- To feel in control;
- To relieve tension;
- As a form of punishing themselves;
- To feel more connected and alive if otherwise they feel detached.

Because self-harm can reduce tension and help control mood, it can be self-reinforcing and habit forming and is a difficult cycle to break. Some factors that may make some students more at risk are:

- Experience of a mental health disorder. This might include depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder and eating disorders;
- Being a young person who is not under the care of their parents, or young people who have left a care home;
- Being part of the LGBTQ+ community;
- Having been bereaved by suicide.

Students often hide their self-harm but there are several signs that they may be self-harming. These include:

- Unexplained cuts, burns or bruises;
- Keeping themselves covered;
- Avoiding swimming or changing clothes around others.

Signs of self-harm may be similar to signs of physical or other abuse as it is hard to know who inflicted the injury.

How staff may deal with the situation
It is important that our staff are curious when asking children about an injury as self-harm is a potential cause for concern. Staff will record and report any observations or conversations they have with students about injuries that could be self-harm or abuse in accordance with the Safeguarding Incorporating Child Protection Policy.

Other non-specific signs of self-harm include:

- Becoming withdrawn or isolated;
- Low mood;
- Lack of interest;
- Drop in academic grades;
- Sudden changes in behaviour such as becoming irritable, angry or aggressive;
- Excessive self-blame for problems;
- Expressing feelings of failure;
- Uselessness or hopelessness.

Self-harm behaviour is usually aimed at coping with life rather than ending it however, there is an increased risk of suicide if someone already self-harms. Designated Safeguarding Leads will follow the NSCP guidance.

Informing parents/carers
When the school becomes aware of a student's self-harm, they will need to have a conversation with them about sharing information with their parents or carers as they will need to be involved in supporting their child and accessing further support for them if necessary (unless this would put them at risk of harm). Sometimes, students have a preference of who they would like to be informed e.g. Mum or Dad. If a young person is reluctant about informing their parents or carers, we will encourage them to think about the benefits of involving their family and how they could help.

As self-harm can often provide a way of feeling in control, it is important that children and young people are fully involved in discussions about informing parents and carers, considering the individual's competence to make such decisions, as well as any safeguarding concerns, as discussed above. Good practice should involve giving young people some choices about how this will be done. Options could include letting the young person inform their parents or carers and the school then gets in touch the next day (where there is no immediate safeguarding concern), parents and carers are then called with the young person present throughout the conversation and parents and carers are invited into school to talk together with the young person.

Parent/Carers support
It is important the parents and carers are provided with the appropriate advice and support about how to support their child.

Parents' Guide To Support - Self-harm (youngminds.org.uk)

Copy_of_coping-with-self-harm-brochure_final_copyright.pdf (ox.ac.uk)

0808 802 5544 (Young Minds Parents Helpline, Monday to Friday 09.30-16.00)