
Belfairs Academy



Mental Health Policy September 2024

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1. Policy statement

At Belfairs academy, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

2. Scope

This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to academy staff on our academy's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the academy
- Inform students and parents about the support that they can expect from the academy in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing

Read this policy in conjunction with:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy

3. Policy aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole academy
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in academy, where students feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
- Celebrate all of the ways students achieve at our academy, both inside and outside the classroom
- Allow students to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting student voice
- Give students the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues
- Provide support and access to resources to students experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

4. Legal basis

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

5. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the academy and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a student's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Mental Health Lead.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in the academy. These members of staff include:

- Principal/CEO
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)
- SENCO
- Mental Health Lead

6. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis

See Appendix A.

7. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a student's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

8. Managing disclosures

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the academy's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL and Mental Health Lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the student's confidential child protection file.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the student(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

9. Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff being at academy
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL / mental health lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case, the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

- Student makes a disclosure
- Member of staff offers support
- Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL or Mental Health Lead
- Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
- Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
- The DSL or Mental Health Lead will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)

- Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

10. Supporting students

Baseline support for all students

As part of the academy's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, the academy offers support to all students by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor programme, values lessons and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all students to sources of online support on the academy website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing students with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of the academy that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring of all students' mental health through assessments e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole academy approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support through heads of year and wellbeing managers
- Making time to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as:
 - Health ambassador programme
 - Peer Education programme – connecting with nature.

Assessing what further support is needed

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health Lead Amy Burch will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1. The academy will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a student will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our academy includes:

- Nurture groups
- Reduced timetable
- Time out pass
- Counselling
- Early Mental Health Support Team

Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

A student may be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP). This is to be decided by the Mental Health Lead along with the SENCO.

IHPs are written in collaboration with the student (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The student's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The student's needs resulting from the condition

- Specific support for the student's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in the academy needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

Making external referrals

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the academy provides, the academy will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- GP or pediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services

11. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to support students' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our academy website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in values, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavor to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the academy will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the student's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers - see section 10.4).

12. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for students. Students may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all students impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends

- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

13. Signposting

Sources of support will be displayed around the academy and linked to on the academy website, so students and parents are aware of how they can get help.

The Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

The academy will spread awareness of sources of mental health support in academy by offering informative parent forum events, send home to parents/carers and guardians end of term newsletters and share current information on social media and via the academy website.

14. Whole academy approach to promoting mental health awareness

Mental Health is taught in PSHE

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

Students will be taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our values curriculum.

Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging students to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating

15. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help

16. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Mental Health Lead and DSL annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by The Local Governing body.

Appendix A

Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis

