

North Halifax Grammar School

Positive Mental Health Policy



Approved by:	Principal
Date approved:	January 2022
Next review:	Spring Term 2025
Policy owner:	Well-being Manager

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)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole-school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students and staff. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. We aim also to recognise and support staff mental health and well-being.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health, their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Designated Mental Health Lead
- Well-being Manager
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Vice Principal i/c Pastoral
- School Welfare Officer
- Acting Vice Principal, Director of Sixth Form and DSL
- Acting Assistant Vice Principal and Director of Main School
- Pastoral Officer
- Pastoral Heads of Section
- Year Group Leaders
- SENDCo
- Senior Student Support Officer
- Personnel Officer

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student or colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should follow the procedures outlined. In the case of a colleague, staff should approach them if it is appropriate, or seek support from their line manager or the Personnel Officer.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental (possibly indicating self-harm)
- 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
- Lateness to, or absence from, school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Staff not managing deadlines and workload

Procedures for students

A student 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 student discloses concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, their response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise, and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring the causes.

Any member of staff who spots a warning sign, or is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a student, should make a referral to the Well-being Manager, who will assess the level of need presented by the student and signpost them to the relevant provision in school: early intervention for emotional well-being, SEND support, engagement intervention or professional counselling. Where a referral to CAMHS is considered appropriate, this should be made by the member of staff with the best knowledge of the issues.

Where there is a safeguarding issue, normal child protection procedures should be followed and an immediate referral to the relevant DSL made.

If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Welfare Officer or next available first aider and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

If a pupil presents with an ongoing mental health issue, they may be placed on the SEND register and a Pastoral Support Plan may be implemented. Any appropriate notes should be entered on CPOMs.

Only the counsellor will offer confidentiality; however, any safeguarding concerns will override this.

Consideration will be given to supporting the peers of a referred student, initially through a conversation with the School Welfare Officer. They may be given one-to-one or group support.

Parents may be contacted if appropriate.

General trends of the students' happiness will be monitored through the student well-being surveys.

Procedures for Staff

Staff are encouraged to approach the Personnel Officer for support if they feel upset, unwell, or concerned about their well-being to see if helpful adjustments can be made either in the short or longer term.

If a member of staff discloses concerns about their mental health to a colleague, the response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental, listening rather than advising or exploring the causes.

All staff are encouraged to seek support to manage their own mental health whenever necessary. Staff are encouraged to recognise and support each other's needs, and work together to manage and mitigate stress. The staff buddy scheme is designed to provide mutual well-being support in a preventative way.

We support the well-being of all staff by:

- respecting staff confidentiality
- regularly surveying staff well-being so that the school can adapt its procedures if groups of staff are struggling
- minimising the harmful effects of stress
- providing supervision for DSLs and other well-being staff
- providing effective peer support for all staff
- helping staff to achieve an appropriate work-life balance

Working with parents

In order to support our parents we will:

- Ensure that they can speak with an appropriate member of staff if they have concerns
- Highlight sources of information and support on our website
- Provide well-being information through our half-termly newsletter

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RPSE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort, 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. We will follow the PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. We teach pupils that it's "okay to talk" and our ethos aims to destigmatise thinking and talking about mental health. We promote accessing support at an early stage through assembly talks and wall displays of information about well-being issues, and our well-being team have a high profile around school. We aim to support mental wellness to prevent the development of serious mental health conditions.

Training

We will run training sessions to promote understanding about specific mental health issues which affect our students and staff.

Staff will also be offered activities to support their personal mental health during directed and optional time.

As a school we the Bronze Mental Health in Schools Award.