



Policy: Positive Mental Health Policy

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Nelson Academy Positive Mental Health Policy

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Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 Organisation).

Policy Aims

Nelson Academy are committed to promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (pupils, staff, parents and carers), and recognise that pupil's mental health and emotional wellbeing are equally as important as their physical health. When our emotional wellbeing is valued, when we feel connected and secure in respectful and nurturing relationships, and when we feel safe to express any worries and concerns we may have, we are most likely to thrive.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe environment for those affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. This document describes our approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and is intended as a guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

Legislation

The academy policy is in line with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act for Schools 2020. This sets out the following requirements for schools and their governing bodies to:

- Promote pupil mental health
- Support mental ill health
- Make statements of policy in relation to their promotion of pupil mental health, and prevention and support for mental ill health
- Promote training and information for school staff on the subject of mental health

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors of mental health. Some pupils will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of the regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

The following staff have specific responsibility with regard to pupil mental health and wellbeing:

- Mrs Sarah Wilson- Principal, DSL
- Mrs Gemma Sykes- Assistant Principal, Deputy DSL
- Mr Glen Rossiter- Assistant Principal, Deputy DSL
- Mrs Avril Varga- Student Support Officer, Deputy DSL, Thrive Practitioner
- Miss Cornelia Leach- SRB Lead, Deputy DSL, Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Lisa Jack- SENDCo, Deputy DSL
- Mrs Alannah Johnson- Wellbeing Lead
- Mrs Debbie James- SRB Teaching Assistant, ELSA
- Mrs Caroline Shelbourne- Teaching Assistant, Thrive Practitioner

If a member of staff or parent is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil, then in the first instance they should refer to the Student Support Officer and Mental Health Lead.

Promoting Positive Mental Health

Nelson Academy will:

- Work to help pupils understand their emotions and experiences better
- Ensure our pupils feel comfortable sharing concerns and worries
- Help pupils to form and maintain relationships
- Encourage pupils to be confident and help promote their self esteem
- Help pupils to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

We will promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all pupils and staff
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements
- Promoting our academy values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting our pupils' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any pupil who needs additional help through interventions and referrals to external agencies
- Educating pupils through our PSHE scheme
- Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally safe are included as part of the PSHE curriculum. This curriculum is reviewed annually and where necessary, additional elements might be added through the academic year to respond to specific needs. Our PSHE curriculum has a sustained focus on

wellbeing issues and encourages a person-centred approach to exploring these. All members of the school community should be encouraged that they can start a wellbeing conversation no matter how small they may deem their concern to be. Pupils will be reminded in their PSHE lessons of their support network and how to approach these individuals should they wish to share a mental health concern about themselves or someone else.

Signposting

We will ensure that all pupils, staff and parent are aware of sources of support within Nelson Academy, locally and nationally. Following a disclosure by a child or their family we may choose to signpost/ refer to sources of support, where appropriate. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Educational Psychologist
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Local Authority Team
- CAMHS
- Family Support Workers
- In school Thrive Practitioner
- Behavioural Support Workers

Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Avril Varga and Cornelia Leach. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided at the end of this document.

Whenever we signpost families to support we will aim to provide the following information:

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

Identifying, supporting and referring pupils with mental health needs

Staff may become aware of signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional well being issues. These concerns should be recorded on CPOMS, in line with our safeguarding policy, where the Student Support Officer, Mental Health Lead and DSL's will then be notified.

Possible physical signs of mental ill health might include, but are not exclusive to:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/ sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure
- Changes in clothing- long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

As part of their PSHE lessons, pupils reflect on the physical, social and behavioural early warning signs that indicate they may be suffering from mental ill health. All staff in school will receive 'Zones of Regulation' training to help children identify

It is important that staff remain calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or someone else.

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 pupils safe. All staff will receive annual training on how to manage and support wellbeing conversations, how to recognise the early warning signs (with additional reference to the Zones of Regulation) and how to manage disclosures.

Working with parents/carers

Nelson Academy will support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering support. To support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in school
- Share and allow parents/ carers to access further support
- Ensure that parents/ carers are aware of who to talk to if they have a concern about their child
- Give parents/ carers guidance about how they can support their child's/ children's positive mental health.

Appendix A: Further Information about common mental health issues

Below, we have sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk), Mind (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) Minded (www.minded.org.uk).
Source: Young Minds

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support

SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support

Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support

Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support

OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Eating problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support

Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children

What makes a good CAMHS referral?

If the referral is urgent it should be initiated by phone so that CAMHS can advise of best next steps

Before making the referral, have a clear outcome in mind. What do you want CAMHS to do? You might be looking for advice, strategies, support or a diagnosis, for instance.

You must also be able to provide evidence to CAMHS about what intervention and support has been offered to the pupil by the school and the impact of this. CAMHS will always ask 'What have you tried?' so be prepared to supply relevant evidence, reports and records.

General considerations

- Have you met with the parent(s) or carer(s) and the referred child or children?
- Has the referral to CMHS been discussed with a parent or carer and the referred pupil?
- Has the pupil given consent for the referral?
- Has a parent or carer given consent for the referral?
- What are the parent or carer pupil's attitudes to the referral?

Basic information

- Is there a child protection plan in place?
- Is the child looked after?
- Name and date of birth of referred child/children
- Address and telephone number
- Who has parental responsibility?
- Surnames if different to child's
- GP details
- What is the ethnicity of the pupil / family?
- Will an interpreter be needed?
- Are there other agencies involved?

Reason for referral

- What are the specific difficulties that you want CAMHS to address?
- How long has this been a problem and why is the family seeking help now?
- Is the problem situation-specific or more generalised?
- Your understanding of the problem or issues involved.

Further helpful information

- Who else is living at home and details of separated parents if appropriate
- Name of school
- Who else has been or is professionally involved and in what capacity?
- Has there been any previous contact with our department?
- Has there been any previous contact with social services?
- Details of any known protective factors
 - Any relevant history i.e. family, life events and/or developmental factors
- Are there any recent changes in the pupil's or family's life?
- Are there any known risks, to self, to others or to professionals?
- Is there a history of developmental delay e.g. speech and language delay
- Are there any symptoms of ADHD/ASD and if so have you talked to the educational psychologist?

STAFF WELLBEING

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY STAFF WELLBEING?

'Wellbeing' is the condition of feeling that our lives are balanced with good physical, mental and emotional health. When we experience positive wellbeing, we feel engaged and motivated, connected to others and better able to cope with life's ups and downs. When we feel this positive connection to our loved ones and to our community more broadly, as well as towards our work and to our wider responsibilities, we are able to show resilience and 'bounce back' from inevitable setbacks.

School staff are frequently juggling a multitude of tasks for a number of different stakeholders in a quick-paced and often reactive environment where there are huge pressures on time and resources. Knowing this, it is imperative that staff are taken good care of, both emotionally and physically so that they can support students, families and colleagues more effectively. When staff feel valued, nurtured and understood, they are more able to talk about their wellbeing free of judgement or stigma, meaning that any mental health issues which arise are addressed more quickly with better outcomes for that person's personal and clinical recovery.

Staff Wellbeing is a priority in our school because;

- Staff who feel valued and who are invested in are more likely to be retained
- Enthused and engaged staff are more likely to have a positive impact on students and their educational outcomes
- Staff with positive wellbeing are more likely have improved job satisfaction and be more productive
- When staff can manage stress better and have developed healthy coping strategies, the likelihood of illness is reduced, as are absences from work

Stress is a normal part of everyday life, but it becomes unhealthy when our outlet for managing stressful situations cannot meet the number of stressful situations or events we are experiencing.

These can be some of the triggers which can impact on and become further impacted by feelings that our physical and emotional health are under threat;

- A major life change
- Unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others
- Limited resources and growing demands
- Unexpected detours and challenges

When working in a caring profession, we are much more likely to experience encounter stress as a result of the number of people we work with in a normal day, as well as the unpredictability of each encounter.

Early Warning Signs

BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS

- Feeling irritable and quick to anger
- Difficulty paying attention or feeling more forgetful
- Changes in appetite

- Increased eating of high fat, salty or sugary foods
- Lack of motivation
- Tuning out

SOCIAL SIGNS

- Decreased desire to attend social events
- Increased desire to stay in the classroom during break times
- Voicing complaints more frequently/reactivity when there was little before

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- More frequent headaches and/ or migraines
- Stomach aches or feelings of nausea
- Increased sweating/night sweats
- Heart palpitations
- Chest pains
- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Clenching of teeth/grinding at night
- Clenching fists/wringing hands
- Agitated bouncing of legs/feet

You could try:

- Start a wellbeing conversation with a loved-one or a Mental Health Champion
- Access the Mental Health Champion Online Library
- Arrange an appointment with your GP
- Create positive self-talk affirmations
- -Schedule in social events or factor in regular communications with friends and family
- Attend one or 2 'me time' activities just for you each week to stop you from being tempted to work overtime
- Download Headspace and practise a relaxation before bed
- Practise 'Bubble Breathing' a long out breath like blowing bubbles which lowers your heart rate
- Try a proprioceptive activity such as yoga, running or even pressing your thumb against each finger of your hand in a loop
- Practise 'Loosy Limp' allowing your whole body to become heavy and relaxed like a rag doll