PUTNEY
HIGH SCHOOL
GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
(Whole School)

Putney High School Policy

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy statement

Putney High School and GDST are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. The culture in the School is one of openness, kindness and compassion. We recognise the value of interpersonal relationships, and the school creates a secure, positive and encouraging atmosphere amongst the whole community. We seek out opportunities to foster and nurture connections as well as educate explicitly on the subjects of wellbeing and mental health, so as to make conversation commonplace. An ethos is celebrating the individual is key to our strategy.

The Pastoral Curriculum and PHSE programmes are carefully planned to ensure age-appropriate wellbeing education is delivered to all cohorts. Pupil voice is integral to providing a supportive and responsive ethos and we therefore ensure the delivery of our provision can be flexible to meet the needs of pupils. When events such as Everyone's Invited, Black Lives Matter or environmental campaigns impact the lives and wellbeing of our pupils, the school will act immediately by listening carefully and responding in a timely manner, thoughtfully and wisely to the needs of our community.

Scope

This policy intends to describe and promote our approach to positive mental health and wellbeing, as well as provide information on the support available for pupils in need.

Aims

- To provide experiences and opportunities for each pupil to develop a healthy outlook on the challenges of growing up and of life, including positive psychology.
- To put context and understanding around issues that pupils face during their time at school, and allow them to develop positive, healthy, cognitive skills in preparation for later life.
- Maintain a high profile for the discussion of mental health generally, while protecting the privacy of individuals.
- Provide on-site support for the pupils most in need.
- To work in partnership with parents and external agencies for an integrated support plan for individual pupils.

Key members of staff

All staff are responsible for promoting healthy work practices for pupils, recognising achievements, building working relationships with pupils and enabling healthy levels of self-worth.

Pupils may speak with any adult at school with whom they feel comfortable. Upon identification of some level of support needed, this adult will connect the pupil with one of:

- The Deputy Head Pastoral and Co-curricular
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- School Nurses
- Student Wellbeing Lead
- School Counsellor
- Head of Year
- Assistant Head of Year
- Head of Key Stage
- Form Tutor
- Mental Health First Aider (teaching staff who have received training).

Educating on mental health

The positive and negative impacts of mental health are interwoven into work/school and personal lives. To divorce them is rarely possible. In the same way, contributory factors to mental health status exist in all areas of the School, and both pupils and staff should have regard to the wellbeing of themselves and others at all times.

It is important that pupils receive a balanced view of mental health. We aim to achieve this through the taught curriculum of PSHE (please see separate policy) which exists throughout the Junior and Senior Schools.

Moreover, opportunities are taken in whole school and year group assemblies, form times, relevant class discussions in other curriculum areas or on "off timetable" days as well as in one-to-one conversations with mentors/coaches/teachers all of whom are consistent in their messaging.

Our Student Wellbeing Lead regularly leads assemblies or runs workshops with year groups that are relevant to their developmental needs and can respond to matters as they arise. Other techniques for protecting positive mental health are in the cocurricular timetable (e.g., mindfulness and yoga).

On each occasion the School seeks to recognise mental health concerns, offer preventative advice and signpost help in and out of school for those who feel they need it. Wellbeing Week and Breathe Week are celebrated during the School Calendar and offer the occasion to recognise wellbeing as a whole community.

Support available at School and locally

Each of these adults is trained in responding to a disclosure and accessing the next stage of help with young people. Pupils may seek help from:

- A trusted teacher
- Tutor
- Head of Year
- School Nurse
- Student Wellbeing Lead or School Counsellor – daily coverage*

*Pupils may self-refer to these services if they are in Year 8 or above or be recommended by a member of staff.

After any safeguarding / pastoral disclosure, a record is made on CPOMS (our online academic and pastoral monitoring system), and those cases which are of sufficient concern would follow the School's Safeguarding procedures (please see separate document).

We work closely with local services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS & MASH or police), via referrals.

Larger national services such as Young Minds, NSPCC. Kooth and SHOUT are signposted for those pupils who would find a text-based service more comfortable.

Identifying needs and warning signs

Staff have a duty to report any concerns about a pupil in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and are reminded of this regularly. The school environment is such that successful relationships exist between staff and pupils allowing teachers to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, in line with those in KCSIE and including:

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption.

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education
- Family and relationship problems
- Bereavement and family health issues.

Staff will also be fully aware of LGBTQIA+ pupils who are more vulnerable to challenges to their mental health and are at an increased risk of depression and anxiety.

Signposting

Wellbeing is discussed regularly in all year groups, with parents and with staff via newsletters, assemblies, boards in every tutor room and in the main corridor. Wellbeing Week is celebrated with high profile speakers and events. It is a recurring agenda theme at School Council and thoughts, ideas and concerns can be raised and addressed via surveys and through our 'Ask the Nurse' anonymous form. The Wellbeing team are well-known via posters in tutor rooms and on Firefly.

Managing disclosure and confidentiality

All disclosures will be handled in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy. Staff training makes it clear that the emphasis is very much on listening and not judging, appreciating the courage a child is using when speaking about a concern.

Confidentiality of the disclosure is never promised to a child, and they are reminded that the reason for this is to ensure they are kept safe. However, in all cases, the School takes an approach of allowing pupils to have as much control as is reasonable over the flow of information where possible.

Working with parents and external agencies

Safeguarding concerns can be emailed to the School's Designated Safeguard Lead. Outside of the school day, parents or guardians should call 999 if they have concerns about the welfare of a child.

The School commits to work alongside CAMHS and GP advice. The School recognises that it is not in a position for clinical delivery, but that it does have a big role to play in affording pupils support to establish healthy coping strategies for poor mental health. Parents are regularly sent helpful material on topics related to mental health by the school to support open discussion at home.

The GDST offers parent webinars on related issues, and the School promotes other opportunities for parents to learn and the counsellors provide online seminars to promote mental wellbeing. The Wellbeing Lead also produces blogs for the School website that can be accessed by the Putney High School community.

Parents would be asked to follow the normal communication pathways to the School, by contacting the child's tutor or Head of Year if they wish to discuss their child's mental health.

Supporting peers

The School places great value in peer-to-peer interaction and that friendship is a fundamental pillar of emotional wellbeing.

The School also acknowledges that peers who are supporting a friend experiencing mental health challenges may need guidance in how to achieve this, in order that they themselves are supported, and that the friend in question receives the correct adult support.

Staff training

Staff receive training on mental health issues, both for their own wellbeing, and in order that they may respond to pupils appropriately. Those with responsibilities are supported in finding specific training, (e.g., Mental Health First Aid practitioners' course, Positive Project Training, or similar). Supervision is provided for members of the pastoral team and regular Pastoral Board meetings enable peer support.

Related policies

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Personal, Social, Health & Economics (PSHE) Policy
- Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy review

The policy is reviewed annually and updated in-line with local and national policy requirements.