



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Agreed by the Wellbeing Link Governor
on behalf of the School Community Committee
To be reviewed
(reviewed every 2 years)

Spring 2025
Spring 2027

To be monitored by Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior Mental Health Lead & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Pastoral Team and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

1. Aims

At Dame Alice Owen's School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy focuses on students' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students across our school
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting students' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which students feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Inform students and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of students' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

This policy should be read alongside:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy
- Behaviour for learning & anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding & child protection policy

2. Legislation and guidance

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](#)

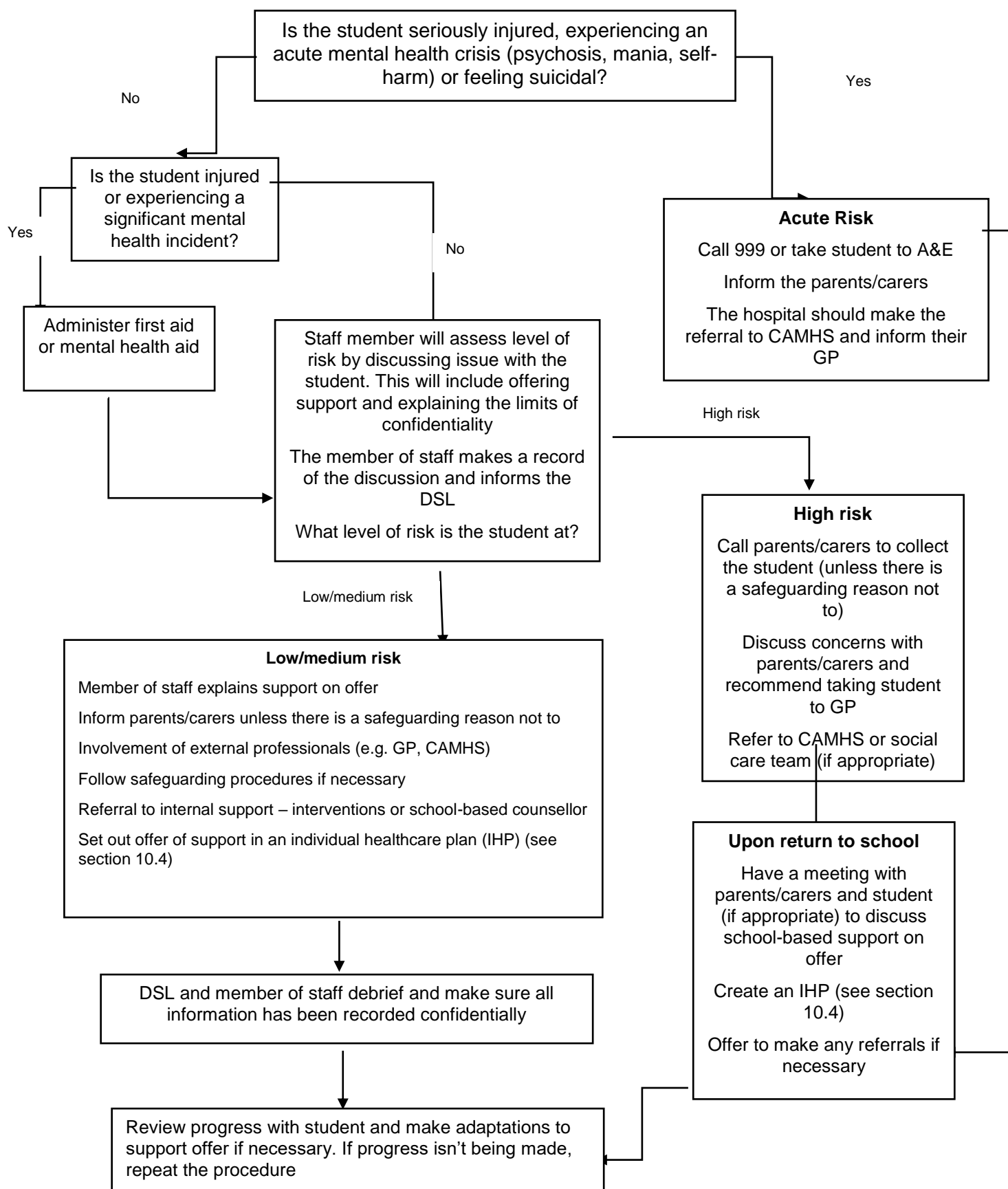
3. Roles and responsibilities

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

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

- Headteacher - Mrs H Nemko
- Designated Safeguarding Lead & Mental Health Lead (DSL) - Mrs V Blackburn
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) - Mr A Wharton
- Attendance Lead - Mrs V Blackburn

- Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



4. 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
 - Eating or sleeping patterns
 - Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- 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
- Rapid 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

5. 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 our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the safeguarding team. 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

6. Confidentiality

Staff will 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 school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team. 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/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding and child protection policy will be followed.

6.1. Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Student makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL/ member of the safeguarding team
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share - if no consent is given, explain to the student who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL/member of the safeguarding team will inform the parent/carers (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

7. Supporting students

7.1. Baseline support for all students

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

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PSHE and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all students to sources of online support on our school website

- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing students with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring 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 school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support, e.g. through Pastoral Directors
- Making classrooms a space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions

7.2. Assessing what further support is needed

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL and pastoral team will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school 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

7.3. 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 school includes:

- 1:1 meeting(s) with pastoral managers
- Reduced timetable
- Time-out pass
- Mentor
- Signposting to external support

7.4. Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

A student will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) if the mental health concern requires extensive support and monitoring on a day to day basis. 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 our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

7.5. Making external referrals

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

A student could be referred to:

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

8. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/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 school 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/carer forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers 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.

9. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very 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

10. Signposting

Sources of support are displayed around our school and linked to on our school website, so students and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

The DSL and pastoral team will be available to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

11. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

11.1. Mental health is taught in PSHE

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

Students are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe
- For more information, see our PSHE curriculum [here](#)

11.2. 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 their mental health is deteriorating

12. 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

13. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with 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
- Offer an employee assistance programme (Westfield Health)

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Mental Health Lead every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the School Community Committee on recommendation from the Wellbeing Link Governor.