



THE TRIPLE CROWN CENTRE



Mental Health Policy

The Triple Crown Centre **Mental Health 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 The Triple Crown Centre, we aim to promote positive mental health for all of our staff and students. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health issues. 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.

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. This Policy will be reviewed annually and will next be reviewed March 2024.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff, students and parents or carers
- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering with mental health issues (and their peers and parents or 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:

- Miss Eleanor Clarke- Headteacher, Lead DSL
- Ms Harvi Ghudhail - SENCO, Deputy DSL
- Miss Kelly Corcoran – Business Manager, DSL

The following members of staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid:

- Ms Harvi Ghudhail
- Miss Sujata Ghosh

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Headteacher and DSL in the first instance. If there is a

fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the usual safeguarding and child protection procedures should be followed. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by our SENCO, Ms Harvi Ghudhail.

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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents or carers are aware of any relevant sources of support within school and in the local community.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of some warning signs which may indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with a member of the DSL team.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff should know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'. All disclosures should be recorded and reported to a DSL who will then speak to the student and parents or carers regarding the concern and offer support and advice on next steps.

Confidentiality

We will be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent or carer.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually a DSL as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Working with Parents and Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents or carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach as it can be shocking and upsetting to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets if available as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will finish each meeting with agreed next steps will provide clear means of contacting us with further questions if they need to. A record of the meeting will be kept on the student file.

Parents and carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

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 students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.