

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

2021 - 2022

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents

Date of last review:	Nov 2021	Author:	Designated Safeguarding Officer
Date of next review:	Nov 2022	Owner:	Education Directors
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set for school <input type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Board
School:	ARK BOULTON ACADEMY	Key Contact Name:	Governance Team
Key Contact Email:	governance.team@arkonline.org	Key Contact Phone:	0203 116 6333

POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Mental Health & wellbeing

Key Contact Personnel:

Principal	Ark's Regional Director	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s	Designated Teacher for Looked After Child (LAC)
Herminder Channa	Gail Peyton	Danny Richards Rosie Higgins	Asif Patel	Rosie Higgins

SENCo	School Nurse	School Counsellor	Mental Health Support Workers	Education Psychologist
Pawel Ptak	Asalah Jaleal	Edd Higgins	Nick Wilkinson	Katie Callicott Francesca Weir

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Policy Statement

At Ark Boulton Academy we use the World Health Organisations definition of mental health and wellbeing:

“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)

In the UK, The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: “in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children’s wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all students to:

- feel confident about themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

At Ark Boulton Academy, we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that helps students become more resilient, happy and successful, and to prevent problems before they arise.

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal approaches for all, and specialised, targeted approaches for vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the Ark Boulton approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, visitors to the academy and the community. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy, in cases where a student’s mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND Policy where a student has an identified special educational need. It also links to the Academy’s Anti-bullying and Safeguarding policies.

The Policy Aims

At Ark Boulton Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events.

We will help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

To achieve this we will:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- 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 and their peers and parents or carers

Staff roles and responsibilities

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

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

These responsibilities are in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2018 and the 2020 Statutory requirements for Relationship, Sex and Health Education.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant in-school support include:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Leads
- Student Welfare Team
- SENDco who helps staff to understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- School Nurse.

Raising Concerns

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

If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed.

If the student presents as a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse/first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to an external agency is appropriate, this will be led and managed by **Ms Higgins**, safeguarding lead.
(See Appendix A: The Referral Process)

Individual Care Plans

Individual care plans will be put in place for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. A care plan will be drawn up involving the students, the parents and relevant health professionals. This should include:

- Details of a student's condition
- Associated risks
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

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 developmental 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.

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.
(Appendix C: PHSE Curriculum 2020/01)

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites, social media), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it

The support we provide to students and families is listed in Appendix B.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which 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 to Ms Higgins Safeguarding Lead

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
- 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

Managing disclosures

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 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 our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file on the EdAware Safeguarding System, and should include:

- Date

- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information is shared with the Safeguarding Lead, who will store the record appropriately, assess the situation and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. We must never promise full confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a student, 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

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

Disclosures should not be shared with a colleague but report it to the Safeguarding lead. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Depending on the type of concern and level of severity we will discuss the matter with parents. If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, and the child protection procedures should be followed.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the student's confidential record on EdAware Safeguarding System, and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Working with All Parents

Parents 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parents' sessions
- Offer support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners
- 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 complete the Mental Health in Education module on the Ark Learning Platform. In addition, they will receive regular updates on mental health issues.

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 provided where appropriate.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

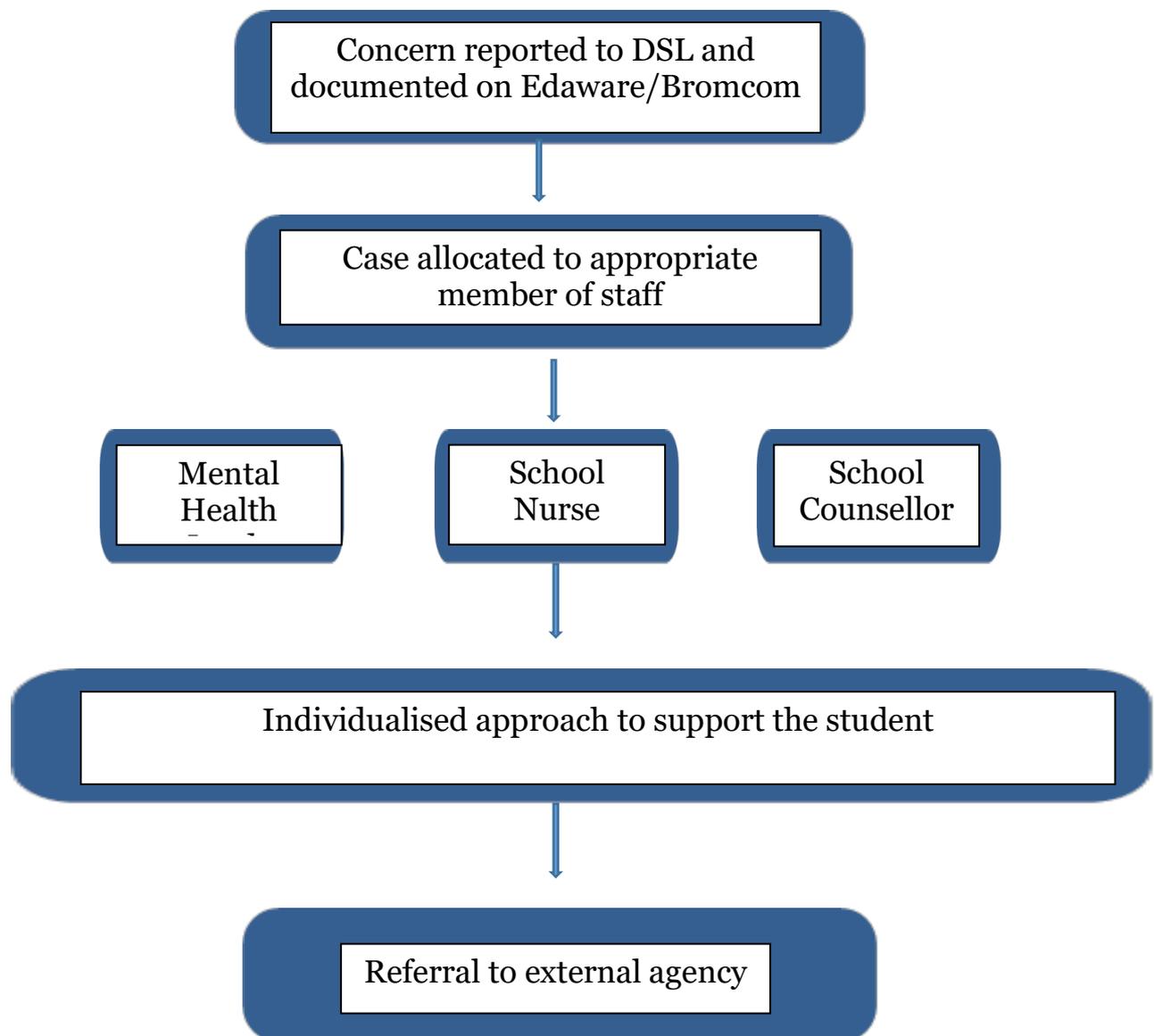
Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2023.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

APPENDIX A: Ark Boulton Academy Referral Process



APPENDIX B: SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Assessment & identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Houses • Blob Tree • Early Help Assessment • Strengths and Concerns Questionnaire • SEN Screening (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Cognition & Learning)
In-house interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis support • Mediation • 1:1/small group support • Mentoring • Counselling • Art therapy • Play Therapy • Press Pause Club • Time to Talk drop-in sessions • Girls Group • Narthex Activity Club • Intimate Personal Care • Police Cadets scheme • Home visits • Fast Track (attendance) • Parenting Course • Parents Drop-in sessions • Physiotherapy sessions • Hardship Fund
Referrals for external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Teams • Think Family • Social Services • Children Missing from Education Team • Elective Home Education Team • SENAR • Forward Thinking Birmingham • Education Psychology Service • Community Paediatrics • School Health Advisory Service • Multi-systemic Therapy Team

**External agencies/
professionals we
work with**

ATTENDANCE

- CME Team
- Education Legal Team
- Home Education Service

EMOTIONAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Birmingham Education Partnership
- Community Paediatrics
- Diabetes Team
- Forward Thinking Birmingham
- Immunisation Team
- Schools Health Advisory service

SAFEGUARDING

- Birmingham Childrens Trust
- Early Help Teams
- Domestic Abuse workers
- Family Support workers
- Food Banks
- Police & Schools Panel
- Police School Liaison Officer
- Safeguarding Network
- Social workers
- Think Family
- Young Carers support workers
- Youth Offending Teams

SEND

- Communication Autism Team
- Education Psychologist
- Hearing & Visual Impairment Teams
- Physical Disability Team & physiotherapists
- Pupil & School Support Service

APPENDIX C: SOURCES OF SUPPORT

HELPLINES	
Aquarius: 0121 622 7780	Bullying UK: 0800 800 2222
Childline: 0800 1111	Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
Cruise: 0808 808 1677	NHS Helpline: 111
Papayrus: 0808 068 4141	RESPECT: 0808 2020 4040
Samaritans: 0161 116 123	Talk to Frank: 0300 124 6600
Young Carers Support Service: 0121 355 2707	

WEBSITES	
www.anxietyuk.org.uk	www.nspcc.org.uk
www.childline.org.uk	www.oed.uk.org
www.bullying.co.uk	www.samaritans.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk	www.thinkyouknow.co.uk
www.nhs24.com	www.talktofrank.com
www.respect.co.uk	www.youngminds.org.uk
www.papyrus-uk.co	www.kids.org.uk
www.time-to-change.org.uk/	
www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/making-good-friends.htm	

Below is sign-posted information and guidance about the mental health difficulties 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 / carers but they are listed here because they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via:

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

Mind www.mind.org.uk

ChildLine www.childline.org.uk

Time to Change www.time-to-change.org.uk

Rethink Mental illness www.rethink.org

Believe in Children Barnardo's www.barnardos.org.uk

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: www.selfharm.co.uk and 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: 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: 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: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support: www.papyrus-uk.org

Eating Disorders

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: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficulties-in-younger-children

Reference Documents:

Mental Health Provision in Schools Report (DfE 2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/747709/Mental_health_and_wellbeing_provision_in_schools.pdf

Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing A whole school and college approach (Public Health England 2015)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWB_draft_20_03_15.pdf

Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools (DfE 2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf