

 The Talentum Learning Trust		Trust Policy Document			
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Mental Health and Well-being Policy

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining good mental health is the responsibility of each human being. It is the responsibility of both home and school to help educate and support young people of all ages to learn how to do this. Although mental health problems will not generally be caused through school attendance, schools need to be aware of how much they can contribute not only to wellbeing, but to exacerbating potential problems for young people by not being aware of stress triggers within their student and staff population.

What is mental health?

Mental health is the ability to deal with the day to day stresses that we all encounter within our everyday lives. To have the emotional resources to cope when an unexpected crisis occurs. To be able to deal with these 'crisis', which although may make us feel momentarily out of control or out our comfort zone, can be assimilated into our psychological make- up as we have the internal resources to deal with them. This is achieved by people having an inner sense of security and wellbeing, through feeling loved, liked, respected, safe and all the other conditions that make us as individuals function normally within the society we live in.

What is mental ill health?

Mental ill health occurs when for some reason the person does not have the inner resources to deal with life difficulties as they accumulate internally within the person. We are on the whole, all able to deal with one or two difficulties, but the person with no internal resources starts to exhibit external behaviour as they struggle to deal with whatever it is they are unable to process within.

EDUCATIONS ROLE

It is the job of educators to learn what the signs of mental health difficulties are and to know what to do in terms of sign posting the sufferer to the appropriate agency for the person to receive help as soon as possible. To understand what contributory factors may be present within schools that can further exacerbate a person's inability to cope.

Implementation

- Support for Vulnerable Individuals
- Clear Leadership
- Availability of Support and Advice
- Effective Anti-Bullying Policy
- Combating Stigma and Discrimination
- Planned Curriculum Opportunities
- Training
- Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing Policies

Supporting Vulnerable Individuals

That schools have the ability to be able to identify vulnerable individuals and have in place resources to help and support them. These could include:

- Individual support plans
- Planned and structured intervention to address issues
- Schools plans and protocols to work with outside agencies to support individuals and families
- Regular meeting of school staff to identify and assess needs of vulnerable young people.
- Individuals feeling that they have a voice about their own needs
- Available resources to offer support, such as peer support, mentoring, tutor groups.

Clear Leadership

Leadership that creates and manages a positive environment which enhances Emotional Health and Wellbeing in school.

- Having a behaviour policy that rewards and sanctions fairly.
- Effective management by Senior Leadership Team regarding EMWB
- Dedicated resources to ensure delivery of EMWB
- Ensuring that people feel listened to regarding EHWB

Availability of Support and Advice

Schools should offer a confidential pastoral system available for students, and staff to help them in times of extreme stress, such as bereavement or family breakdown.

- Ensuring that students know that there is a pastoral system and who they can approach if the need arises.
- Potentially allowing students to help design the pastoral system so they feel included at all levels.
- That the pastoral system can be accessed in many ways, such as; one to one, counselling, drop in sessions, web systems.
- That staff know how they too can access emotional help, should they require.

Effective Anti-bullying Policy

That each school has its own anti bullying policy based on the needs of the particular age group it serves. A policy that is owned, understood and implemented by the whole school community.

- That staff know and understand the policy on bullying and their role within it.
- Staff should feel supported on correct implementation of the policy by the school.
- That school has a swift reporting system on recording of and notifying parents/carers about incidents.
- That there is an effective follow up system after events for victims and perpetrators.
- Increased awareness of potential social bullying, i.e. the net, twitter, texting.
- Leadership and education from senior staff to Governors, other staff on how to manage and implement policy fairly and justly.

Combating Stigma and Discrimination

Schools should be pro-active in providing an ethical and anti-discriminatory practice. So having an effective and implemented policy, that does not allow discrimination to others based on race, disability, religious, culture or sexuality. That allows people to feel safe regardless and to feel equal amongst others based on being human and not for any other reason.

Planned Curriculum Opportunities

There are clear opportunities for students to explore and understand their feelings using appropriate learning and teaching styles.

- Demonstrating through teaching and learning that social and emotional skills are an integral part of the PSCHÉ programme.
- The use of the SEAL programme (Social and emotional aspects of learning)
- The use of reflection and self-assessment as a structure for the enhancement of EHWP. As children learn to identify how they play a part in their own personal responsibility. And gain confidence in being able to change in a safe environment of the learning situation.

Training

In which staff are taught appropriate professional for pastoral care within the framework of their school.

- That all staff be trained to a sufficient level, position dependant, to understand the role in promoting EHWP.
- That there is a CPD programme for all staff linked to personal and social development that promotes the understanding of emotional and psychological needs.
- The training, use and implementation of SEAL.
- The support and development of specific staff appointed to deliver pastoral care at a higher level to more vulnerable students.
- The involvement and training of governors relative to EHWP, SEAL and Safeguarding.

Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing

Schools need to have clear policies in both these areas, to ensure a feeling of wellbeing and safety amongst its members. If people feel safe and protected they are more likely to feel safe enough to talk or confide in others without feeling under threat. So that the policy is encouraged throughout the establishment as a living document that allows users to engage within its framework to explore arising issues and seek appropriate support.

SUMMARY

If schools are able to deliver a programme of emotional and psychological awareness amongst all staff and governors then there is the potential for mental ill health to be identified and helped at an early stage, So that observation and prevention are used as opposed to more damaging psychological issues taking hold with their subsequent drain on all resources, emotional and financial for schools, staff and students.