

# PENRYN COLLEGE

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

**Approved by:** Full Governing Body

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**Responsible SLT member:** Fiona Williams/ Ben Gillo

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## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

### 1. Introduction

*“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 Organisation)

At Penryn College, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. 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 ill health. In an average classroom, one in four young people will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue (WHO). Based on our safeguarding records we believe this number is proportionally higher. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

### 2. 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. Penryn College will offer advice and support for students with mental health difficulties and signpost to external agencies for continued support.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s SEN policy where a student has an identified special educational need. It is also to be read in conjunction with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where applicable.

### 3. Aims

The aims of our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy are to:

- 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 signpost support and guidance for parents or carers

### 4. Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mrs Claire Croxall - Headteacher
- Mrs Fiona Williams – DSL/AHT/SENCo/Vulnerable Student Lead
- Mr Ben Gillo – Mental Health Lead/SEN HOF

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speaking to the Head of Year or Educational Support Team in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection and safeguarding procedures should be followed with verbally speaking with the DSL/DDSL. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff, emergency services will be contacted if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the school's Education Support Team/Safeguarding Team

## **5. Individual Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. Reasonable adjustment in line with the DDA 1995 will be implemented as part of these plans to support students with a disability, these will be made with the support of the relevant external agencies and key professionals. Any assessment of the individual's needs will ensure that any provision or adjustment made will be beneficial for the student and possible for the school to deliver.

### **Plans can include:**

- Details of a pupil's condition
- 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

## **6. 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 Personal Development curriculum through Life skills lessons, tutor programme and assembly schedule.

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. As with all PD curriculum through Life skills lessons, tutor programme and assembly schedule, the curriculum is delivered in an age-appropriate manner.

## **7. Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support and regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student seeking help by students understand:

- What support is available
- Who the support is aimed at
- How to access the support

Students can share any concerns they may have through our @Talk app, installed on all students' iPads to receive personalised support from our Educational Support Team (EST). Additionally, the PenrynWellbeing app is also installed on all students' iPads and online with sources of support for students and parents/carers.

Information can be found on the school website in the Mental Health and Wellbeing section.

## **8. 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 with the Designated Safeguarding Team.

### **Possible warning signs include:**

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / 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

**Common mental health issues may include:**

- Anxiety disorders including: - PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, OCD - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Panic attacks
- Depression
- Stress
- Eating Disorders
- Disorders of personality and identity
- Psychosis- including Schizophrenia
- Bi-Polar
- Self-Harm
- Suicidal thoughts/ attempts

The needs and experiences of people with mental health difficulties are individual to them. As a school we will endeavour to make it possible for people who experience mental health difficulties to complete their education and play their full part in society whilst they are initially supported through school and then signposted or referred to external agencies.

**9. Managing Disclosures**

A student may choose to disclose mental health 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 reasons behind concerning behaviour. All disclosures should be passed onto a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team. Please see the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more information.

**10. Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. No adult must ever guarantee confidentiality to any individual including parents, children and colleagues. Staff should make children aware that if they disclose information that may be harmful to themselves or others, then certain actions will need to be taken. Any disclosure will be reported passed onto a

member of the Designated Safeguarding Team. Please see the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more information.

## **11. Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach.

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents 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 always provide clear means of contacting the school with further questions and consider organising a follow up meeting or phone call. Meetings will finish with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting will be kept on the child's confidential record.

Where appropriate, we will always offer either support in school and/or signpost or refer to external agencies, both in initial communication and subsequently.

In order to support our parents, we will:

- Signpost sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our school channels (website, newsletter and social media).
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our Mental Health and Wellbeing policy and SEMH provision map easily accessible to parents.
- Signpost ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our information evenings.
- Ensure parents are informed about the mental health topics their child(ren) are learning about in Life skills.

## **12. 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 young people 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 and signpost where necessary.

## **13. 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. This will

also be included through staff briefings and signpost additional information for staff who wish to learn more.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Fiona Williams or Ben Gillo who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Fiona