



**Amber Valley  
& Erewash  
Support Centre**

## **Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Pupils**

**Written by:** Janine Dix **Date:** 24/11/21

**Last reviewed on:**

**Next review due by:** 24/11/23

**Approved by:** Tom England

**Version** 1

## **Introduction**

We promote a caring and supportive environment in which each individual is valued and respected. We have high expectations and recognise that all pupils need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all opportunities available to them. At some point, pupils may experience life challenges that can make them vulnerable, and our academy therefore plans to provide additional support and intervention to help pupils develop good mental health and wellbeing. The mental health and wellbeing of pupils will impact on their development, learning, achievement and experiences.

1 in 10 children aged 10-15 have a clinically recognised mental health disorder in any one year.

1 in 4 adults will experience mental health difficulties, at least half of these difficulties can be traced back to childhood.

1 in 10 people will have at least 4 negative adolescent childhood experience (ACEs). ACEs can have a detrimental impact to a child's cognitive functions due to stress and its adverse effect on neurological pathways during development. Research also evidences that 4 or more ACEs increase a child's chances of developing anti- social behaviours and health harming behaviours such as increased risk of mental ill health later in life. ACEs can also contribute to low self- esteem and affects threat perception so that children may have an inability to respond to different emotions and form healthy relationships. Children with 4 or more ACEs are 4 times less likely to attend university, twice as likely to achieve no qualifications at all and 62% were unemployed, many of which through sickness and disability.

Many of our pupils come on roll with mental health concerns, either diagnosed or underlying, or with low wellbeing. Our academy culture is proactive, and we welcome all opportunities to promote the importance of positive emotional health and wellbeing through the formal and informal curriculum. We aim to improve mental health and wellbeing and give pupils the strategies they need to maintain a positive outlook. We aim to equip pupils with the life skills the emotional resilience to successfully cope with challenges throughout their lives. We believe that by promoting emotional health and wellbeing that pupils will be happier, more confident, more motivated and that this will contribute to raising standards in our school.

The emotional health of our pupils is fundamental to our ethos and emotional healthy pupils will be able to:

- Develop psychologically, creatively, intellectually and spiritually
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- Become aware of others and empathise with them
- Embrace and improve learning
- Improve attendance
- Improve behaviour
- Develop an understanding of right and wrong
- Face challenges, resolve issues and learn from setbacks

## **Aims**

Through this policy the academy aims to:

- Promote the importance of positive mental health in AVESC
- Create a culture of awareness of mental health, tolerance and acceptance
- Enable pupils to talk about their own mental health and reduce stigma
- Allow pupils to identify triggers for poor mental health
- Provide effective support for all pupils
- Make pupils aware of the 5 steps to mental wellbeing
- Help to promote positive mental health strategies
- Improve attendance
- Improve a pupil's capacity to learn
- Increase emotional resilience
- Enable pupils to manage their emotional health and wellbeing more effectively
- Give pupils the strategies to accept change and move forwards
- Counter childhood adversity for pupils with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

### **How our academy will assess and monitor pupil mental health and wellbeing?**

- Our academy is currently implementing mental health and wellbeing assessment tools for all pupils
- The mental health and wellbeing of our pupils will be assessed using a questionnaire through an online survey.
- The outcome of the questionnaire will provide bands of scores which will signify low, medium or high levels of poor mental health.
- Pupils with medium and high risk will produce a 'Wellbeing Action Plan' (WAP) with a key member of staff. This will allow an open dialogue. Pupils will be able to identify triggers if known. These plans will also enable pupils to be proactive in maintaining positive mental health.
- Plans may involve a range of strategies such as referrals to agencies, interventions and life skills challenges.
- It must be noted that AVESC staff will mainly focus on improving wellbeing as we are not mental health professionals.
- Mental health and wellbeing will be promoted during INSET training, twilights and team meetings.
- At least one member of staff from each site will be trained in Mental Health and Wellbeing for young people.
- WAPs will be reviewed on timescales dependent on need.
- All pupils will complete the questionnaire at the end of the year to assess improvements in mental health and wellbeing.

### **Strategies that our academy may use over the 4 sites to support pupil wellbeing**

- Providing mindfulness and relaxation sessions
- Referrals to the ESTEEM FASST for HOPE and Family Support intervention
- Referrals to CAMHS, school nurse and GP
- Links to appropriate support organisations
- Collaborative working with families

- Offer resilience-based workshops to talk about wellbeing
- Development of coping strategies
- Self-esteem awareness
- Emotional intelligence
- Reflection time
- 1:1 resilience activities
- PSE units covering emotional health and relationships
- Team development opportunities
- Encouragement of social competence
- Achievement Celebrations
- Clearly defined rewards and sanctions
- Provide breakfast, tea and toast
- Sending postcards to praise for positive events/work
- Therapeutic counselling service
- Mentors or a pastoral keyworker
- Encourage physical exercise as part of the 5 ways to wellbeing
- Provide opportunities for community or volunteering work
- Outdoor education
- Reading interventions
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Rewards and reward trips
- 1:1 and small group sessions

### **Continual professional development**

Training to support all staff will be updated either through whole academy INSET Training or on an individual needs basis. Named staff will be trained in 'Mental Health First Aid'. Each site will have an identified key staff member who has also completed the Mental Health First Aid training. These key staff will contribute to the academy's mental health and wellbeing steering group.

We have achieved the Bronze Mental Health Carnegie Award for schools through Leeds Beckett University in August 2021 which demonstrates our commitment to supporting staff and pupils with their mental health and wellbeing in our academy. We will be developing our academy's strategy over the next 12 months in order to achieve the Silver Mental Health Carnegie Award.

### **Other related policies:**

- Staff mental health and wellbeing policy
- Attendance policy
- Behaviour and rewards policy
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