



Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

**Presented to Local Governing Committee
22 March 2022**

Approved:

Date approved: ¹	22 March 2022
Date reviewed: ²	18 March 2025
Date of next review: ³	Spring 2028

¹ This is the date the policy was approved by the meeting

² This is the date the policy was reviewed prior to its approval above

³ This is the date as set by the policy review clause or the date approved plus three years

1.0 Policy Statement

At Arthur Mellows Village College, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and Governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures, we aim to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

1.1 Statement of Intent

“Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 their community. Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world” (World Health Organisation).

Arthur Mellows Village College aims to become more pro-active in the promotion of Positive Mental Health, supporting everyone in the College to feel safe and happy in the setting. Staff support students via specialised, targeted support such as group work, counselling and support plans which assist more vulnerable students. In addition to working to promote Positive Mental Health, we recognise and respond to those students who suffer from mental ill health. Statistics suggest that in an average classroom of 30 children, five children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue (Children's Society). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and Governors – outlining the College's approach to promoting social, emotional and mental health. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques
- Raise awareness amongst staff to supplement the recognition from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school

4.0 **Key Staff Members**

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- SENCO
- Mental Health First Aid Champion
- Life skills and Citizenship Lead
- Senior Mental Health Lead

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. The list of DSL's can be found on 'MyConcern' or as shared in staff training.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the College's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

A log on 'MyConcern' should be followed at all times and 'Urgent' should be selected where there is a risk to life or young person is in immediate danger.

5.0 **Individual Care Plans**

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the student, parents/carers, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the student's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the College and specific staff
- A risk assessment if required

6.0 **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE (Lifeskills and Personal Development) curriculum as well as assemblies and extended registrations.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-teaching-about-mental-health-and>

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

We will promote ways to support Mental Health and the differences between Mental Health and Mental Illness through curriculum and assemblies as well as awareness days in line with National Events. This also includes showcasing Wellbeing strategies, Resilience Framework and work recommended by the Anna Freud Foundation.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. See Section 14 for Supporting Peers.

7.0 **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. This will be through Life Skills Lessons, in assemblies and extended registration as well as Personal Development lessons.

Within the College (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc) and through our communication channels (The Voice, Sixth Form Parent Bulletin and the website), 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

8.0 **Sources or support at school and in the local community**

We engage with a range of different support services to promote SEMH in the College. These are based both within the College and in the local area.

8.1 School Based Support

NOTE: Full staff lists for the roles indicated below are available on the College website and updated accordingly depending on staff changeover.

Pastoral support team

- Dedicated non-teaching staff who support each Year Group and Key Stage
- Accessed via Pastoral Hub or Sixth Form
- Support students with friendships, behaviour, wellbeing and mental health
- Accessed 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

School based Counsellor

- On site mental health and wellbeing counselling
- Fully qualified BACP staff member
- Available for booked sessions and lunchtime drop ins

Early Help Assessment Lead Pastoral Staff

- Dedicated non-teachers to support in raising EHAs where necessary who also liaise with outside agencies

Intervention Staff

- Dedicated staff member to work with Key Stage 4 students who have been withdrawn from some subjects to support with the SEMH needs as well as Emotional Behaviour Difficulties (EBD)

Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year

- Teaching staff who lead Year Groups and are supported in being knowledgeable about student awareness and promoting SEMH
- Designated offices for staff which are signposted to students

Attendance Officers

- Key staff members designated to support and intervene with attendance
- Provide appropriate support for engaging remotely where needed

SENCO and SEN support

- SEN area within the College which supports students and their wellbeing
- Key HSLA staff who support SEMH students with SEN needs
- Signposting and escalating systems in the College to 'flag' students and share information as well as students/parents/carers raising concerns themselves

Pastoral Lunch clubs

- Offered to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 every day in R3 to support students as a safe haven at lunch time
- Ran by designated Pastoral staff to support students and their SEMH

8.2 Local and National Support

There are a range of local and national partners that we work together with to support the SEMH needs of our young people. Some of the key local agencies are:

- **Peterborough CAMHS** - Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service <https://fis.peterborough.gov.uk/kb5/peterborough/directory/service.page?id=ftw8OEt4p7E>
- **Centre 33** - Supporting young people up to the age of 25 with mental health, caring responsibilities, housing, sexual health and more. <https://centre33.org.uk/>
- **Kooth** - An online mental health support and counselling service <https://www.kooth.com/>
- **Younited Peterborough** - YOUnited offers help to children and young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health registered with a GP in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

9.0 Warning Signs

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 alert a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the College immediately by logging the concern on 'My Concern' or contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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 – eg 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

10.0 Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care (Children in Care - CIC or Previous Children in Care PCIC), young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating. We also work effectively with other local teams who are involved in the care of our young people to ensure a coordinated approach is taken to maximise the support and care given to our students.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems
- Working closely with Peterborough City Council Children's Services, Peterborough CAMHS or other designated Local Authority as in the case of CIC/PCIC students as well as other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment (EHA), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the student and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as necessary or required
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Peterborough CAMHS or other designated body through routes such as the EHA, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality

- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014

11.0 **Managing Disclosures**

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure and main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This should also be logged on 'MyConcern' following College procedures. This information will be shared with one of the Designated Safeguarding leads to then support and put an action plan in place in line with procedures.

12.0 **Confidentiality**

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the College, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we are going 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.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff is not solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents/carers must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the College makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 **Whole School Approach to SEMH**

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face to face?

- Where should the meeting take place – some parents/carers are uncomfortable in the College premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents/parents etc?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

The College is mindful that for a parent/carer, 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/carer to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents/carers 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/carers 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 record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate. Relevant logs should be made on SIMS and 'MyConcern' where required.

13.2 Supporting Parents

The College recognises the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents/carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of, and have access to, promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc)
- Offering support to help parents/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
- Ensuring parents/carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents/carers 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/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs help (eg 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

15.0 **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. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent as well as the Senior Mental Health Lead in the College.

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.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Training and Development who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 **Policy Review**

The Local Governing Committee (or responsible committee) will review this policy in line with the procedure for policy review.

Date for Review

If no other reason for review (see policy review procedure) this policy will be reviewed in three years.