The Howard School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Policy Scope:	**The Howard School**
Responsibility:	**Local Governing Body**
Date Adopted:	**September 2025**
Review Frequency:	**Every 2 years**
Review Date:	**September 2027**

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff and pupils at The Howard School
Dissemination:	The document will be available to staff via the Academy's Policy Centre on the shared area of the IT system. The document will also be published and shared electronically within the school.
Training:	On request
Review frequency:	The document will be reviewed every two years.
Policy Author:	Ms J Deakin, Assistant Principal, SENCo
Policy Owner:	Ms J Deakin, Assistant Principal, SENCo
Approval by:	Local Academy Board / Principal
Approval Date:	September 2025
New Review Date:	September 2027

The Howard School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1.0   Policy statement

At *The Howard School,* 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 ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2.0   Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining The Howard School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.
It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school 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 and gain recognition from 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 Lead
- SENCO / Designated Mental Health Lead
- Mental Health First Aiders (Staff)
- PSHE Coordinator

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should log it on CPOMs.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school'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.

5.0   Individual Plans

When there is a concern raised, guardians and key staff will meet (with the pupil too, where appropriate) in order to devise a way forward, this could also be in the form of a phone call. Relevant professionals will be asked to contribute or ideally will be in attendance too.

Example of elements in the plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- Signposting relevant information/ support
- Actions

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 curriculum.

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

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. 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, including the sharing of appropriate signposts to professional support such as Kooth.

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.

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), 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

- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

8.0   Sources or support at school and in the local community

School-Based Support - MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION MAP APPENDED

Local Support

In Medway, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including:

- NELFT/ Kent & Medway Children & Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS), a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-mental-health/

- Medway Council also have lots of helpful resources on their website: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200231/mental_wellbeing/569/healthy_mind

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 log this on CPOMs.

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 – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- 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, 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 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 Medway Council Children's Services
and other agencies' services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;

- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety/ other emotional difficulties;

- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Plan where appropriate;

- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, According to the child's needs, where appropriate;

- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, where available, so that anxiety/ other emotional difficulties can be dealt with as soon as possible;

- 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; and

- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & 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 & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be logged on CPOMs for the Safeguarding Team which the Designated Mental Health Lead is part of.

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 school, 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're 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 isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents / Guardian must always be informed, where it is believed safe to do so. If a pupil 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

13.1   Working with parents/carers

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 pupil's record and a plan created, if appropriate.

13.2   Supporting parents

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

- Ensuring all parents 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 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; and
- 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 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 (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

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.

We will provide relevant information on our shared area for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 twilight 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 Designated Mental Health Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 Policy Review

In between scheduled updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of The Designated Mental Health Lead.   Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

Mental Health Provision Map

	Mental Health Provision
Tier 1 Specific	Reduced Timetable Contract
	Mental Health Plan
	External Professional Network
	Senior Leader- Designated Mental Health Lead attends LA Network
	Regular Review Meetings
Tier 2 Targeted	Key Person
	LA Mental Health Champion Days
	MIND Counselling
	Specific staff trained for mental health
	External Referrals
	NELFT Wellbeing
	Year Team Check ins
Tier 3 Universal	PSHE
	Homework Support
	Breakfast Space
	Lunch Clubs
	Signposting support groups for parents/ pupils
	Signposting seminars for parents/ pupils
	Signposting websites for parents/ pupils
	Peer Mentoring
	Buddy
	Form Tutor Check ins
	Staff Training
	Year Team Tracking
	Pastoral Support

17.   Self Harm Policy

We want to support any young person experiencing difficulties with self-harm, including young people who are affected by the self-harm of a friend or sibling. This document gives a brief overview of how we intend to achieve this.

As an organisation we recognise that self-harm can be defined by the following behaviours: *Cutting, burning, bruising, scratching the skin, use of sharp implements.*

In the event of one young person reporting concerns of self harm about another, the following steps must be taken:
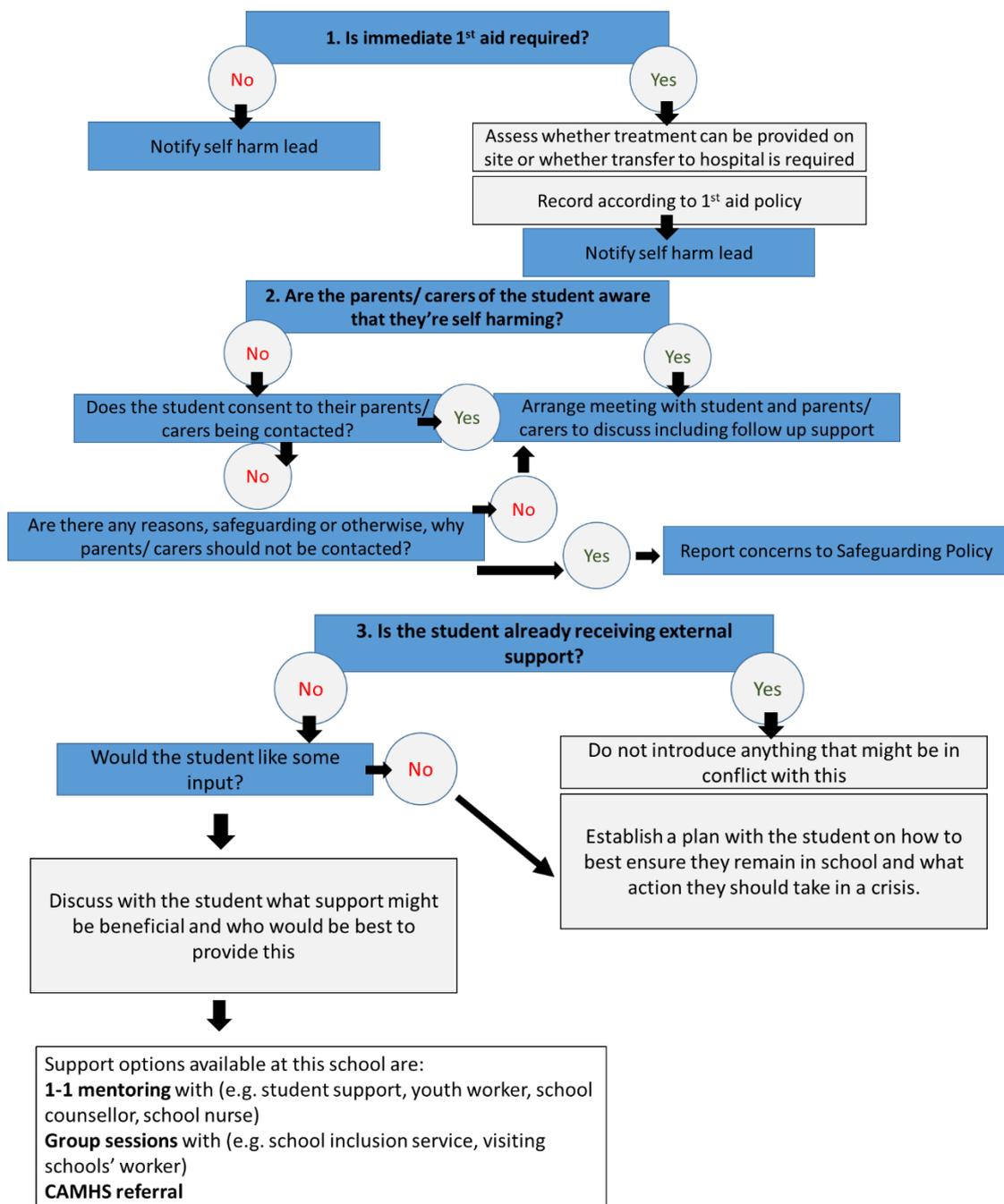
As an organisation we have identified that we can offer the following support:

- MIND sessions in school
- Support with signposting relevant agencies
- Support with referrals where appropriate
- Safety plan drawn up where appropriate
- Key person when needed

The following support can be offered to siblings/friends of someone who is experiencing self-harm:

- Reassurance from safeguarding team
- Recommendations of resources for support where appropriate
- MIND Counselling where appropriate

Within the organisation the following are appropriately trained in first-aid:

Number of staff	Location
2	Food Tech
4	Facilities
1	Art
7	Technology
1	Science
6	PE
1	Pastoral
1	Office

As an organisation we will notify other agencies (e.g. social services, schools, CAMHS etc.) in the following circumstances:

- Where the young person has external agency involvement
- Where the parent and young person ask us

References

1. YoungMinds & Cello Group, '*Talking Taboos: Talking Self-Harm*' (2012)

2. O'Connor, R.C., Rasmussen, S., Hawton, K., '*Distinguishing adolescents who think about self-harm from those who engage in self-harm*' in The British Journal of Psychiatry, April 2012

3. ChildLine, (2015), '*Always There When I Need You: ChildLine Annual Review 2014-2015*'

4. Royal College of Psychiatry, '*Managing Self-Harm in Young People*', October 2014

5. selfharmUK, ChildLine, YoungMinds, Youthnet, National Self-Harm Awareness Day Campaign, 2014

For further reading, we suggest the following publications:

Self Harm: The Path to Recovery, Dr Kate Middleton

This book demystifies a subject many people find hard to understand, assessing it's causes and showing the way to recovery.

Eating Disorders: The Path to Recovery, Dr Kate Middleton

Writing from her experience of working with sufferers, Dr Middleton explains eating disorders and why we develop them, offering guidance for recovery.

Talking About Self-harm, SelfharmUK.

Talking about Self-harm has been used as a discussion starter in schools, youth groups and a range of other contexts.

These resources and more are available to purchase from the Youthscape store:
http://youthscape.co.uk/store/project/selfharm

Recommended watching:

No Harm Done: Film for Professionals: https://youtu.be/79w0OahFQnc

What is Mental Health? https://youtu.be/G0zJGDokyWQ

Emergency Advocates 1: https://youtu.be/lZurvI34PWQ

Emergency Advocates 2: https://youtu.be/_xX6kP7O_mM

Rebecca's Story: https://youtu.be/gTrqehlFz1w

How to have difficult conversations with your child: https://youtu.be/6ptdZeSkEVY