



Mental Health Strategy

World Health Organisation Statement

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises her or his 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.

At Aylesbury High School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school and specialised, targeted approaches. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to poor mental health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health strategies, we can promote a safe and stable environment affected both directly and indirectly by poor mental health.

1 Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to medical issues or where a student has an identified special educational need:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

2 Aims

The strategy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Highlight early warning signs
- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues
- Provide support to students or colleagues suffering with poor mental health and their peers and parents/carers

3 Lead members of staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote mental health, the following have a specific remit:

- Lisa Westcott - Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead , DSL Team
- Nette Hamnett - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Harriet Queralt (L4L Lead), Amanda Brigden, Caroline Wilkes - DSL Team
- Sam Nix - Matron
- Miranda Crafts - SENDCo
- Heads of Year

4 Support for students and their parents or peers

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the appropriate Year Head in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, member of the DSL Team or Headteacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting Matron and contacting emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Lisa Westcott.

An individual care plan may be drawn up for a student causing concern or who has received a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. The plan will be drawn up by Lisa Westcott with the student, their parents/carers and relevant health professionals. The plan may include:

- Details of a student's condition
- Requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we will be sensitive but direct in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers we will consider the following questions:

- Is a face to face meeting or telephone communication preferable
- Does the student want to attend the meeting or be present when the phone call takes place
- The aims of the meeting/discussion

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn information of this type 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/carer time to reflect. We should always highlight possible next steps and give them leaflets, where possible, to help them understand the information being shared.

When a student is suffering with their 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 disordered eating, it is possible that friends 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. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is struggling. We will discuss prior to the meeting:

- What 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 they may suggest further support is required

Additionally, we will highlight to 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

5 Staff support

Any member of the school community who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a member of staff is encouraged to share their concerns with Giles Scoble (Headteacher) or Nette Hamnett.

Members of staff who are concerned about their own mental health or wellbeing are encouraged to speak to Lisa Westcott in her capacity as the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead or another colleague. If a member of staff is feeling overwhelmed by their role within the school, they are reminded that Lorraine Tominey, Teaching and Learning Lead Practitioner can be a great source of support.

Various levels of support can be accessed and information shared will be treated with confidence and sensitivity. It might be necessary for some personal information to be shared when forming a support plan.

6 Teaching about mental health and staff training

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 developmental Learning for Life (L4L) curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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 a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe. We will host relevant information via the notice board in the staff room and via the weekly bulletin in addition to in-house and external training. 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 CPL will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPL should be discussed with Amanda Brigden.

7 Signposting

Staff, students, parents/carers will be made aware of sources of support within school and in the local community via our pastoral support pages on the school website and in the AHS Newsletter.

Additionally, information regarding support for staff will be placed on the staffroom notice board and in the Weekly Bulletin.

Sources of support for students are also displayed in the Support Central corridor, Matron's room and opposite the lower floor toilets on the corridor leading to the reception. We regularly highlight support through notices in the toilets, the daily notices, via peer support groups, assemblies and through the L4L curriculum and we seek to ensure that students and staff understand:

- What help is available and who is it aimed at
- How to access the help and why
- What is likely to happen as a result of a request for help

8 Warning Signs

Individuals in the school community may be alerted to warning signs which indicate that someone is struggling with their mental health or emotional wellbeing. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and if observed, communicated with relevant staff. 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
- Increased lateness or absenteeism from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

9 Confidentiality

If it is necessary to pass on concerns then we should discuss :

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student or member of staff without telling them first. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain emergency situations when information must be shared with another member of staff and/or parent/carer.

Students are encouraged to share information with parents/carers themselves and are normally given 24 hours to do so before the school contacts the parent/carer. Students will be given the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them. If a young person gives us reason to believe that

there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers should not be informed but information shared with the DSL immediately.