



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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## Policy Statement

At Tower Learning Centre Independent School we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We offer a supportive, nurturing, respectful and caring environment. Pupils are encouraged to be open and to have their voices heard.

We know that everyone has different life experiences and challenges that come with that, and that every now and again we may need support from those around us. At Tower Learning Centre Independent School , positive mental health is the responsibility of all, and we all have a role to play.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By implementing policies and procedures we can provide a safe learning environment for those pupils affected directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

## **Part 1. Pupils**

### **1. Policy Scope**

This policy is to act as a guide to staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This policy outlines our approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. This policy should be read and understood alongside other relevant Centre Policies.

### **Policy Aims**

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils.

#### **We will always:**

- Help pupils understand their emotions and experiences.
- Ensure our pupils feel comfortable sharing concerns and worries.
- Help pupils form and maintain positive relationships with others at the Centre.
- Promote self-esteem and encourage students to be confident.
- Help pupils develop resilience and ways of coping in difficult situations.
- Listen and support.

#### **We will promote a healthy environment by:**

- Promoting positive mental health and the emotional well-being of all staff and pupils.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements (See Behaviour Policy).
- Promoting a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth and to reflect on experiences.
- Promoting the 'student voice' and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating pupils for who they are and making them feel valued and respected.
- Providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils regarding mental health issues and the signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health.

### **Key Staff Members**

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. Certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These staff members are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: David Ratcliff

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kim McCormack

Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (MHWT): Natalie Partington, Jenna Bartley, Charlotte Towers and Kim McCormack. This team is overseen by the Proprietor Kathryn Towers.

If a member of staff has a serious concern about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil they must speak with the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the first instance.

If a pupil presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including the involvement of emergency services.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing Team**

The primary aim of this group is to ensure that mental health and wellbeing a priority at the Centre. This group will meet once a month, this allows time to discuss issues and share ideas to ensure that the needs of the pupils are catered for. The members of this group will be a first port of call for staff or students who may need advice.

This group will arrange the assessment and induction of students, Wellbeing activities/days, keep display information up to date and accurate, including leaflets and flyers to give to students/parents.

This group will offer in house training to all staff on stress reduction, resilience and Mental Health issues.

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

Our PSHE curriculum offers pupils the chance to explore a wide range of topics and skills, as well as the opportunity to gain a knowledge and understanding on the importance of looking after their own mental wellbeing. This will include stress relief and resilience techniques.

Our PSHE curriculum will be regularly reviewed to ensure that all the necessary topics are covered and in accordance with the aims set out in our policies. We aim to have a 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Day' once a term, where students are offered the chance to take part in activities which can help them form a bank of stress relieving techniques and activities that promote mindfulness. This will be organised by the MHWT.

### **Support at the Centre and in the local community**

Upon induction all pupils are made aware that we want them to feel safe and supported in our environment. They are introduced to all staff, including the Headteacher to ensure that they are comfortable and know who is available for them to get support from if needed.

Other ways in which support is offered at the Centre are:

- Posters and Leaflets being on display around the Centre.
- We have a designated room for students who need a time out to go to, there is information on promoting mental health in here also.
- Through events and activities planned by MHWT.
- Staff having a good knowledge of support that pupils can access and being able to signpost.

Blackpool has a high rate of Mental-Ill Health and so has many outside agencies which offer support for young people. The contact information for these services can be found on the Safeguarding notice board in the office. These services are:

- CAMHS
- Youththerapy
- Blackpool Young Carers
- Supporting Minds
- Minds Matter
- Single Point of Access (SPA)
- SMART
- CASHER
- The Hub

Information on all these services is readily available to staff and students. Teachers are encouraged to use group discussions, group work and mindfulness activities within their lessons, this could be a starter, part of the main session or through delivery of PSHE.

### **Signposting**

As part of our duty of care to our pupils we ensure that all staff are aware of services in which they can signpost students to, or which members of staff that would be best placed to help signpost to the correct services. All staff will be made aware of where this information can be found.

### **Identifying needs and warning signs of mental-ill health**

All School Staff will be trained to recognise the warning signs of mental health problems. This ensures that they are best place to support pupils should they need it. These signs should be communicated to one of the DSL's straight away and should not be ignored, no matter how trivial.

### **Behavioural and physical changes**

- Physical signs of harm/self-harm.
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking about Self Harm or Suicide.
- Drug and Alcohol abuse.
- Disclosing feelings of helplessness or failure.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Unsuitable attire for the time of year/Change in types of clothing worn.
- Negative patterns of behaviour.

### **Other issues to be taken into consideration**

- Attendance and absenteeism- Change in pattern of attendance.
- Punctuality and lateness- Change in pattern.
- Changes in educational achievement

- Change in attitude towards education
- Disclosing issues with friends or family relationships

Staff should also be sensitive to other factors which may impact the mental well-being of pupils such as bereavement and loss, family breakdowns, health issues (either their own or family/close friends).

### **Managing Disclosures**

Any disclosures made to School staff, by a pupil/about a pupil will be treated with respect and a non-judgemental approach. They will be met with support and in a calm manner.

All disclosures must be recorded through the online Safeguarding Concern Form, in line with Centre safeguarding policy. Any disclosure will be recorded confidentially and only shared with appropriate members of staff and appropriate authorities in order to ensure the well-being of the young person.

The Tower Learning Centre Independent School disclosure record must contain:

- The date the disclosure was made
- The name of the staff member the disclosure was made to.
- The nature of the disclosure and any important facts from the conversation
- Agreed next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

Pupils should be made aware that staff have a duty of care and cannot keep 'secrets'. If these concerns need to be passed on, whether it be inside the Centre, to parents/Guardians or an outside agency, pupils must be made aware of the following four things:

- Who the information has to be disclosed to.
- What exactly is going to be disclosed.
- Why the information must be passed on.
- When the information will be passed on.

If gaining the pupils consent first is not possible or they refuse to give it, if the young person is in immediate danger or it may put others at risk then this information must be passed on to the appropriate people straight away. Protecting the pupil(s) is the number one priority, therefore we would share any disclosures should we judge to be high risk.

### **Working with Parents/Carers/Agencies**

At Tower Learning Centre Independent School we aim to support the whole child, this includes supporting parents and carers by keeping them informed and offering our support. To support parents and carers we will:

- Keep parents and carers informed about any mental health training our staff participate in. This can be given via the half term newsletter.
- Inform them of the topics covered by PSHE in order to support Mental Wellbeing.
- Help signpost them if they have any concerns regarding their child's mental wellbeing.
- Make our policies easily accessible to them.
- Have leaflets on offer for parents to take regarding mental health services.

Agencies that we may work with:

- LAC Nurse
- CAMHS
- Family Support Workers
- Care Agencies
- Social Workers
- Counselling services
- Other Mental Health Agencies

## **Training**

It is mandatory for staff at Tower Learning Centre Independent School to attend Mental Health training days that they are put on. We will ensure that there is a Mental Health First Aider on site at all times. A record of courses/online courses completed by staff will be kept on record and will form part of our safeguarding training.

Staff will be offered training should a pupil with specific Mental-III Health attends the Centre.

## **Policy Review**

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure information remains up to date and relevant. This will also be reviewed in accordance to Safeguarding Policy changes.

# **Part 2. Employees**

## **Policy Aims**

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy outlines our provisions to prevent and address mental health issues among our employees.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Mental illness may be detrimental to a person, as it impacts happiness, productivity and collaboration. Mental health issues may affect companies, in the form of:

- Turnover
- Absenteeism
- Poor employee performance
- Employee substance abuse
- Work-related accidents
- Workplace violence or harassment

The mental health and wellbeing of qualified teachers can influence the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils, as well as educational outcomes. However, the teaching profession is commonly reported to be one of the most stressful occupations. In the UK, people working in the education sector report statistically significantly higher levels of work-related stress and lower wellbeing than the average across all industries.

With this policy, we aim to support our employees and create a healthy and happy workplace. We want everyone to feel appreciated and be treated fairly.

The mental health and wellbeing of qualified primary and secondary school teachers can influence the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils, as well as educational outcomes. However, the teaching profession is commonly reported to be one of the most stressful occupations. In the UK, people working in the education sector report statistically significantly higher levels of work-related stress and lower wellbeing than the average across all industries.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all our employees. The Director and the Senior Leadership Team is primarily responsible for communicating this policy and overseeing its implementation.

Our policy will consult employees, Director and Senior Leadership Team and mental health professionals to annually review our policy.

## **Policy elements**

### **What are mental health issues?**

Mental health issues in the workplace are any conditions that affect employees' state of mind. These conditions may include mild depression, stress and severe anxiety which may result in burnout and nervous breakdowns. Substance abuse may also perpetuate mental health issues.

Mental health problems manifest in different ways. Some employees may suffer with no physical side effects, while others may experience physical symptoms (e.g. increased blood pressure, lethargy, changes in eating habits.)

### **Factors that cause mental health issues**

Employees may experience mental health issues for various reasons that an employer cannot control (e.g. hereditary, family conflicts, general health.) But, there are also work-related reasons for mental health problems, including:

- Job insecurity.
- Excessive pressure.
- Work-life imbalance.
- Lack of encouragement, resources and support from colleagues, Managers or Director.
- Unsatisfactory job or workload, including lack of understanding of role and responsibilities within the Company.
- Unpleasant relationships with colleagues, Director, Senior Leadership Team or pupils.



To every extent possible, our company's Director and Senior Leadership Team aim to recognize and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

## **Company Actions**

We aim to:

- Treat mental illness seriously.
- Identify issues proactively and resolve them.
- Support employees who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces in collaboration with Director, Senior Leadership Team, employees and health experts.

## **Internal Policies**

As a way to prevent employee distress, we have policies for:

- Equal Opportunities and Diversity (Anti-discrimination)
- Whistle Blowing Policy (Anti-retaliation)
- Harassment and Bullying
- Safeguarding (employees and pupils)
- Flexible Working
- Open Communication Systems (Manager Support Meetings, Appraisals, Grievances, etc.)
- Shared Parental Leave
- Absence (Disability, sickness, bereavement or other short-term leave)

These can be found in the Staff Handbook

This list isn't exhaustive. All of these policies aim to preserve a harmonious workplace where employees can enjoy their work and balance their jobs with their personal lives. The Director and Senior Leadership Team must ensure the company adheres to these policies.

We have established a Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Team who can sign-post employees to the relevant and appropriate external services.

## **Professional services**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Team will sign-post to external services as necessary. We intend to, at some point in the future, engage certain services directly.

## **Mental health awareness**

We want to raise mental health awareness and combat the stigmas associated with them. To do this, we will:

- **Host/schedule workshops.** We will schedule workshops (in house and externally) for managers and employees explaining important elements of mental health.
- **Keep employees informed.** We will organise an event to present updates to this policy whenever it's modified. HR will also present this policy as part of Safer Recruitment.
- **Compile helpful resources.** We will establish resources about mental health. These resources will exist in a shared folder (SharePoint).

### **Job-related issues**

Issues related to work, compensation, job insecurity and work-life balance can heavily burden our employees. We encourage our employees to speak to the Director or Senior Leadership Team about how to handle their individual situations better. The Senior Leadership Team are obliged to listen to their employees and should search for a mutually satisfying solution together.

### **Director and Senior Leadership Team's responsibilities**

The Director and Senior Leadership Team should also proactively identify mental health issues among their employees. If they perceive that an employee is in a state of emotional or psychological distress, they should reach out to them.

Here are some tips on how the Director or Senior Leadership Team can address an employee who suffers from mental health issues in common situations:

- If an employee has work-related problems, come up with a solution.
- If an employee has issues collaborating with colleagues, meet with concerned employees and serve as mediators. If the problem is severe (e.g. violence, harassment, victimization), contact HR.
- If an employee's problems are personal or the employee refuses to discuss them, then sign-post to a relevant external service.

### **Open communication and support**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Team is responsible for sending out surveys to gather information about mental health in the workplace. Surveys must be anonymous.

We want to actively support employees as a Centre who are or at risk of facing mental health issues through support sessions employees can access to discuss their situations and seek further help and support.

Often, it's easier to reach out to a colleague instead of the Director, Senior Leadership Team or HR. We encourage co-workers to support one another when needed.

### **Employee recognition and development**

The Centre will reward and recognise staff, both formally and informally, in line with its values, particularly in relation to:

- the importance of regular informal recognition of people's contribution and achievements by their line manager.
- the use of the appraisal and 1 to 1 meetings to discuss performance, health, well-being and work life balance, to recognise achievements and to identify training and development needs
- recognising individuals, teams and managers nominated by their peers and/or service users through the monthly Awards
- recognition of individual achievements of people undergoing education, training and development
- celebrations for people achieving long service milestones of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years and people choosing to retire.

### **Compliance with the law**

The law protects employees who suffer from medical conditions (e.g. clinical depression) or mental disorders (e.g. schizophrenia.) Consistent with our non-discrimination practices, we will treat these employees fairly and we won't oblige anyone to disclose their condition or other medical information. Instead, we will attempt to support employees who come to us with mental health issues and establish strategies that apply to everyone.

### **Evaluating outcomes**

This policy's provision is not restrictive. We will test its elements to find out what works and what doesn't. The Director and Senior Leadership Team should continuously research mental health topics and evaluate the results of our policy with managers' help.

To develop, revise and establish this policy, we need everyone's help. We can all work to define mental health issues, their causes and seek or offer help when needed. We encourage employees to share their ideas and concerns.

**Date for Next Review: September 2021**