

**NORTHCOTT SCHOOL**

Mental Health and Well Being Policy

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**Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy**

**Rationale**

At Northcott School, our pupils have additional SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) needs which can require specific, individualised support to promote good mental health and wellbeing. We believe in a whole school approach for supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for pupils, their families, our staff and governors.

Recent worldwide events, such as the pandemic of covid 19, have disrupted learning for many making it even more important to support our own mental health needs. An understanding and awareness of how we support others with their physical health and mental health is essential.

We believe that our student voice is an integral part of our school and college, we value our pupils’ opinions to influence decisions and promote self-care for good mental health and wellbeing. Positive mental health is how our emotional, physiological and social wellbeing affects our responses to everyday life.

The Thrive Approach is part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing as this helps pupils to be in the best emotional state in order to access their learning. We support this for academic and non-academic learning opportunities.

**Policy Statement**

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every pupil and member of staff. We support this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches for vulnerable and SEND pupils. We also have universal, whole school and targeted support for members of staff.

This policy has been written following our accreditation of the Mark Of Excellence with HeadStart, Hull. Our policy includes information relating to the ever-changing needs of our pupils and staff. Our pupils thrive and respond well to routine and can sometimes struggle with change or unpredictability. It is therefore essential that our aims to support the individual, for pupils, staff and parent/carers, are clearly communicated to support their mental health and wellbeing.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching staff, visitors and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Relational Policy and other school policies and documents:

* Keeping Children Safe in Education
* Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
* Anti-Bullying Policy
* PSHE Policy
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Northcott School Home School Agreement

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy refers to DfE guidance and external agency documents that should be read alongside this policy. These include

# Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges 2021

* Anna Freud 5 steps Framework to wellbeing
* Thrive Hull Directory
* NHS Mental Health Support Teams

**Aims and objectives**

* Promote good, positive mental health support for pupils, their families, our staff and governors and visitors
* Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues through our PSHE curriculum and specific mental health days in school
* Alert staff and pupils to early warning signs for mental ill health in pupils and adults by following our PSHE curriculum and through staff training
* Provide support to staff working with young people who have mental ill health
* Provide support to pupils, parents/carers and staff who are affected by mental ill health, signposting when necessary

**Roles and responsibilities**

Jo Richardson is our Lead Practitioner for Pastoral Progress and a member of our Senior Leadership Team and has overall responsibility to ensure our pupils well-being and mental health needs are met. Claire Roberts is our Lead Practitioner for Staff CPD and has overall responsibility to ensure our staff well-being and mental health needs are met.

We have a trained Senior Mental Health Lead, Karen Sharpe, in line with the DfE requirement that all education settings have this in place by 2025. This role involves coordinating and assessing the provision for mental health and well-being across the school on a day-to-day basis.

The school is supported to carry out the mental health and well-being work that we do by the governing body. Anne Fowlie regularly visits school to meet and support the pastoral team.

All staff have the responsibility to ensure that they are self-aware to look after their own mental health needs and of those that they work with. All staff working with pupils have a responsibility to raise concerns regarding a pupil’s well-being and mental health to the pastoral team. See appendix 1 for the pastoral team roles and responsibilities.

**Whole School monitoring and evaluation**

We use the Anna Freud 5 Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework to support our planning and development supporting pupil and staff wellbeing.

This includes planning for

* Leading Change
* Working Together
* Understanding Need
* Promoting Wellbeing
* Supporting Staff

This framework is reviewed and updated termly, to identify strengths, achievements and next steps.

**Section A: Wellbeing mental health support for pupils**

**Whole school support**

**Teaching & Learning**

At Northcott we educate our pupils on mental health and wellbeing using the JIGSAW PSHE programme across the whole school. This programme is adapted in order to meet the needs of our pupils accordingly. We have selected JIGSAW as it is a mindful approach to teaching PSHE that can be made accessible at an age appropriate manner. This ensures that our pupils learn about this subject and related issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Our school takes part in mental health days throughout the year raising awareness such as Children’s Mental Health Week, Hello Yellow and neurodiversity events through assemblies, activities and fundraising. We feel that it is an important part of our pupil’s development to understand the world around them.

As a school, we invest heavily on ensuring we have a high number of adults to support ourpupil’s needs. Each class has teaching assistants who move around with the class to their lessons. We focus heavily on the importance of relationships so that these adults can become trusted to support and identify wellbeing needs. We also have a lunchtime drop-in option for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) support for pupils to request to attend a session if they have a worry or would like to talk to an adult out of their class.

**The Thrive Approach**

The Thrive approach is a dynamic, developmental, trauma-sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social developmental needs of all children and young people. It is informed by recent developments in neuroscience and is underpinned by a theoretical base in child development theory, attachment theory and research into creative play. All staff are trained in trauma informed care using PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) and VRF questioning.

The Thrive model helps us to understand healthy child development and enables us to see where children and young people may have missed key areas of development due to trauma in their lives, these strands of development are:

* Being (0-6 months)
* Doing (6-18 months)
* Thinking (18 months – 3 years)
* Power and identity (3-7 years)
* Skills and structure (7-11 years)
* Interdependence (11-25 years)

Thrive provides a powerful way of responding to children with mental ill health as it actively develops the resilience and wellbeing of all children. This equips them with the skills to cope more effectively with challenges they face rather than becoming overwhelmed. It also helps pupils who may lack stress regulation systems and offers them a practical way of working through situations. This can over time, leave them with a stronger regulation system that they can access themselves without adult intervention.

**Resources**

At Northcott we have invested in providing safe spaces to promote physical containment that a pupil can use when dysregulated or to prevent them becoming distressed. Our pupils present with a variety of needs so we offer a wide range to support these. We currently have:

* Designated space for ELSA sessions with individual rooms. This space is accessible at any point if needed for unplanned well-being needs.
* Designated Thrive space with a developing sensory room and space for Thrive interventions. This space is accessible at any point if needed unplanned wellbeing.
* Access to animal therapy when needed – therapy dog, axolotl and guinea pigs.
* Outdoor areas used for mental health and wellbeing including sensory garden.
* Plans to develop a forest school outdoor area are planned with MHST.
* An immersive sensory room that is used to support regulation.
* Quiet safe spaces allocated around the school.

**Internal support**

**Identification for support of pupils**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or member of staff should speak to the pastoral team. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral is made for well-being support, the member of staff will complete a referral on Behaviour Watch.

Staff can refer pupils for internal support following observations, incidents in school or following issues that may occur from relationship difficulties or bereavement support.

**Planning and Assessment**

We have three programmes of internal mental health and wellbeing support for pupils – Reparative Thrive, ELSA and long term ongoing wellbeing support. If pupils require a more specialised intervention, external referrals are made as required. (See appendix 3 for external agencies we work with)

**Reparative Thrive**

We have three Thrive Licensed Practitioners in school across the Childhood and Adolescence phase of development. Pupils initially have a Thrive Assessment to assess their social and emotional development stage. If a pupil is screened at the Thinking Stage of development or above, then they will access an ELSA intervention possibly alongside reparative Thrive. An ELSA assessment will take place to monitor the progress throughout the series of sessions. If the pupil is below the Thinking Stage, they will be supported on the Thrive framework.

Reparative Thrive is used when a child has interruptions in their development that is causing them to become dysregulated regularly. A pupil will have a Thrive profile carried out and an action plan created for school and for home. This action plan will be updated as decided by the Licensed Practitioner.

**ELSA**

We have four qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) in school. Pupils are referred by class staff and the type of support offered to a pupil is bespoke, supporting their individual needs.

All sessions are subject to change – we may need to cover a more immediate type of support such as bereavement. Pupils can attend for a short or longer time period of support dependant on need. We use an assessment tracker to evaluate the impact of the support offered. This is completed by pupils and staff at the beginning and end of the intervention and also at planned checkpoints every term.

**Hierarchy of ELSA support**

Some internal support has a more immediate need depending on the circumstances. We use the following priority to offer support.

Priority

1. safeguarding
2. LAC pupils
3. Recent bereavement

Secondary

1. Anger
2. Self esteem
3. Emotional support
4. Previous, longer term bereavement

**Long term wellbeing support**

For some pupils we have to create a bespoke package using all interventions to hand and this may take longer to deliver depending on the need of the child. We offer ongoing wellbeing support which is monitored and progress tracked to find the best way forward for the child. This may also involve referral to external agencies.

**External Support**

Our school have various groups that support the emerging mental health needs of our pupils.

When required, some of our pupils attend support with external agencies e.g. MIND, Time

To Listen, MESMAC and Early Help. They work with pupils supporting mental health and

wellbeing concerning their own physical development and puberty, healthy relationships and

domestic violence.

The needs of the child will dictate which support is required. Parents will be informed and

their views and consent sought should the school refer to one of the above agencies.

**Mental Health Support Teams**

We work with by Mental Health Support Teams (MHST). Referrals are made by tutors by talking to the pastoral team and the MHST Co-ordinator. Pupils work 1:1 or as part of the SMASH Grows project which is a small group of pupils learning about self-esteem and healthy relationships. Support is usually offered for half a term when working with pupils. ‘Consult to Refer’ meetings take place every half term to discuss new referrals and review the existing support being offered.

**Hull Thrive**

The Thrive directory of services has been developed by the key partners in Hull that provide support for children, young people and family’s emotional health and wellbeing.

Our staff work closely with Thrive Hull provided by Hull City Council. This local service supports us by helping children, young people and families. We have termly meetings with our Early Help Officer (Education) to receive updates relating to staff training and support services. Information is then circulated and shared with parents.

**MESMAC**

Weekly appointments on site provide 1:1 bespoke sessions to support pupils with sexual health understanding and relationship support.

**Counselling Therapy**

Identified pupils attend 1:1 various confidential talking and play based therapies.

**Pupil Voice**

Through PSHE lessons and mental health and wellbeing days in school, our pupils learn about the important of looking after their own health and that of others. Our school has three groups that are run by pupils and student voice that helps support their needs.

**School Council**

The group meet every two weeks to discuss ideas and improvement suggestions to support their wellbeing needs in school. Students wear a blue badge for identification. The School Council is supported by Kim Garrett.

**Wellbeing Ambassadors**

These are pupils who have been trained by HEY Mind. The group will plan and deliver mindful and wellbeing activities at lunchtime or break time, starting January 2024. The Wellbeing Ambassador Co-ordinator is Karen Sharpe.

**Peer Mentors**

The main focus for these pupils is to support their peers in school and to escalate any unresolved issues to staff. The Peer mentors wear a blue badge for identification. The group meet every month. Peer Mentors are supported by Karen Sharpe.

**ELSA lunchtime drop ins**

Pupils in school can self-refer for an ELSA sessions to see Lisa Allan, Laura Edwards or Karen Sharpe for a drop in lunchtime session. This is done by pupils speaking to class staff, who then email or phone ELSA staff to book an appointment.

**Section B Support for Staff in School**

**Whole school**

Claire Roberts is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and is available for all staff wellbeing.

The Senior Leadership Team and pastoral staff are available for staff to speak to confidentially relating to matters of mental health and wellbeing.

**Mental health and wellbeing support**

All staff in school have access to a Staff Wellbeing Room. This is room in a quiet part of the school and offers a safe space where an adult can take time on their own or with another member of staff. This is especially important if an incident has occurred and a member of staff needs time to reflect and regroup.

Our school has a volunteer trainee counsellor available for all staff to see. These sessions are completely confidential. Staff can see the counsellor once a week by prior arrangement. Staff can speak to Karen Sharpe if they would like to book an appointment.

We have several Mental Health First Aid trained staff to support colleagues.

Some members of staff have accredited qualifications in NCFE Mental Health Awareness Level 1 in order to support their own mental health and wellbeing needs and those of others. This training was delivered by Hull City Council Adult Education.

**Resources**

* Designated staff wellbeing room
* Volunteer counsellor available
* Various members of staff available to talk to for support

**Internal support**

**Wellness Action Plan**

Some staff have a Wellness Action Plan (WAP). These are completely confidential between the Senior Leader and the member of staff. Regular check in meetings are offered to ensure support is always available when needed.

If staff have been absent from school for a long or short term, a phased return may be offered to support mental health and wellbeing of the member of staff. This allows them to be comfortable and confident in performing their role in school on their full time return.

**Menopause support**

Our school understands that menopause is part of every woman’s life. We treat all individuals with respect and dignity during this time. We aim to educate and inform all staff to understand potential symptoms and the types of support available for women who are experiencing menopause. Our aim is to provide individual support when needed, as there is not a ‘one size fits all’ support and we hope to avoid classroom conditions that may make symptoms any worse. Staff can speak to their line manager if they feel comfortable, or any other member of SLT if they need support. Confidentiality will always be respected.

We want to encourage a culture where women have the opportunity to feel comfortable in discussing their experiences and to be offered support as and when required. This could include support by:

* Ensuring ventilation makes the room comfortable to work in
* Discussion between staff to turn down room heating to support others
* Blinds on windows to control the temperature and shield from the sun
* Staff wellbeing room available for use
* Short time out/cover from the classroom/timetable to allow for hygiene breaks
* Permission for leave of absence for menopause related medical appointments if they cannot be organised out of school time

Our school is working with Menopause’Ull, a local charity, to set up a monthly drop in session to support issues relating to menopause. This is available to all staff. We plan offer peer support, information and advice on menopause. The sessions will be informal and held on site after school one evening per term.

**Training for staff**

Staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues. The training takes place on designated training days or as part of staff meetings and disaggregated time. Some staff attend more in-depth training which is essential for their role in supporting pupils and staff. The training is sometimes delivered by school staff, and sometimes from outside agencies. Staff training is planned and informed using available school data to identify area of need.

**External Support**

**Time to Listen**

Staff can be referred to Time to Listen for counselling support

**Supervision**

Staff who deal with safeguarding issues attend supervision each term to allow for reflection and support.

**Section C Working with Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from school about supporting their children’s emotional and mental health. Our Parent Liaison Officer, Connie Lambert, can signpost parents and carers to various different organisations when needed.

Support action plans are created and implemented to allow signposting and support of the identified needs of our pupils. This is done in conjunction with parents and also with Lisa Allan (Safeguarding Officer), Natasha Ryan (our Education Welfare Officer) for attendance support and Josh Harrison (our Pastoral Support and Behaviour Lead) for behaviour support needs.

**Support for Parents/ Carers**

* Staff are available at the beginning and end of the school day for parents to raise any concerns relating to their child’s wellbeing and mental health needs
* Parents are welcome to contact our Parent Liaison Officer Connie Lambert, for help and advice relating their own or their child’s needs
* Signpost parents to other support agencies to help support them or their child’s mental health and wellbeing - see appendix 3
* Share ideas about how parents can support positive wellbeing and mental health in their children during our parent and carer coffee mornings
* Training for parents and carers is offered in the form of workshops by Mental Health Support Teams during the year. These workshops include support with ‘anxiety’, ‘understanding communication in children with additional needs’ and ‘exploring behaviour and emotions’
* Various coffee mornings are held through the year. These include welcoming new parents, visits from School Nursing Team, safer internet day information, PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education.

**Appendix 1 Lead Members of Staff - Roles and Responsibilities**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

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| Designated Safeguarding Lead | **Julie Wickenden** |
| Deputy Safeguarding | **Katherine Johnson** |
| Safeguarding Officer & ELSA | **Lisa Allan** |
| Lead Practitioner for Pastoral Progress | **Jo Richardson** |
| Parent Liaison Officer | **Connie Lambert** |
| Education Welfare Officer | **Natasha Ryan** |
| PSHE Lead | **Rich Nichols** |
| Pastoral Support/ Thrive Childhood Practitioner | **Josh Harrison** |
| ELSA & Wellbeing Lead | **Karen Sharpe** |
| ELSA/Thrive Adolescent Practitioner | **Laura Edwards** |
| ELSA & Wellbeing Support | **Ryan Laybourne** |

**Appendix 2 Warning Signs for potential mental ill health**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which may indicate that 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 communicate their concerns to the pastoral team.

Possible warning signs include:

▪ Evident changes in behaviour

▪ 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

▪ Reduced concentration

▪ Lowering of academic achievement

▪ Talking, joking or researching 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

▪ An increase in lateness to or absence from school

▪ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

▪ Spending more time at the bathroom

▪ Discontinued hobbies or interests

▪ Failure to take care of personal appearance

▪ Seemingly overly-cheerful after a bout of depression

**Managing disclosures**

Staff will follow our normal safeguarding policy procedures should a pupil or adult make a disclosure. If a pupil makes a disclosure relating to their mental health and wellbeing, staff will speak the ELSA team in the first instance. Support will be given in a calm and supportive manner whilst staff are being non-judgemental. An ELSA referral can be made for support in school. Pupils may be referred to Mental Health Support Teams or an external referral may be made e.g. to CAMHS.

When a disclosure is made, staff will explain to pupils that although we support confidentiality, there may be an instance when we have to share information with other staff, parents or external agencies. Pupils will always be told when information will be shared relating to their mental health and wellbeing.

**Appendix 3 External agencies providing parent/carer support**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisation** | **Contact details** | **Types of support** |
| **The Samaritans** | Call free on 116 123 (UK)  Email: jo@samaritans.org | Confidential support service and are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. |
| **Hull Thrive** | https://www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk/parents-carers | Emotional wellbeing support for parents, children and young people |
| **SEED** | <https://seed.charity>  **Contact us via our contact form or email us at:** [hello@seed.charity](mailto:hello@seed.charity)  **Advice Line:**(01482) 718130 | Eating Disorders Support Services |
| **Young Minds** | Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544 www.youngminds.org.uk | Free, confidential online and telephone support providing information and support |
| **How are you feeling?** | https://www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk/ | This site aims to be the trusted source for Young People, Parents and Carers to find advice and support to help improve emotional health and well-being. |
| **Let’s Talk** | Telephone 01482 247111  text TALK to 61825 | The Let’s Talk depression and anxiety service can support you with your mental health. The service is made up of different organisations that have come together to support people in Hull with mental health conditions. They offer a range of services that support a wide range of issues that may affect you mental health. |
| **Cornerhouse** | Cornerhouse, Hull  [admin@wearecornerhouse.org](mailto:admin@wearecornerhouse.org)  Tel 01482 327044 | Supporting sexual health and relationships for young people |
| **GP** | Contact your GP at your local Surgery | Speak to your GP if you are  worried about your child’s mental health |
| **Papyrus** | Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org | Support for suicidal thoughts and feelings |
| **NHS Choices** | http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress anxiety-depression/pages/mental health-helplines.aspx | Whether you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, the helplines listed can offer expert advice |

**Appendix 4 Further information about common mental health issues**

**Self-injury**

Self-injury describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

**Depression**

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

**Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias**

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person’s ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

**Obsessions and compulsions**

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds, which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don’t turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive, compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

**Suicidal feelings**

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

**Eating problems**

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.