



MENTAL HEALTH POLICY (Including Suicide-Safer Policy)

Reviewing Member of Staff: Mr Ben Freeman

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Committee: Safeguarding, Risk, Finance, Estates & General Purposes

1. MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Policy Statement

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 her or his community.

(World Health Organization)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including support staff and governors. The Policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in young people
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/ carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mr Ben Freeman - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Mental Health Lead
- Miss Tracey Marcham & Mrs Clare Webb - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Mrs Sophie Thorner - Deputy DSL and Student Wellbeing Lead
- Mrs Debbie Walters - Lead Student Counsellor
- All Heads of Year Teams
- Mrs Sarah Nolan - Head of Learning Support / SENDCO
- Miss Sarah Thomas - Head of PSHRE
- Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST)
- Mrs Sue Jennings - Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Mrs Dee Bryson - Attendance Officer & Reintegration Support Co-ordinator

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student must complete a record on CPOMS in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal Safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the school's safeguarding team through CPOMS.

If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies must be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the DSL.

Teaching about Mental Health

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 PSHRE 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.

We will ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community through displays and regular assemblies.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs must communicate their concerns with a member of the Safeguarding team.

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 - 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

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff will listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures must be recorded in a record on CPOMS, which will be held on the student's confidential file.

Confidentiality

We must be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we deem it necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, due to a safeguarding concern, we will discuss with the student:

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

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website on the Wellbeing page
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children

Training

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 to developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 Mrs Lungley, our CPD Co-ordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

2. SUICIDE-SAFER POLICY

Prince Henry's High School has adopted the key guiding principles of the Suicide-Safer Policy for schools and colleges developed by Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide (www.papyrus-uk.org) and endorsed by Worcestershire Children First. Papyrus is the UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people.

Statement of purpose

- a) The Prince Henry's High School community is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.
- b) We want to make sure that students at our school are as suicide-safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, students and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a Suicide-Safer school.

Our beliefs about suicide and contributory factors

This school acknowledges that:

- a) **Suicidal thoughts are common**
We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common among young people.
- b) **Suicide is complex**
We believe that every suicide is a tragedy. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.
- c) **Stigma inhibits learning - stigma can kill**
We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. This school is dedicated to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos.
- d) **Suicide is everyone's business**
As a school community, we recognise that students may seek out someone who they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to facilitate the reporting of any risks or concerns.
- e) **Safety is very important**

We want to support our students, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers, external agencies and other professionals where this may enhance suicide-safety.

f) Suicide is a difficult thing to talk about

We know that a student who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will provide trained adults who are able to identify when a student may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

g) Talking about suicide does not create or increase risk

h) Those with personal experience have a unique role to play in the development and refinement of this Suicide-Safer Policy

We will endeavour to involve anyone from our community who has personal experience of suicide, either having struggled themselves or supported someone with thoughts of suicide.

How we help ensure an active person-centred suicide prevention and intervention policy

- a) Our school has a named individual who is responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of this policy.
- b) Our school has an established safeguarding team that works closely with the school Mental Health Team (qualified and experienced school counsellors and WEST) who fulfil the functions of a Suicide Intervention Team. The safeguarding team will keep confidential records of students at risk of suicide to ensure some continuity of care within the intervention model.
- c) We will educate all students through the school's PSHRE programme so that they are able to access appropriate mental health support. We will ensure that all students are aware of the mental health support available in school and the processes in place to access this support for themselves and others.
- d) We will monitor the physical safety of our environment including restricting access to places which facilitate jumping and securely storing harmful substances.
- e) Confidentiality - In order to protect life whenever we have serious concerns for the welfare of a student we will break confidentiality and share information with the necessary services, including emergency services.
- f) We recognise that students may experience periods of poor mental health while attending our school. We will endeavour to put in place mechanisms which allow staff that have regular interaction with the student to be able to flag or review any concerns about individual students including suspected suicidal thoughts. This flagging will be conducted through CPOMS. Students that are flagged in this way will be reviewed regularly and routinely by nominated staff so that patterns of concerning behaviour can be spotted and the necessary steps can be put in place to keep them safe, including meeting them face to face.
- g) When we identify a student at risk of suicide and the school engages external services, eg CAMHS, the school will fully engage with those services.
- h) In the event of a suicide, the school will work with a range of external services to support the wider student and staff community.

3. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and the governors' Safeguarding, Risk, Finance, Estates and General Purposes Committee.