



# Student Mental Health Policy

Sept 2023-24

Passmores Academy

Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community



## **Policy statement**

At Passmores Academy we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students. Our culture is supportive, caring and respectful. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard. At our school we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our school, positive mental health is everyone's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

## **Policy Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teaching staff, governors, and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies.

## **Policy Aims**

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our students and staff.

At our school we will:

- Help students to understand their emotions and experiences better
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help students to form and maintain relationships
- Encourage students to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem
- Help students to develop resilience and coping strategies

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

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect
- Promoting our students' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any students that need it
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students

### **Key Staff Members**

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- The Safeguarding Team:
- Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL)
- Pastoral Staff: Heads of Houses and Deputy Heads of Houses
- STEP Team
- SEND: SENCO, Assistant SENCO, and the SEND Lead Team
- Mental Health First aiders
- The HR Team

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Safeguarding Team. A concern should be shared in writing, on 'My Concern.'

In addition, there is a group of staff called the 'Mental Health Team' who meet half termly to continue to develop Mental Health work at Passmores. This group consists of the DMHL, DHOH with pastoral responsibility for Mental Health, Leader of the Staff Wellbeing Team, Organiser of the Mental Health Ambassadors, Head of I-Future, Head of the STEP team, and the single point of contact for Mental Health.

If a child presents as a medical emergency, then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

## **Teaching About Mental Health**

Our tutor time, I-Future and cultural appreciation days curricula are developed to give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training.

We will regularly review our curriculum content to ensure that they are meeting the aims outlined in this policy.

## **Support at School and in the Local Community**

**We have a range of support available in school for any student struggling, as listed below:**

- Designated Mental Health Lead support
- Tutor support
- Head of House/Deputy Head of House support
- Peer Dialogue in tutor time
- Mentoring
- Counselling – face to face
- MIND
- Referrals to online counselling
- Future Ready programme
- STEP team support
- Essex Young Carers
- Self Esteem Workshops
- Goodman Project
- School Nurse
- Power Project
- Kids Inspire
- Craft therapy

- Key Mental Health support cards

**There are also a lot of support networks available for students in the local community. This includes places such as:**

- EWMHS
- YCT
- Family Solutions
- Social Care
- Healthy Minds
- Mind

## **Identifying needs and warning signs**

All our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students who need it, when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns using 'My Concern.'

**Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:**

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol use
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year e.g., a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns e.g., disruption

**Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues including:**

- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education
- Family and relationship problems

## **Managing Disclosures**

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner. All disclosures will be recorded on 'My Concern.'

## **Whole School Approach**

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers, and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

We aim to support parents and carers as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents and carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school
- Ensure that parents and carers are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child
- Give parents and carers guidance about how they can support their child/children's positive mental health through the Key Mental Health service cards which are issued to the students.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents and carers.

## **Training**

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health, so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.

The Local Governing policy approved this policy on XXXXXXXXXXXX