

Engaging Potential - Mental Health Policy

Policy Statement

We are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard. We encourage all members of our school community to see the connection between good physical and good mental health.

At Engaging Potential, 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 may need additional emotional support.

Positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers 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 staff and students.

At Engaging Potential, we will always:

- Help students to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and 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 ways of coping with setbacks

At Engaging Potential will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging, connection 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 student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health

Key staff members

All staff members at Engaging Potential have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process and include.

- Designated Safeguarding Officers
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- Learning Support Mentors
- Mental Health First Aiders

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they share this at the daily meeting. If there is a high level of concern, contact with the DSL should be made immediately so relevant procedures can be followed.

Teaching about mental health

Our PSHE curriculum is 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 PSHE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they're meeting the aims outlined in this policy. We'll also implement this into our curriculum at all stages to provide students with strategies to help keep them mentally well. Students

will be encouraged to participate in regular self evaluations to ensure that they are being supported with their mental well-being.

Support at school and in the local community

We have a range of support available in school for any students struggling with their mental wellbeing.

We have a qualified ELSA on site that support our young people when they are struggling with:-

- Listening and Communication Skills
- Recognising Emotions and Managing Feelings
- Self Esteem and resilience
- Understanding and Managing Anger and Anxiety
- Friendships and Social Skills
- Loss and Bereavement & Family break up

There are a number of strategies and interventions that we can use if their PASS assessment indicates there is a need for support to address their:

- Feelings about School
- Perceived Learning Capability
- Learner Self-Regard
- Preparedness for Learning
- Attitudes to Teachers
- General Work Ethic
- Confidence in Learning
- Attitudes to Attendance
- Response to Curriculum

We are also able to obtain support from the Mental Health support Team (MHST) and various counsellors / psychologist who specialises in working with young people.

There is also a lot of support networks available for children in the local community and nationally . This includes places such as:

- Emotional Health Academy
- Time to Talk
- The Edge
- Sport in Mind
- Kooth
- Shout 85258 24/7 (Text support)
- Young Minds
- Anna Freud Org
- Childline
- Place to be

Signposting

We will ensure that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

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 confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure.

- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps

Identifying needs and warning signs

All of 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 with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

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 abuse.
- 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.

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

Whole school approach

At Engaging Potential, 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.

Working with parents and carers

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

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- The school nurse
- Paediatricians
- CAMHs
- Counselling services
- Therapists
- Specialist support workers

Supporting peers

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case-by-case basis, any peers that may need additional support. These

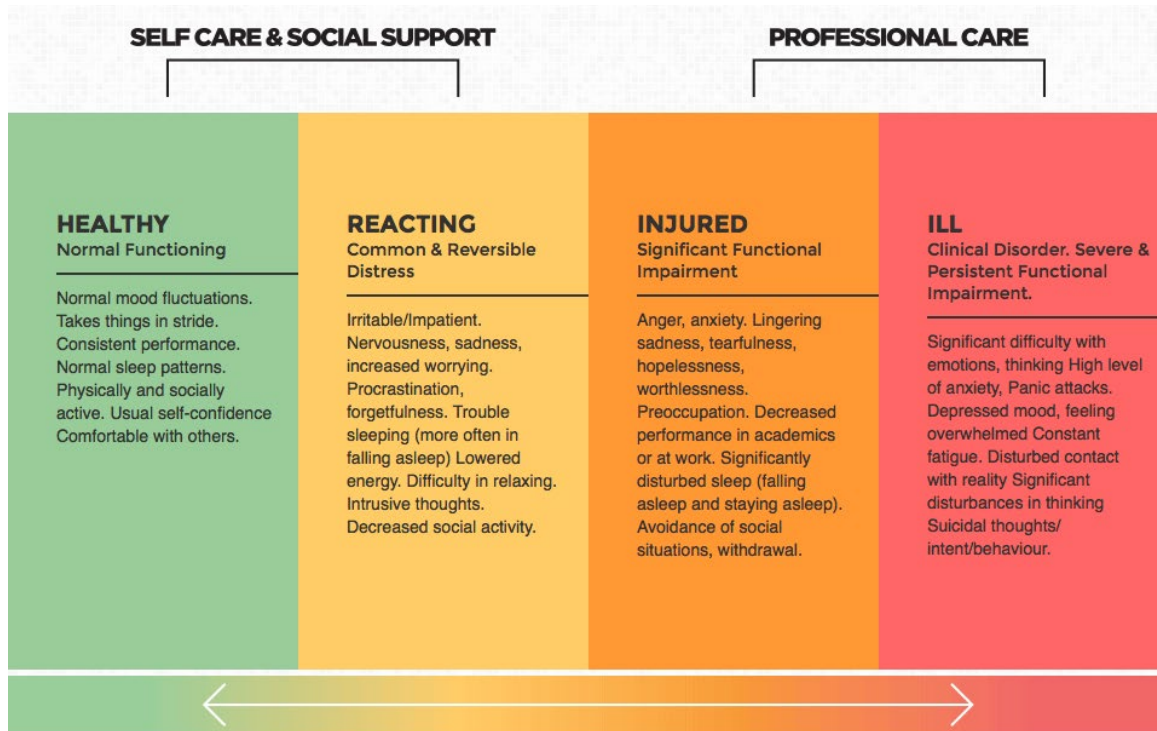
sessions will be guided by the student, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

Training

All staff will receive 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. Training records will be held in staff files. We will also consider additional training opportunities for staff where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils

Appendix 1

Continuum of mental health



Version	Date	Description	Initials
1	25/09/24	New Policy	TW/LH