



GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Name	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Policy Owner	Vice Principal - Safeguarding
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
Statutory	No
Authorisation	Principal

Date Ratified	Review Date
January 2026	January 2028



Version	Date	Author	Changes

Legislative Guidance

Linked Policies
Attendance Policy



Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of well-being 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 Organisation).

At Guilsborough Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. The importance of social, emotional, mental health and well-being (SEMH&W) is recognised within the Academy Improvement plan with the aim of creating a successful SEMH&W strategy, of which the policy is one-step and to ensure that students receive the mental health support they need quickly and efficiently.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, statistics suggest three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. 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 and is intended as guidance for all staff and Trustees.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies/procedures, all of the following policies on review by Trustees must be updated to include reference to supporting the school aims for SEMH&W:

Attendance Policy	Students with SEMH&W often have issues with regard to attendance
Positive Behaviour Policy	Students with SEMH&W may demonstrate challenging behaviour
Safeguarding Policy	SEMH&W and some aspects of Child Protection often have close correlations
Children in Care	The emotional development and resilience of students can often be hindered significantly as a consequence of home life factors.
Curriculum Policy	Subjects, through the SEMH&W promise have a significant role in supporting the positive SEMH&W ethos of the school
Drugs Policy	Students with SEMH&W may be involved in substance misuse
Home Visits	As issues arising from SEMH&W may require home visits
Inclusion Policy	Many students with SEMH&W are at risk of exclusion because of their underlying social, emotional and mental health concerns



Acceptable Use Policy	Social media can play a significant role in students SEMH&W
Relationship and Sex Education Policy	Core delivery of the SEMH&W strategy Education (PSHE)
Supporting Medical Conditions	This is important in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the Inclusion policy where a student has an identified special educational need.
Healthy Eating Policy	Direct line with students and eating disorders

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

Where a referral is required, including Occupational Therapy (OT), Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or other external agencies; this will be led and managed by the key member of staff working with the student and their family. Staff OT referrals or other agency support for mental health and wellbeing will be lead and managed by the Principal and Human resources

Team Members

Whilst all Trustees and staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and staff a core group of staff will play a significant role in the development of the SEMH&W strategy. This will be reviewed by Trustees.

- Gabby Keenes Designated Safeguarding Lead/Vice Principal
- Nicola York Deputy DSL/ Safeguarding Officer
- Kit Woolridge Senior Mental Health Lead/Assistant Principal
- Chris Hancock Deputy DSL/Vice Principal
- Kimberly Lynch Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDSCO)
- Sam Morran Deputy SENDSCO
- Jennifer Malcolm Family Support Worker
- Rhiannon George Lead First Aider / Assistant HOY
- Steve Flanagan Head of Life Skills
- Louise Nixon HR Manager
- Della Rowinski Student Counsellor

Identification of Students with SEMH&W

Using a range of data and information, the school will identify and record students about who we have SEMH&W concerns. MyConcern (safeguarding and child protections software) will be used to record incidents, behaviours and emotions, which can be interpreted as expressions of SEMH&W e.g. self-harm, anxiety, suicidal



thoughts, being withdrawn, challenging behaviour etc. MyConcern along with Provision Map will be used to record diagnosed SEMH&W conditions e.g. eating disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) etc.

This data and information will allow the welfare and pastoral team working in conjunction with the SENDCO to flag students who have significant SEMH&W concerns. This list will be categorised into four:

Individual Care Plans or Risk Assessments

Individual care plan or Risk Assessment for students causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This must be drawn up involving the student, the parents, carers and guardians and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play including support from Key Workers and support strategies recorded on Inclusion Passports

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 Life Skills curriculum, subject curriculum, and through the assembly programme, Form activities and the Guilsborough Way.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort, 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. Signposting will be an important aspect for all four of these elements as well as teaching about the underlying factors of SEMH&W.

We will follow the PSHE & C Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

We invite external agencies into school to deliver assemblies and sessions. These may include the NHS Mental Health Support Team, The Low Down, Service Six.

The school actively arranges events to acknowledge key mental health initiatives such as Young Minds – Hello Yellow Day to mark World Mental Health Day.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents, carers and guardians are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. This will be provided on the School Website here- <https://www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk/wellbeing> and on information boards around the school. We will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum and in other presentations and assemblies.

The ithinkyoushouldknow@guilsborough.northants.sch.uk email address is shared during every assembly along with the safeguarding poster and this is also advertised/included in the tutor presentations linked to 'the Guilsborough way'.



Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate 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 and record on MyConcern

Possible warning signs

Listed below are some possible examples of warning signs of SEMH&W. This list is not comprehensive but give a small insight into some examples of SEMH&W expression.

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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 – e.g. 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
- Suspension from school
- Persistent disruptive behaviours

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. Staff must follow the guidance in the schools' Safeguarding Policy.

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 should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures must be recorded in MyConcern as part of the student's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation



- Agreed next steps/actions

This information must be shared, via MyConcern but as these incidents are often urgent, personal contact is also required to communicate the issue with the DSL Support and advice about next steps will then be agreed.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

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

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent, is appropriate. This will be when students are in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who this will be, as finding the most appropriate support and help is imperative.

Parents, carers and guardians must always be informed regarding SEMH&W, unless this puts the student at further risk (This decision will be taken by the DSL) and students may choose to tell their parents, carers and guardians themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents, carers and guardians. We should always give students the option of us informing parents, carers and guardians for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents, carers and guardians should not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents, Carers and Guardians

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, carers and guardians, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, carers and guardians we should consider the following questions (on a case-by-case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, carers and guardians, the student and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents, carers and guardians to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information (signposting) and give them information to take away where possible, as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared. Sharing sources of further support



aimed specifically at parents, carers and guardians can also be helpful too, e.g. the school website, parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting the academy with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents, carers and guardians often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record on MyConcern.

Working with All Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents, carers and guardians 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 and guardians we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and through the sharing of resources/plans for RSE delivery and curriculum (shared termly)
- Ensure that all parents, carers and guardians are aware of who to talk to, and how to go 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 and guardians
- Share ideas about how parents, carers and guardians can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents, carers and guardians informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Life Skills and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers and friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents, carers and guardians with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse) Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:
- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

SEMH&W Student Leadership

This year we have introduced a new 'Student Parliament' across Key stage 3 and 4. This is in addition to 6th Form Student Senior Leadership Team (SLT) across Key Stage 5. Student Parliament allows the students to have a voice. Each form group will have two representatives for their class, this will be across all years in Key stage 3 and 4. The



6th Form SLT will also play a part in attending the termly parliament meetings. This process shadows the UN parliament style and will have a clear focus/topic each term for the council to discuss aspects of the academy e.g. Mental Health and Wellbeing. It is crucial that the students have a voice and a say in their school experience, feel supported and listened to, and are able to share their thoughts and opinions.

Each term, the student parliament will meet for one period to hold a meeting and discuss key topics for the academy, the brief of SEMH&W is included within these key topics.

Student Parliament will have the following aims:

- To represent the students with regard to outlining SEMH&W issues within the student body
- To help in assemblies and with dissemination of signposting
- To help evaluate current provision for students and propose solutions

Managing expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing for a long time. They can influence a student's ability to access learning. We need to ensure that all members of staff are familiar with students who are suffering from mental health and provide information that helps manage expectations of affected students in order to ensure those students are not placed under undue stress which may exacerbate their mental health issues.

Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year will play a significant part in monitoring these identified students, taking a holistic approach which may include considering issues addressing:

- Academic achievement
- Absence and lateness
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons
- Escalation in behaviour incidents

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

We provide staff with on-going opportunities and updates regarding positive Mental Health approaches and strategies. Awareness and additional training opportunities are shared via INSET days, staff bulletins, staff briefings and CPD sessions.

External agencies such as the Educational Psychology team and The NHS Mental Health Support Team also provide additional training for staff.

The Senior Mental Health Lead works closely with the Safeguarding Officer and Student Counsellor to coordinate the training provided to staff.

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 developing situations with one or more students.

The school has invested in a number of staff qualifying as Mental Health First Aiders and both level 2 and 3.



Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and updated as appropriate. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder
- that is around three children in every class.
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Below, we have sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents, carers and guardians but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all these issues can be accessed via Young Minds (<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>), Mind (<https://www.mind.org.uk>) and for e-learning opportunities Minded (<https://www.minded.org.uk>).

Self-harm

Self-harm 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.

Online support

SelfHarm.co.uk:

<https://www.selfharm.co.uk/> National

Self-Harm Network:

<http://www.nshn.co.uk/>

Books

- Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers



- Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Carol Fitzpatrick (2012) *A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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.

Online support

Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/depression-alliance/>

Books

- Christopher Dowrick and Susan Martin (2015) *Can I Tell you about Depression?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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.

Online support

Anxiety UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk>

Books

- Lucy Willetts and Polly Waite (2014) *Can I Tell you about Anxiety?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Carol Fitzpatrick (2015) *A Short Introduction to Helping Young People Manage Anxiety*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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.

Online support

OCD UK: <https://www.ocduk.org/ocd>



Books

- Amita Jassi and Sarah Hull (2013) Can I Tell you about OCD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Susan Conners (2011) The Tourette Syndrome & OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents, carers and guardians and teachers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

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.

Online support

Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org>

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/>

Books

- Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Terri A.Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer and Scott Poland (2015) Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention. New York: Routledge

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.

Online support

Beat – the eating disorders charity: <https://www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders>

Books

- Bryan Lask and Lucy Watson (2014) Can I tell you about Eating Disorders?: A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Pooky Knightsmith (2015) Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Pooky Knightsmith (2012) Eating Disorders Pocketbook. Teachers' Pocketbooks