



Excalibur Academies Trust
Health and Wellbeing of Students Guidance

Date of approval	June 2023
Approved by	Education Scrutiny Committee
Review date	June 2025



Reviewed and no changes made to

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At Excalibur Academies Trust and within its academies, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole community and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. In 2019, 3 in 10 children aged 5 to 18 had a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "In order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building anti-fragility. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in the academies is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be an academy where:

- All children are valued
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated

2. Purpose of the guidance

This guidance sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing: "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."



Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Cope with stresses of everyday life
- Manage time of stress and be able to deal with change
- Learn and achieve

4. Links to policies

This guidance links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical needs, anti-bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the individual academy behaviour policy are important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

5. A whole academy approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole academy approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become anti-fragile, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be anti-fragility learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

6. Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

All academies will have an identified mental health lead. This lead may also be the SENDCO or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.



Academy mental health lead:

- Assesses current position of academy through use of recognised framework and develop action plan
- Leads academy action plan
- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
- Leads on PSHCE teaching about mental health;
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates;
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the individual academy environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Excalibur Head of Safeguarding
- Academy senior leadership
- Academy Designated Safeguarding leads
- Academy mental health lead and trained staff
- Academy support staff
- Academy SENDCo
- Academy school nurse where relevant
- Academy therapists and counsellors where relevant

7. Supporting children's positive mental health

We believe the academies have a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our academies have developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Pupil-led activities
- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Peer mediation and peer mentoring
- Healthy minds champions
- A lunchtime group supporting younger children at lunchtime
- Transition programmes
- Transition programme to secondary schools
- Praise boxes
- Worry boxes
- Memory boxes
- Mental health teaching programmes
- Philosophy for Children

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHCE our academies teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

Please request further information from individual schools if required.



8. Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs
- Engage parents and carers when their child needs support
- Engage children in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated

Early identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- SDQ (Social Difficulty Questionnaires)
- Taking into account ACERs and their impact
- Analysing behaviour and exclusions
- Visits to the medical room/school nurse
- Attendance and punctuality
- Using Leuven scales to identify children in EYFS who need support
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead person
- Pupil progress review meetings
- Regular meetings or supervision for staff to raise concerns
- Gathering information from previous schools and family
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff

All staff in the academies have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Falling academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Drugs or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.



If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the Trust safeguarding procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the individual academy procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is the staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the safeguarding system file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health/Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either form within the academy or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

Need	Evidence-based Intervention and Support	Monitoring
The level of need is based on discussions at the regular meetings with key members of staff and engages parents and children	The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and children	
Highest need	CAMHS- assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with academy staff and other agencies.	All children needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Wellbeing Plan. Children and parents/carers will be engaged in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact. The Wellbeing Plan is overseen by the Mental Health Lead
Some need	Access to in academy support group, family support worker, school nurse, art, music or drama/dance therapy, educational psychologist, 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends	All children needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Wellbeing Plan. Children and parents/carers will be engaged in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact. The Wellbeing Plan is overseen by the Mental Health Lead



Low need	General support e.g. school nurse, class teacher/TA.	Signalled awareness to Mental Health Lead
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Support for friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one group support.

We will engage the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help.

We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Support for children after inpatient treatment

We recognise that some children will need ongoing support and the pastoral lead allocated will meet with children on a regular basis. We are careful not to “label” children with diagnoses without prior and sensitive consultation with family/carers and other relevant professionals.

We have duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children. We will carry out a risk assessment and produce an Individual Wellbeing Plan to support children to re-integrate successfully back to school.

When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school, we discuss what needs to happen so the transition will be smooth and positive.

9. Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases a pupil’s mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the children’s Individual Wellbeing Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Pastoral Lead, DSL or SENDCo following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and their parents or carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil’s specific needs.

10. Involving parents and carers

In promoting mental health, we recognise the important role of parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On first entry to the academy, our parents’ meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child’s mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share



information with the Academy so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs. We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice area available.

When a concern has been raised, the academy will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (in almost all cases, parents and carers will be engaged in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and places to see further information
- Be available for follow up calls
- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree a mental health Individual Care Plan including next steps
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or of accompanying and supporting them to do so.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Trust and record this as a safeguarding concern. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

11. Involving children

Every year our academies train up a group of children as our Healthy Minds Champions who lead on whole school campaigns on health and wellbeing.

We seek pupils' views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

12. Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help. Our Mental Health Lead is a qualified "mental health first aider" and a number of our staff have completed mental health first aid training.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing, such as wellbeing INSET events, group and individual supervision, staff social activities, team building events. The Trust promote a healthy work life and have streamlined procedures and policies to



minimise workload. In more acute cases external agencies will be brokered to offer more specialist support.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing guidance is on academy websites. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the academy as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The guidance is monitored at an annual review meeting and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the academy. The guidance is reviewed at Trust level every two years.



Appendix I

Wellbeing Care Plan – Excalibur Academies Trust

Excalibur Wellbeing Care Plan	
Academy Name:	
Child Name:	Date of plan:
Year Group:	
Parent/Guardian Name:	Contact number:
Other info i.e. PP/SEND et	
Presenting Issues (s) - Mental health issues and other symptoms; events that have occurred	
Student History - Social - Psychological - Behavioural - Academic - Other	

Student needs	Goals	Support within school	Support outside of school

This plan will be monitored and reviewed byevery.....weeks

Review comments -

Date plan completed

Signature of parent

Signature of student