



ROOTED IN COMMUNITY  
STRENGTHENED BY EQUALITY  
ENABLING ACHIEVEMENT.

# PLASHET SCHOOL

COMMUNITY, EQUALITY, ACHIEVEMENT

## Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Applicable from July 2024

Signed:

Chair of Governors

## **Contents**

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	4
4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis	4
5. Warning signs	5
6. Managing disclosures	6
7. Confidentiality	6
8. Supporting students	7
9. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers	9
10. Supporting peers	9
11. Signposting	10
12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness	10
13. Training	10
14. Support for staff	10
15. Monitoring arrangements	11

## **Policy Statement**

*"Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their own community."*

World Health Organisation

*"Well-being cannot exist just in your own head. Well-being is a combination of feeling good as well as actually having meaning, good relationships and accomplishment."*

Martin Seligman

At Plashet School we aim to promote and support positive mental health for all. We are committed to establishing a culture within the school that supports all students to grow and develop a skill set to manage their mental health and wellbeing both now and in the future.

We strive to promote positive mental health and to help reduce stigma linked with poor mental health and mental ill health. We understand that by promoting positive mental health and empowering all our students with techniques in self-care we are supporting them to flourish.

Our school has a rich history of academic success. We know we provide a platform for our students to make outstanding academic progress and in addition to this we offer an environment for them to also be resilient and to have the tools they need to successfully navigate the wider world.

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. We know that there has been a further deterioration in young people's mental health, exacerbated by the pandemic. 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.

The mental health of individuals is shaped by the social, environmental and economic conditions in which they are born, grow, work and age. Research shows that while any child or young person can experience mental ill health, mental health problems are not evenly distributed across society and some groups of young people are significantly more likely to experience poor mental health. Young people who have experienced social deprivation have disproportionately high rates of mental ill health. They also face a "triple barrier" (Commission for Equality in Mental Health, 2020) when it comes to services, facing inequalities in access, experience and outcomes from mental health services.

Plashet School is situated in a ward that presents significant challenges related to socio-economic deprivation; including overcrowded multiple occupancy and temporary housing, high rates of child poverty, high youth crime rates, high rates of mental health diagnoses and reduced life expectancy rates.

This means we make a conscious effort to counteract these challenges and support our students to navigate any difficulties they may face. This also forms part of our approach to increasing the attainment of all our students, especially those from a disadvantaged background, so that our students leave school with the best possible platform to lead successful and happy lives.

## **1. Aims**

At Plashet School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy focuses on students' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students across our school.
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting students' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which students feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Inform students and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of students' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources.

This policy was written in consultation with the Curriculum Leader for Learning for Life (including PSHE) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school.

It should be read alongside the following policies:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- SMSCD policy
- Staff Wellbeing Policy

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023](#)
- [Ofsted Education Inspection framework for September 2023](#)
- [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges -2024](#)
- [Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green paper](#)

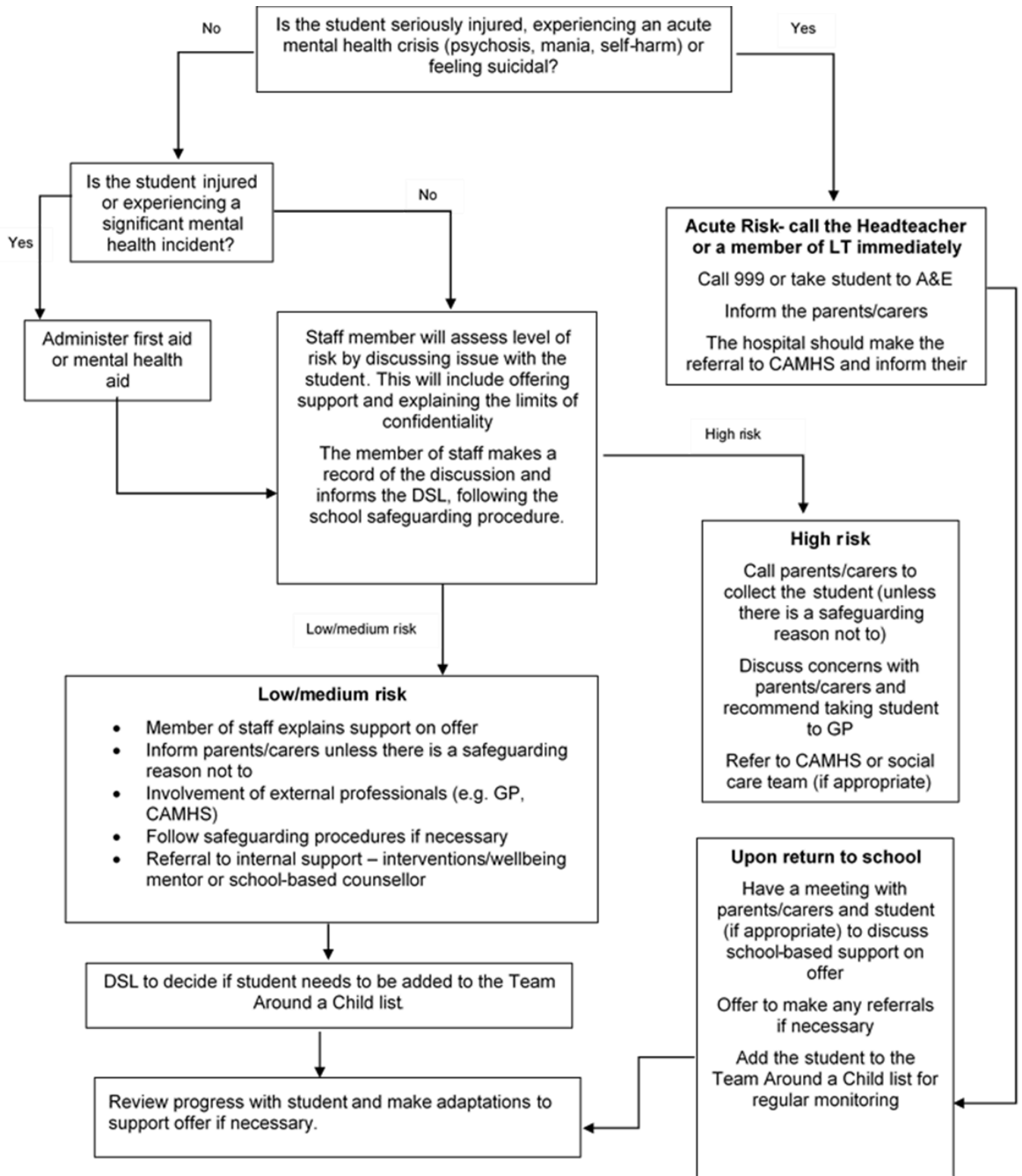
## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a student's mental health or wellbeing, they should follow the school safeguarding procedure and ensure they inform the Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead, Safeguarding Offer for the year group concerned, the relevant LT line manager and the relevant Year Coordinator. In most cases, this communication should be made using the school safeguarding platform; Safeguard.

Specific members of staff have as part of their duties to support the provision for mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Head Teacher: Rachel McGowan.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Kalash Thakor.
- Mental Health Lead (MHL): Lucy Still.
- Senior Accredited Psychotherapist: Andy Watson.
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo): Sagree Naidoo
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Frances Gell.
- Safeguarding Officers: Patricia St. Louis & Ambreen Sultan.
- Attendance Officer: Lekan Adegoke.

#### 4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



## **5. Warning signs**

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a students' mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in:
  - Mood or energy level
  - Eating or sleeping patterns
  - Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
  - Level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

## **6. Managing disclosures**

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the Head Teacher, DSL, DDSL, Mental Health Lead, relevant Safeguarding Officer, LT line manager and YC via the school's Safeguard system. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the student's confidential child protection file.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the student(s) involved
- The date and time of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

## **7. Confidentiality**

Staff will not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question

Staff should always share disclosures with appropriate staff following the safeguarding procedure. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the child protection and safeguarding policy will be followed.

### **7.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures**

1. Student makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with the DSL and any other appropriate member of staff.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL/Deputy DSL or LT line manager will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

## **8. Supporting students**

### **8.1 Baseline support for all students**

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, our school offers support to all students by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PSHE and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all students to sources of online support on our school website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Utilising student voice to understand and reflect on student mental health and wellbeing
- The senior mental health lead has a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support, e.g. Year coordinator/Assistant Year Coordinator/Form Tutor.
- Ensuring Learning for Life lessons cover key topics in mental health and wellbeing so that students are informed about mental ill health but they also understand the importance of promoting their own positive mental health



- Through the Learning for Life curriculum and the tutor time offer students have high levels of emotional literacy and know and are able to employ strategies for self-care

## **8.2 Assessing what further support is needed**

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the mental health lead and the DSL, will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered i.e.; Team Around a Child meeting

## **8.3 Internal mental health interventions**

Where appropriate, a student will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Allocation of a Wellbeing Mentor
- Referral to the Wellbeing In Newham Schools Team (WINS)
- Time-out pass
- Counseling
- Drop-ins at the wellbeing suite

## **8.4 Making external referrals**

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- Their GP or a pediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#))
- Wellbeing In Newham Schools Team (WINS)

## **9. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers**

We will work with parents/carers to support students' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child

- Providing support for parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)
- Ensuring a curriculum map of the PSHE curriculum (known as Learning for Life at Plashet) is accessible on the school website.
- Informing parents and carers if their child has requested or been referred for wellbeing mentoring

## **10. Supporting peers**

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for students. Students may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all students impacted by mental health issues directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

## **11. Signposting**

Sources of support are displayed in safeguarding, wellbeing and Learning for Life classrooms and links to support and guidance and resources are available on the school website, so students and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

The mental health lead will be available to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

The wellbeing curriculum which includes tutor time sessions will be utilised to promote positive mental health, strategies for self-care, mental health awareness and support in understanding mental health issues and warning signs.

Mental health and wellbeing will also be taught in the Learning for Life (PSHE) curriculum.

## **12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness**

### **12.1 Mental health is taught in Learning for life lessons (PSHE)**

In Learning for Life (PSHE) we offer a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing curriculum, to inform, empower and safeguard our students now and in the future.

We ensure our curriculum allows students to understand what a mental health issue is and reflect on the warning signs for mental health conditions. Additionally, students reflect on the best way to support someone who has a mental health condition and signpost where to go for support and guidance. We ensure that students understand that all people are susceptible to poor mental health and that how we experience our mental health and feelings of wellbeing can fluctuate throughout life. Students therefore have access to resources that help them flourish and promote positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience to ensure they are able to bounce back from the adverse events and challenges that inevitably happen in all our lives.

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Students are taught to:

- Develop self-care strategies
- Challenge misconceptions and stigma around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe
- Understand that mental health is just like physical health and needs to be worked on and maintained

### **12.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health**

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging students to seek support when their mental health is deteriorating

### **13. Training**

Staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help

Additionally, the school will support some staff to become Youth Mental Health First Aiders.

### **14. Support for staff**

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions if required
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme
- Offer sessions with the school counselor, who has a caseload allocation for staff support as required
- The Wellbeing mentors and the Mental Health Lead will be offered half termly supervision to support their practice

### **15. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the Mental health Lead, every three years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.