

Pupil mental health and wellbeing protocol

Hamilton School

Approved by: Gemma Nemeth **Date:** 20/06/2025

Last reviewed on: 27/04/26

Next review due by: 27/04/27

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1. Aims

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

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

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across our school
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils 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 pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

This protocol was written in consultation with Clare Biddiss, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Sarah Concannon, Headteacher.

It should be read alongside:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Child protection and safeguarding 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](#)

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 pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead and senior mental health lead.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Sarah Concannon - Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Clare Biddiss – Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Gemma Nemeth – Senior Mental Health Lead
- Scott Versace - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Samantha Archer – Thrive Lead
- Teresa Johnson – School Care Officer

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

If there are urgent and significant mental health or risk concerns, but no medical treatment is required, support is available via NHS111. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people who need help fast, but it is not an emergency. If necessary, NHS111 will refer to the locality CAMHS team for further support.

A young person should only be taken to A&E (or contact emergency services on 999) if they require urgent life-threatening emergency medical attention such as because they:

- have recently taken an overdose
 - ingested harmful liquids
- cut themselves significantly (deep cut/s and/or bleed profusely)
 - burns that are blistering/red
 - have lost consciousness

Definition

An acute mental health crisis is when a student's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours pose an immediate risk to their own safety or to others (e.g. active suicidal thoughts, self-harm, panic attacks, psychotic episode, severe emotional dysregulation).

Policy Statement

The school is committed to ensuring the immediate safety of students, staff, and peers during a mental health crisis, and to responding with care, dignity, and consistency.

Procedure

1. Immediate Safety

- Remove or reduce any immediate risks (e.g. sharp objects, unsafe environment).
- Ensure the student is not left alone until they are safe.

2. Staff Response

- Remain calm and supportive; use de-escalation strategies where appropriate.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Mental Health Lead immediately.
- If there is imminent risk of harm, call emergency services (999) without delay.

3. Communication

- Inform senior leadership and parents/carers as soon as possible, unless doing so would increase risk to the student.
- Keep records of the incident factually and promptly.

4. Aftercare

- Agree a safety and support plan with the student and their family.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g. CAMHS, GP, crisis teams) where appropriate.
- Provide staff with debrief and wellbeing support after the incident.

5. Confidentiality

- Information will be shared only with relevant staff and professionals, following safeguarding principles.

6. Training & Preparedness

- Staff will be trained in recognising signs of crisis and in basic de-escalation.
- The school will maintain clear referral pathways to specialist support.

5. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's 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 pupil 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 pupil'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 DSL. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil'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 pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

All concerns raised about a child (including verbally) will be recorded electronically using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and relevant notes and documents uploaded. CPOMS will automatically alert the DSL and Deputies via email that a concern has been logged. Where this concern is deemed to relate to mental health, the DSL and/or Deputies will alert the SMHL.

7. Communication & Confidentiality

Staff will not promise a pupil 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 pupil'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 pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with the DSL. 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 pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil 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 pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

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

7.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil 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.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil 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 and/or SMHL 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

7.2 Communication between school and home

The school recognises the importance of collaborative working between home and school in supporting students' mental health and wellbeing. To this end, we will feedback to parents/carers in the following ways regarding their child's mental health:

- Parents' evenings
- EHCP Annual Reviews
- Weekly tutor phone calls
- Newsletter updates
- Further updates/meetings as required

We encourage parents/carers to contact school if they have concerns or questions about their child's mental health. This is usually with the child's tutor in the first instance.

8. Supporting pupils

8.1 Baseline support for all pupils

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

- Raising awareness of mental health during tutor time, personal development lessons, and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on our school website and through school displays
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Training staff to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health needs in students and know what to do should they have a concern
- Training some staff to be Youth Mental Health First Aiders
- Developing links with local and national mental health services
- Providing pupils with opportunities to provide feedback on how school impacts and/or supports their mental health
- Monitoring all pupils' mental health through assessments, e.g. Thrive
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support from the Thrive team
- Offering access to safe spaces such as quiet rooms

8.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the Senior Mental Health Lead 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 pupil'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

8.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil 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:

- Thrive
- Modified timetable
- Canine Assisted Learning
- Building Resilience in Young Minds
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

8.4 Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

A pupil will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) if:

- They have a diagnosed mental health condition
- They require medical or emergency procedures linked to their mental health
- They require adjustments or interventions beyond those available as part of the school's universal offer
- External professionals (e.g. GP, CAMHS) recommend an IHP
- Parents/carers and school are in agreement that an IHP is necessary for a student to attend school safely

IHPs are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

8.5 Making external referrals

If a pupil'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 pupil could be referred to:

- Their GP
- MHST or CAMHS
- Local counselling services or mental health charities

9. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' 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
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- 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 guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section 10.4).

10. Supporting peers

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

We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health 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 around our school and linked to on our school website, so pupils and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

The Senior Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

12.1 Mental health is taught in Personal Development

The School's approach to teaching Mental Health is holistic and all staff are encouraged to address Mental Health and Wellbeing across the curriculum. However, Personal Development is taught as discrete lessons and the statutory requirements for RSHE are planned and delivered to all students

We follow the Jigsaw Education scheme of work

Pupils are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our Personal Development curriculum [.Personal Development Curriculum Intent and Big Ideas.docx](#)

12.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating

13. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

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

14. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil 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
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme
- Signpost to relevant services

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Gemma Nemeth, Senior Mental Health Lead, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by Sarah Concannon, the Headteacher.

ANNEX 1

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for this school is:

Clare Biddiss Assistant Headteacher

Deputies (*Also trained as DSL*):

Teresa Johnson School Care Officer

Scott Versace SENCO

Victoria Burford PE Teacher & Phase Leader

A member of our safeguarding team is available from 8:00am to 4:00pm on 01189 375524

In their absence, these matters will be dealt with by Sarah Concannon, Headteacher.

Outside those hours advice can be sought from Children's Single Point of Access (CSPOA) 0118 937 3641 or email at CSPOA@brighterfuturesforchildren.org. For emergencies outside of regular hours (5pm-9am weekdays, 5pm Friday to 9am Monday), contact the Emergency Duty Service. ... In an emergency and where a child is at risk of harm, the police should also be notified.

The name of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for Brighter Futures for Children is Sue Darby 0118 937 2684 / LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

The designated member of the School Advisory Board for safeguarding is Christine Jones.

DESIGNATED MENTAL HEALTH LEAD

The designated Mental Health Lead is Gemma Nemeth

TRUST LEAD

The Trust safeguarding lead is Alison Walker, School Improvement Director: Culture and Safeguarding (SID:CS).