The Rydal Academy
Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being 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 well- being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events and some children have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils 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 resilience. 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 pupils well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils 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 be a school where:

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils 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

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing: .. 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 their community. Mental health and well-being 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 and cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Self-Regualtion, Personal Social Health Relationships Education (PSHRE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Behaviour and Self-Regualation Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message to communicate a need.

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils 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 resilience

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

We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open door philosophy'.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health(see appendix 1). 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 pupils 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 a 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 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.

The school's Mental Health Team (Mental Health Lead/ SENCO/Designated Safeguarding Lead):

- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHRE Leader on teaching about mental health needs and their families.

  Support includes: Safeguarding/Child Protection Team, Support staff to help manage mental health needs of pupils, SENCO and Mental Health Lead who help staff understand their responsibilities to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
  Access to School Nurse Service, Mental Health Support Teams
  Liaison with CAMHs/ Educational Psychologist Service

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school 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 pupils with mental health.

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- Pupil-led Activities
- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Transition Support
- Support for vulnerable children, for example, ELSA or Social Communication group
- Transition leaflets available for all children

- Key Adults might support Secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils
- Extra transition where needed.
- Class activities and calm corners
- Regulation Stations & Sensory/safe spaces
- Choices regulation space
- Kind Minds Curriculum
- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
  identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school
- Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Through PSHRE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

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:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- analysing behaviour, exclusions and attendance
- pupil surveys termly
- staff report concerns about pupils to the SENDCo or Mental Health Lead
- weekly staff briefing for staff on behaviour, attendance and Mental Health
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open door philosophy'
- drop-ins with School Educational Psychologist, Mental Health Teams

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1) 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 SENCO, Pastoral Lead or Designated Safeguarding Team.

These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- 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 school's child protection procedures are followed.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the SENDCo/Mental Health Lead. We then look at each case based on level of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes.

Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Multi-agency meetings, regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers, Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate, discussion, advice and support from Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

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

Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health - We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children,
To support parents and carers:

- we have a range of support topics on our website such as Anxiety, Sleep etc
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our website/social media on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an open door philosophy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- 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
- parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Involving Pupils

We seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through pupil questionnaires, assembly discussion, house representatives, voting and suggestion boxes and the pupil voice section on our SEMH support plan.

We have Anti-bullying Ambassadors in each year group to support peers in school

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 pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where needed access to supervision from mental health professionals.

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.These are detailed in our Staff Wellbeing Charter.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored by the governors and SLT. This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1 Protective and Risk factors

	RISK	PROTECTIVE
In the Child	- Genetic influence - Specific development delay - Communication difficulties - Physical illness - Falling behind academically - Low self-esteem - SEND	- Being female (in younger children) - Secure attachment experience - Outgoing temperament as an infant - Good communication skills, sociability - Being a planner and having a belief in control - Humour - Problem solving skills and a positive attitude - Experiences of success and achievement - Faith or spirituality - Capacity to reflect
In the Family	- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence - Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) - Inconsistent or unclear boundaries - Hostile and rejecting relationships - Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs - Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect - Parental poor mental health - Death and loss – including loss of friendship	- At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) - Affection - Clear, consistent boundaries - Support for education Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	- Bullying - Discrimination - Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships - Negative peer influences - Peer pressure - Poor pupil to teacher relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences