

TRANSFORMING HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOLS



Hurst
EDUCATION TRUST

Ditchling (St. Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children



'Living life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Version	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
3	ESCC Model	Head/FGB	Sept 2024	Sept 2026

Signed: Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. B. Jones'.

Signed: _Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Clarke'.



Kent Community Health **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



TRANSFORMING HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

As the same may be amended by legislation or other regulations.

MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING of CHILDREN POLICY

This policy guidance is designed to develop and implement practical, and effective mental health policies and procedures that promote a safe and stable environment for the many children affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. In every standard classroom, three children will suffer from a diagnosable mental health condition and the school has an important role to play, acting as a source of support and information for both children and parents. This is important to us as we are a church school, and our school vision, values and teaching focus on the support we should give to all children to enable them to flourish and be whole as children of God. Our school value of koinonia, in particular, means that if we are all part of the same community, when one part is hurting, it brings pain to the whole.

This policy acts as the school's central reference point for mental health.

Section one

The mental health and emotional wellbeing policy guidance

Aims of the policy

The policy aims to:

- promote positive mental health in all staff and children
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- provide support to staff working with children with mental health issues
- provide support to children suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- provide appropriate support to parents suffering mental ill health

Why does mental health and wellbeing matter in schools?

Schools play a crucial role in developing pupil mental health, and a positive school environment and ethos promotes emotional wellbeing across the community. There are a variety of ways that schools can support both children and parents through: establishing consistent systems and interventions; enabling children to develop a sense of belonging; ensuring children feel safe and have the opportunity to ask for help, and providing support for parents that need additional help.

A consistent whole school culture and vision is integral for developing children's positive mental health and resilience.

A child's mental health will affect them for the rest of their life; it influences their overall health, happiness and productivity into adulthood. Promoting and protecting mental health in school children is therefore one of the most important things we can do for them. Half of all lifetime mental health problems develop by the age of 14, affecting approximately three children in every classroom. Untreated problems in early life lead to adult mental illness.

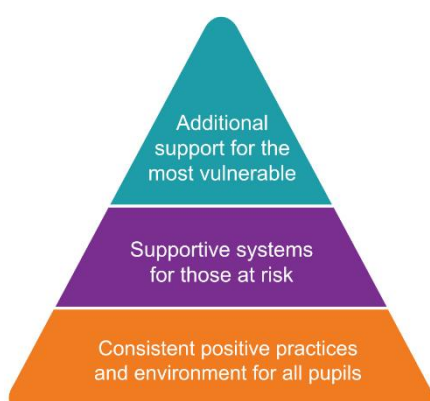
As well as lifetime wellbeing, there are immediate benefits to positive emotional health. Children are happier, make friends and sustain relationships, are aware of and understand others, face problems and setbacks and learn from them, enjoy their play and leisure time and, most importantly for schools, they learn better.

The factors that influence whether or not a child develops an emotional or behavioural problem are complex but broadly fall into two categories: risk and resilience. We cannot always protect children from risks (for example parental substance misuse, bereavement or refugee status), but we know that individuals respond differently to difficult life events, failure and mistakes. Building resilience is about supporting and enabling children to cope better with what life throws at them. Risks do not in themselves cause illness, but they are cumulative, whereas resilience is developmental.

The ESCC MHEW audit framework for schools is a whole school approach that effectively supports children's mental health and resilience. The eight components reflect different aspects of school life that promote positive mental health. The evidence strongly indicates that the framework is most effective when all of the components are embedded in school culture.

We are working to ensure that the framework is put into practice across the whole school community; by staff, parents and children.

Our structures and practices consistently support all children's mental health across the school community. We continually consider how children's individual needs are met through a stepped approach, ensuring that practices are consistent for all children, whilst providing additional support for the most vulnerable children.



Roles and responsibilities in school

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mrs Sayers - Designated safeguarding lead
- Mrs Amy Clarke - Mental health lead
- Miss Hemes- Lead first aider and Mental Health First Aider

- Mrs Clarke - Pastoral lead alongside class teachers
- Mrs Clarke - CPD lead
- Mrs Watkins - Life Skills Subject Leader
-

Role of the mental health lead

There is an expectation that all schools should have an individual responsible for mental health in schools. The mental health lead will: provide a link to expertise and support regarding specific children; identify issues and make effective referrals; contribute to leading and developing whole school approaches around mental health. For small primary schools, it is expected that the role of the mental health lead will be integrated with the safeguarding lead.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead or the head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix 6.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix D.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the staff room, toilets, displays and on our website, and will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring children understand:

- what help is available
- who it is aimed at
- how to access it
- why to access it
- what is likely to happen next

Specific help for vulnerable children

Warning signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 with our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- changes in eating / sleeping habits
- increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- increased difficulty in separating from adults (clinginess)
- 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

Managing disclosures

A pupil 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.

If a pupil 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-judgmental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise, and first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see appendix 5.

All disclosures should be discussed with the mental health lead, class teacher and recorded on My Concern.

This mental health lead will offer support and advice about next steps. See appendix 6 for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

Confidentiality

Refer to the safeguarding policy.

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

- 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 pupil outside the school team 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 ie. if we believe the child is at risk of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It also ensures continuity of care in our absence and provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if a disclosure is made and children may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give children the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the designated safeguarding lead must be informed immediately.

Supporting a child with mental health needs

Team around the Child

We are committed to ensuring that a pupil with mental health needs receives appropriate support at an early stage. We use Boxall Profiles to ensure that a student's needs are appropriately met, and that there is careful joint planning to meet children's specific needs. We initiate Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings to support co-ordinated working, information sharing and early intervention. The pupil and family are at the centre of the process, and one action plan can be produced using Early Help Plan.

Support networks that enable children to develop social relationships

Supporting peers

How does the school support the peers of those experiencing mental health issues?

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their 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 pupil who is suffering and their parents 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- warning signs that their friend needs 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

Peer support systems

We have an established peer support scheme that is reviewed on a regular basis by the children. The peer support scheme supports children to socialise with different children, promotes friendships and supports children that may be isolated.

Effective partnerships with parents

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

- can the meeting happen face to face?
- should the meeting happen at school, home or somewhere neutral?
- who should be present?
- what are the aims of the meeting?

It may be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be understanding and compassionate as this reflects our school values.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents 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.

It is very important for us to ensure that there is joint planning and decision making with each child's parents. Parents will be contacted by a member of staff to inform them of any updates, in order for them to be a key part of their child's planning.

Parents 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 we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- ensure that all parents 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
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular parents' evenings
- run focus groups to provide us with an opportunity to gather parent perspectives
- keep parents 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
- promote joint planning and decision making with each child's parent

How does the school provide appropriate support to parents who need additional help?

We will ensure that parents suffering from mental ill health and/ or who need appropriate support, are provided with that support. We are mindful that parents with mental health issues may worry about discrimination, and the effect their illness has on their child. Therefore we will be sensitive when approaching parents with mental health needs. In order to support parents with additional needs, we will:

- keep parents informed about services and sources of help around emotional wellbeing
- provide details of counselling services available for parents, if required
- refer parents to specialist services, in consultation with parents
- provide additional support such as help to complete forms and paperwork
- support parents in developing their parenting skills
- provide accessible information, explanation, guidance and signposting

Support and training for all staff to build skills, capacity and own resilience

What professional development does the school provide to support and train staff in recognising and responding to mental health issues?

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 in order to enable them to keep children safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. Staff should also familiarise themselves with the 'Guide for East Sussex schools: Supporting children in their mental health', held in the head teacher's office.

Training opportunities for staff that 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 to developing situations with one or more children.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the head teacher who co-ordinates CPD. They can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

A curriculum that teachers life skills, including social and emotional skills

Section two

Mental health within Life Skills

Mental health within Life Skills is developmental and appropriate to the age and needs of every pupil. It is part of a well-planned programme, delivered in a supportive atmosphere, where we aim for all children to feel comfortable to engage in open discussion and feel confident to ask for help if necessary.

Establishing a safe and supportive environment

How do teachers establish a safe and supportive environment?

- Boundaries for discussion and issues of confidentiality are discussed before mental health lessons begin.
- Each class/group works together to establish its own ground rules about how they would like everyone to behave in order to learn.
- Distancing techniques such as role play, third person case studies and an anonymous question box are employed when teaching sensitive issues.

Inclusion

All children and young people whatever their experience, background or identity are entitled to good quality education about mental health that helps them build a positive sense of self. Respect for themselves and each other is central to all teaching and learning. The Life Skills programme and approach is inclusive of difference: gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief or any other life experience.

Things to consider:

- staff approach mental health education sensitively, knowing that their children are all different and have different family groupings.
- mental health lessons cater for all children, and the teachers and teaching materials are respectful of the rights of children with disabilities and how children choose to identify themselves.
- links with the school's SEND policy.

Mental health in the curriculum

Mental health is addressed during Life Skills lessons following the National Curriculum.

Related Policies

Behaviour Regulation Policy

Inclusion Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Anti-bullying Policy

Equalities Policy

Appendix I

Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues¹

- 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 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 but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff too.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via [Young Minds](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) (www.youngminds.org.uk), [Mind](http://www.mind.org.uk) (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) [Minded](http://www.minded.org.uk) (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: www.selfharm.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network: 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

¹ Source: Young Minds

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

Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

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: 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 do not 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: 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 Connors (2011) *The Tourette Syndrome & OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents 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; other young people may suddenly commit suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support

Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: 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: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children

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

Appendix 2

Guidance and advice documents

[Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future](#) - departmental advice for school staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2015)

[Future in mind – promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing](#) - a report produced by the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce to examine how to improve mental health services for children and young people. Department of Health (2015)

[Healthy child programme from 5 to 19 years old](#) is a recommended framework of universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing. Department of Health (2009)

[Islington MHARS: A framework for mental health and resilience in schools](#) – Health and Wellbeing Team, Islington Council (2015)

[Keeping children safe in education](#) - statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Department for Education (2014)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) - departmental advice for school staff. Department for Education (2014)

[NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in primary education](#)

[NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) - statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. Department for Education (2014)

[Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) LIFE SKILLS Association. Funded by the Department for Education (2015)

[What works in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and responding to mental health problems in schools?](#) Advice for schools and framework _document written by Professor Katherine Weare. National Children’s Bureau (2015)

[Delivering Psychological services in schools to maximise emotional wellbeing and early intervention.](#) McConnellogue, Hickey, Patel and Picciotto, in The Child and Family Clinical Psychology Review: What good looks like in psychological services for children, young people and their families (2015), British Psychological Society

Appendix 3

Sources of support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

- **Mental Health Link worker**
- **Nurture Group**
- **Lego Therapy**
- **Members of staff**
- **ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support)**
- **ESBAS (Education Service Behaviour, Attendance Support)**

Local Support

Winston's Wish

Supports children who have been bereaved

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Autism Sussex

Support for families with children on the Autistic Spectrum

<http://www.aspens.org.uk/>

B-eat

Help lines, online support and self-help groups for adults and young people to beat eating disorders. Young people's live chat Tuesday and Thursday, 5 - 6pm.

Tel: 0845 634 7650 or text 07786 20 18 20

Email: fyp@b-eat.co.uk

Website: www.b-eat.co.uk

Childline

Adults, children and young people can phone Childline at any time when in a crisis. The service also offers phone and email counselling and message board support as well as tips and advice on a wide range of issues, including exam stress and bullying.

Tel: 0800 1111 (24 hours a day)

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Appendix 4

Talking to children when they make mental health disclosures

The advice below is from children themselves, in their own words, together with some additional ideas to help you in initial conversations with children when they disclose mental health concerns. This advice should be considered alongside school policies on safeguarding and discussed with relevant colleagues as appropriate.

Focus on listening

If a pupil has come to you, it is because they trust you and feel a need to share their difficulties with someone. Let them talk. Ask occasional open questions, if you need to, in order to encourage them to keep exploring their feelings and opening up to you. Just letting them pour out what they are thinking will make a huge difference and marks a huge first step in recovery. Up until now they may not have admitted even to themselves that there is a problem.

Do not talk too much

The pupil should be talking at least three quarters of the time. If that is not the case then you need to redress the balance. You are here to listen, not to talk. Sometimes the conversation may lapse into silence. Try not to give in to the urge to fill the gap, but rather wait until the student does so. This can often lead to them exploring their feelings more deeply. Of course, you should interject occasionally, perhaps with questions to the pupil to explore certain topics they have touched on more deeply, or to show that you understand and are supportive. Do not feel an urge to over-analyse the situation or try to offer answers. This all comes later. For now your role is simply one of supportive listener. So make sure you are listening.

Do not pretend to understand

The concept of a mental health difficulty such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can seem completely alien if you have never experienced these difficulties first hand. You may find yourself wondering why on earth someone would do these things to themselves, but do not explore those feelings with the sufferer. Instead listen hard to what they are saying and encourage them to talk and you will slowly start to understand what steps they might be ready to take in order to start making some changes.

Do not be afraid to make eye contact

It is important to try to maintain a natural level of eye contact (even if you have to think very hard about doing so and it does not feel natural to you at all). If you make too much eye contact, the pupil may interpret this as you staring at them. They may think that you are horrified about what they are saying or think they are a 'freak'. On the other hand, if you do not make eye contact at all then a pupil may interpret this as you being disgusted by them – to the extent that you can not bring yourself to look at them. Making an effort to maintain natural eye contact will convey a very positive message to the pupil.

Offer support

Never leave this kind of conversation without agreeing next steps. These will be informed by your conversations with appropriate colleagues and our school's policies on such issues. Whatever happens, you should have some form of next steps to carry out after the conversation because this will help the pupil to realise that you are working with them to move things forward.

Acknowledge how hard it is to discuss these issues

It can take a young person weeks or even months to admit they have a problem to themselves, let alone share that with anyone else. If a pupil chooses to confide in you, you should feel proud and privileged that they have such a high level of trust in you. Acknowledging both how brave they have been, and how glad you are they chose to speak to you, conveys positive messages of support to the pupil.

Do not assume that an apparently negative response is actually a negative response

Despite the fact that a student has confided in you, and may even have expressed a desire to get on top of their illness, that does not mean they will readily accept help. The illness may ensure they resist any form of help for as long as they possibly can. Do not be offended or upset if your offers of help are met with anger, indifference or insolence, it is the illness talking, not the pupil.

Never break your promises

Above all else, a pupil wants to know they can trust you. That means if they want you to keep their issues confidential and you can not then you must be honest. Explain that, whilst you can not keep it a secret, you can ensure that it is handled within the school's policy of confidentiality and that only those who need to know about it in order to help, will know about the situation. You can also be honest about the fact you do not have all the answers or are not exactly sure what will happen next. Consider yourself the pupil's ally rather than their saviour and think about which next steps you can take together, always ensuring you follow relevant policies and consult appropriate colleagues.

Appendix 5

Referring to CAMHS

CAMHS is not an emergency service. If you think there is a risk of immediate harm to a pupil or to others you should go to the Accident and Emergency department of the nearest hospital, or contact the GP or the police, as necessary.

All CAMHS referrals must be made through the Single Point of Advice, (SPOA) telephone 01323 464 222.

Primary Mental Health Workers

Primary Mental Health Workers (PMHWs) are available for consultations. PMHWs are experienced CAMHS workers who offer primary care staff consultation with regard to children with mild to moderate difficulties. As part of consultation, PMHWs can advise on management of concerns, whether a referral is appropriate for CAMHS and/or suggest sign-posting to other relevant provisions. PMHWs provide support to schools (including some direct work with young people), support to Early Help Keyworker service and GP drop-ins. Contact them through ISEND for further information.

Child Protection

If you have child protection concerns please contact Children's Social Services at the Single Point of Advice, (SPOA) telephone 01323 464 222.

Who can make a referral?

GPs and other health professionals (paediatricians, school nurses and health workers), social workers, schools, other professionals and also self-referral. Referrals for emotional wellbeing can be made via SPOA on 01323 464 222

Information Needed for an Appropriate Referral

When considering making a referral, please meet with the child or young person in question to consider whether they have an emotional wellbeing or mental health disorder. Please include the following information :

- what interventions have been tried in supporting the child/young person
- whether any other services involved
- how long the difficulties have been present

CAMHS website

www.turnyourfrownupsidedown.org.uk

CORE PURPOSE

The core purpose of CAMHS is the specialist assessment and treatment of **moderate to severe mental health disorders** and associated risks in all young people under the age of 18 years. **The following list is not exhaustive and, if you have any concerns, please refer to CAMHS through SPOA as detailed above.**

ACCESS

This service can be accessed via a SPOA referral.

INDICATORS OF MODERATE OR SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

- Significant mental health problems which are present in at least two areas of functioning i.e. significant impairment of personal, family, academic or social functioning
- A lack of sufficient response to universal and targeted interventions (at Tier 1 and Tier 2)
- Primary Mental Health Worker (PMHW) information

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person, risk to themselves or others, please telephone the Emergency Services for an Ambulance and/or the Police.

EMERGENCY GUIDANCE (CAMHS response within 24 hours)

The following presentations may indicate a mental health emergency:

- symptoms of severe depression with active suicidal ideation
- severe psychotic symptoms
- anorexia with a BMI below 14 and a pattern of rapid weight loss (> 1 kg per week for at least two consecutive weeks) – please also see adjacent Eating Disorders section

If you believe a child or young person needs to be seen by our service as an emergency, contact service through SPOA. An assessment will be undertaken, if deemed clinically indicated, within 24 hours. If the emergency occurs outside of office hours contact the out of hours service.

URGENT GUIDANCE (to be seen within 7 days)

The following may indicate the need for an urgent review by CAMHS :-

- psychotic symptoms
- severe depression
- eating disorder with BMI below 15 and a pattern of rapid weight loss (> 1 kg per week for at least two consecutive weeks)

If you believe a child or young person needs to be seen by our service as a matter of urgency please contact the CAMHS through SPOA. An assessment will be undertaken, if deemed clinically indicated, within seven days.

ROUTINE GUIDANCE (to be seen within four weeks)

Anxiety Disorders

- Excessive anxiety and worry
- Recurrent unexpected panic attacks
- Phobias (fear and avoidance of a specific situation lasting for more than six months)
- The above problems affect daily functioning or school attendance

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Referrals through ISEND are considered for children **over 6 years** old whose education appears compromised by symptoms of inability to focus or abnormally high activity levels. There is an expectation that learning difficulties and social adversity (particularly parenting issues) will have already been assessed and addressed before referral.

Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Referrals through ISEND for diagnostic assessment are considered for children aged 11 years and above who present with a history of impaired social communication, social interaction and inflexible social imaginative play. Difficulties need to be present across all environments, including home and school. There is an expectation that learning difficulties and social adversity will have already been assessed and addressed prior to referral. We are not currently commissioned to work with behaviour problems secondary to Autism Spectrum Disorders however co-existing mental health problems will be considered. Children aged 10 years or younger, with suspected Autistic Spectrum Disorders, can be referred to the Child Development Centre (Scott Unit).

Depression

- Core symptoms – depressed mood, loss of interest and enjoyment, increased fatigability
- Physical symptoms – poor sleep, altered appetite or weight
- Cognitive symptoms – reduced self-esteem and self-confidence, guilt and worthlessness, bleak and pessimistic views of the future
- Suicidal ideation – ideas or acts of self-harm (please consider level of intent and current thoughts)
- Co-existing – depression often occurs alongside other mental health problems (especially anxiety)
- Bipolarity – bipolar symptoms

Eating Disorders

- Anorexia – at least 10 to 15% deficit from ideal weight, self-induced weight loss, body image distortion, fear of fatness, absence of three consecutive menstrual cycles, high risk physical signs and symptoms – **see Emergency Guidance**
- Bulimia – engaging in binge and purge behaviour, preoccupation with eating; fear of fatness, craving for food
- It is advisable to make a referral early if you have any concerns about a young person's weight

Gender Identity

- Gender dysphoria and trans-sexuality.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Tics

- Obsessions and/or compulsions
- Complex motor and vocal tics (consider CDC)
- Trichotillomania (compulsive hair pulling)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Symptoms occurring more than three months after a recognised traumatic event
- Flashbacks; intrusive memories; avoidance of trauma reminders
- Problems sleeping, irritability; anger outbursts; poor concentration; easily startled; emotional “numbness”

Psychotic Illness

- Positive symptoms – paranoia, odd beliefs, abnormal perceptions (i.e. hallucinations in all sensory modalities)
- Negative symptoms – deterioration in self-care and daily personal, social and family functioning
- Disinhibited behaviour, over activity, pressure of speech, agitation

Self Harm

- Self-harm with co-existing mental health symptoms and serious physical risk to self.

Suicidal Ideation

- Strong wish to kill self or die; persistent thoughts of suicide; detailed plan; previous attempts; suicide note; few or no protective factors.

CAMHS IS UNABLE TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES

CAMHS does not see individuals with the following difficulties unless there is evidence of co-existing moderate or severe mental health disorder, **nor does it provide general counselling:-**

- Behaviour problems (including problems secondary to the impact of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
- Bereavement
- Bullying
- Drug and alcohol misuse (East Sussex U19SMS)
- Enuresis, encopresis and faecal incontinence
- Fussy eating
- Learning Disability in the absence of a significant mental health problem
- Parental divorce and separation
- Peer relationship problems
- Phobias which do not significantly impair day to day life.
- Sleep issues (refer to sleep clinic)

Primary Mental Health Workers are available for consultations on these issues.

The above list is not exhaustive, if you have any concerns please contact SPOA for a further discussion