



PIONEER ACADEMIES COMMUNITY TRUST

Policies and Procedures

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Review/Approve	By Whom	Date	Review Date
Approved	PACT	TBC	2 years
Reviewed	PACT		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 At Pioneer Academy Community Trust we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is one of kindness and respect, where each individual and their contribution are valued.
- 1.2 Our academies know that everyone experiences different life challenges and that anyone may find themselves in need of additional emotional support. It is our view that positive mental health is everybody's responsibility; we all have a role to play.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers the approach to supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for our pupils and our workforce. It is a guide to all staff including teachers, governors and non-teaching staff. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant policies:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - SEND
 - Code of Conduct
 - Behaviour and Anti-bullying

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils.

At each of our academies we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children form and maintain relationships
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

We will promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in pupils and staff
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting pupil voice and ensuring opportunities for them to be heard.
- Celebrating each pupil for who they are and supporting them to feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any pupil or staff member who needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and pupils about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental ill-health in pupils

- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

4. Key Staff Members

4.1 All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and each other. However, certain members of staff have a specific role in the process. These are:

- The Designated Safeguarding Officers
- Pastoral Care staff
- Special Educational Needs Coordinators

4.2 If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil, then in the first instance they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

4.3 If a child presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

5. Curriculum

Our PHSE and RSE curriculum is developed to give pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe. At Parkside we follow the 'Jigsaw' scheme for both PHSE and Sex and Relationships Education. This enables children to develop skills in resilience, self-esteem and confidence to help promote and maintain positive mental health. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage will begin to be taught the characteristics of good physical health such as sufficient sleep, daily exercise and good nutrition. Throughout school children will also know that being aware of their mental health is a normal part of daily life. They will know the characteristics of good mental wellbeing - such as understanding normal ranges of emotions and the ability to talk about their bodies linking their feelings to their behaviours. Pupils will begin to be taught about steps they can take to support their own and others' health and wellbeing, self-care techniques, personal hygiene and prevention of health and wellbeing problems. Pupils will also be taught about the links between good physical health and good mental wellbeing, the benefits of pursuing their own interests and participation in their own communities.

5.1 The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the children. In some cases, it may not be appropriate for children to access learning as part of a whole class. The content may need to be adapted to meet children's individual needs, for example, giving consideration to SEND and social, emotional and mental health needs. We will ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

5.2 We will regularly review our curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they are meeting the aims outlined in this policy. We will also implement this into our curriculum at all stages to provide pupils with strategies to support their mental health and wellbeing.

6. Support Available

6.1 We will provide a range of support in school for any pupils who may be struggling. These will include:

Circle time approaches

Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes'

Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5 point scale'

Visual timetables to reduce anxieties

Personalised timetables to meet individual needs

Mental health and wellbeing groups

Therapeutic activities including relaxation and mindfulness techniques

THRIVE interventions

Time to talk with trusted members of staff

Access to nurture provision to support mental health and wellbeing

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire

The Boxall Profile

Emotional literacy scales

Pupil Voice

7. Signposting

7.1 We will ensure that all staff, pupils and parents are aware of the support that is available in school. This will also include how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

8. Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

8.1 All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to pupils who need it, when they need it.

8.2 These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

8.3 Staff will be able to identify a range of behavior and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Talking and / or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol abuse

- Feelings of failure, uselessness and loss of hope
- Secretive behavior
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year e.g. a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns e.g. disruption

8.4 Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards learning
- Family and relationship problems

8.5 Staff will also be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

9. Managing Disclosures

9.1 If a pupil discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it is necessary to keep the child safe; in line with the policy and procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 If a member of staff believes it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil, either to someone inside the school or with external organisations, this will first be discussed with the pupil. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell
- What the staff member is going to disclose
- Why it is necessary for somebody else to be told
- When the contact will be

10.2 However, it may not always be possible to gain a child's consent, such as in the case of pupils who are at immediate risk. Protecting their safety is our main priority so staff will share disclosures if it is deemed that a child is at risk, in line with the Information Sharing policy.

11. Whole School Approach

11.1 We will take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our pupils. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

Working with parents and carers

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional

wellbeing that we have in our school

- Share and allow parents to access further support
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child/children's positive mental health
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our whole school approach we will also work with other agencies to support our pupils' emotional health and wellbeing. This may include liaising with:

- School nurse
- CAMHS
- TADS
- Counselling services
- Therapists
- Family Support Workers
- Behavioural Support Workers
- Social Workers

12. Supporting Peers

- 12.1 We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems, it can be a challenging time for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure of the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.
- 12.2 These sessions will be guided by the pupil concerned in order to consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid and warning signs that their friend needs help. We will also make information available about where and how to access support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

13. Training

- 13.1 All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files.
- 13.2 We will post relevant information on our school websites so staff can learn more about child mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to development situations with pupils. Staff with particular responsibilities in relation to support the wellbeing of pupils may require specific training. Training opportunities for staff who 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 pupils.

14. Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school community we are currently working towards gaining the Wellbeing Award for schools (WAS). This award focuses on changing the long-term culture of the whole school. Completing the award will drive change and help to support staff and pupil wellbeing. It will ensure systems and external partnerships are in place to support different types of emotional and mental health needs. Staff will have access to high-quality, ongoing professional development in order to feel confident responding to pupils' needs. The school has 15 months to complete the award process with the award remaining in place for 3 years upon successful completion.

The Change Team

As part of the award process the award co-ordinator will appoint a Change Team who will be responsible for ensuring the school completes the award tasks and provides the evidence needed. Their duties will include:

- Completing the analysis of provision and practice as required collaboratively
- Engaging parents and sharing knowledge
- Creating an effective communication strategy
- Managing and delegating tasks as required by the award process
- Reporting and monitoring on behalf of the SLT and governing body
- Delivering training directly or by managing providers
- Supporting staff
- Supporting and encouraging students to be involved and share ideas
- Developing networks within the school and with partners to ensure sustainability of change

Successfully completing the award process will ensure that mental health and wellbeing sit at the heart of our school life.

15. Staff Wellbeing

15.1 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community. We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision. We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

Aims

We aim to ensure that our school:

- supports staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimises stress
- helps staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- helps staff to manage their family and work responsibilities
- ensures staff feel valued
- recognises and promotes the importance of a happy team
- involves staff in decision making
- takes account of equality implications.

15. Roles and responsibilities

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

The governing body is responsible for:

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the headteacher
- receiving any concerns from members of staff
- ensuring that the resources are in place to keep staff workload at healthy levels
- reviewing this policy in conjunction with the headteacher
- considering how its own members are treated and valued
- ensuring that demands are not placed on individual members of staff that interfere unfairly with their work-life balance
- operating a sensitive performance management policy
- ensuring that other school policies and procedures take account of staff wellbeing
- overseeing that change management is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communication
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- acting as gatekeeper and prioritising reforms and innovations
- ensuring that staff are equipped with the right training to do the job confidently
- ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- providing meeting guidelines that are agreed upon and followed
- planning the year's timetable considerably bearing in mind staff commitments
- providing a set budget for staff facilities, environment and welfare
- including in professional development meetings opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions

- making special arrangements, where possible, to enable staff to combine the demands of family life and work life
- recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances
- ensuring accessibility and the accessibility of SLT to members of staff
- ensuring that there are effective methods of communication
- ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed
- maintaining contact with staff during long absences
- ensuring that a mentor system operates within the school and especially for each new members of staff and that the staff induction process is put into place
- conducting risk assessments for work-related stress
- relevant time protected for staff such as PPA, staff meeting time for reports etc.

The headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the deputy headteacher and senior leaders who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

Members of staff are responsible for:

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

We aim to support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health. Should a member of staff raise wellbeing issues support will be given by line managers or senior staff, for example:

- Giving time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing workload and prioritisation of tasks
- Arranging external support such as counselling, mediation, or occupational health services.

Examples of good practice are followed to promote mental health and wellbeing among staff such as:

- providing lunch and refreshments in Inset training
- carrying out team-building exercises as part of staff CPD
- giving staff the option to plan their own social activities
- holding designated health and wellbeing days

- celebrating staff achievements
- providing pastoral services – drop-ins and confidential sessions
- creative spaces for staff to be able to meet, relax and work quietly
- making refreshments available to staff
- providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing

16. Support in specific circumstances

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to specific circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services but the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, support will be given on an individual basis.

It is recognised that promoting staff health and wellbeing is an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Training and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing will be made available for all staff. An open door policy to senior leadership is established should any member of staff need to speak to someone about any issues of concern. Supervision and appraisal will allow for mutual communication and identification of support required.

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

17. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it remains up to date, useful and relevant. It will also be regularly reviewed in accordance with local and national policy changes.