

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

The Dixie Grammar Senior School
The Dixie Grammar Junior School (including EYFS)
The Pippins Nursery School

August 2023

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1.0 Policy statement

At the Dixie Grammar School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, Dixie families, staff and governors and our open culture allows pupils' voices to be heard. Through the effective use of whole school policies and procedures as well as targeted approaches for individuals, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues. This policy helps to facilitate consistency of approach and equality of provision for our pupils. We want all our pupils to:

- feel valued
- have a sense of belonging
- be able to make and maintain positive and healthy relationships
- be able to cope with the challenges of everyday life, manage stress and deal with change
- feel confident so they can learn, grow and achieve

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and Governors – outlining the Dixie Grammar School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including [First Aid policy](#) in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue and our [SEND policy](#) where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

3.0 Policy Aims

This policy aims to set out how we:

- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all pupils and staff.
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues in pupils.
- enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- provide the right support to pupils with mental health needs, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral team
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- SEND lead
- Academic Support Coordinator
- Mental Health First Aiders
- PSD/RSE Coordinators
- School listener

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Head of Pastoral.

If there is a concern that a pupil is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures should be followed. If a pupil presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including consultation with Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) and/or involving the emergency services if necessary.

Key members of staff:

Joanne Banton	Head of Pastoral, Lead DSL (3-18) and Mental Health First Aider	bantohn@dixie.org.uk
Catrina Young	Deputy DSL, Deputy Head, Head of Staff and SEND lead	youngc@dixie.org.uk
Jon Dixon	Deputy DSL, Head of Academic and Sixth Form	dixonj@dixie.org.uk
Richard Lynn	Headmaster	head@dixie.org.uk
Alex Buttery	School Listener	butterya@dixie.org.uk
Lisa Pittwood	Nominated Safeguarding Governor	pittwoodl@dixie.org.uk
Rachel Marshall	Academic Needs Coordinator and High Level Teaching Assistant	marshallr@dixie.org.uk
Sarah Baker	Head of Pastoral (Junior) and Mental Health First Aider	bakers@dixie.org.uk
Lower Sixth	Peer Mentors	

5.0 Individual Care Plans

The school may draw up an individual care plan or safety plan when a pupil requires additional support or has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue. The development of this plan should involve the pupil, parents and where applicable, relevant health professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff can play

6.0 Teaching about mental health

At the Dixie Grammar School, we believe in supporting all aspects of children and young people's lives, not just their academic progress. We know that helping them develop qualities like resilience, determination and the ability to meet challenges will not only be invaluable qualities during their time at the school, but also throughout their life, well into adulthood.

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSD and RSE curriculum and our Positive Education and Peer Mentoring training programmes. Mental health and wellbeing sessions are also supported by Form time and class activities, well-being questionnaires, assemblies and whole school awareness weeks. Incorporating this into our school life at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupils' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people. Additionally, we use such sessions as a vehicle for providing pupils who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as guiding students if they are supporting any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Guidance and resources are drawn from sources such as Mentally Healthy Schools, YoungMinds and Place2Be to ensure that we discuss mental health and emotional wellbeing in a safe and sensitive manner.

7.0 Signposting

We ensure that pupils, staff and parents are aware of the support available to them within school and in the local community and how they can access this support.

We display relevant sources of support in communal areas in school and highlight sources of support to both pupils and parents via the curriculum and in school communications.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

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

8.0 Sources of support at school and in the local community

We signpost pupils to the following as appropriate – this is not an exhaustive list and we respond to the needs of individuals in a timely and sensitive manner.

School Based Support

- Peer Mentors
- Pastoral team including Class Teacher, Form Tutor and/ or Head of Section
- Head of Pastoral/ Mental Health First Aider (Senior School)
- Head of Pastoral/ Mental Health First Aider (Junior School)
- School Listener
- Art Group

- LGBTQ+ group

External Support

- Leicestershire Children and Family Wellbeing Service
- Leicestershire Teen Health 11-19
- NHS Every Mind Matters
- YoungMinds
- Kooth
- Relate
- Childline
- Shout
- NSPCC

9.0 Warning Signs

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 record their concern on CPOMS and alert the Head of Pastoral/ DSL as appropriate. Possible warning signs of which all staff should be aware include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/ sleeping/ social habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family/ becoming socially withdrawn
- 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

10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, young carers, those who have had previous access to CFWS and/ or CAMHS, looked after children, those living with parents/family members with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We ensure timely and effective identification of pupils who would benefit from targeted support in school and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- ensuring pupils have access to pastoral care and support in school so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- providing specific help for those pupils most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional and behavioural problems;
- discussing options for support with parents/carers as appropriate and working together to agree the approach for support;
- working closely with Leicestershire Children and Family Wellbeing Services (Early Help), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) including the Crisis Team and other agencies where appropriate for assessment and referral to support pupils who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- responding in a timely manner to notifications from Operation Encompass;
- providing pupils with clear and consistent information about the opportunities and support available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should be in line with school policies regarding confidentiality;
- providing pupils with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and

10.1 School Listener

We provide an Independent School Listener one day a week - this support is free of charge to students. Our school listener is a qualified counsellor and will carry out an initial meeting on pupils signposted to her by the DSL. Pupils are offered an initial six week block of 30 minute sessions – this arrangement can be terminated at any time and equally the number of sessions offered can be extended.

Parental support is required for younger pupils however, older pupils (Upper School and Sixth Form) may be permitted to meet with the School listener without parental consent if contact with parents is a barrier to access.

Listening sessions are confidential but any information passed on by the pupil which may be of a safeguarding nature or indicate they are in immediate danger must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Head of Pastoral. The School Listener and Head of Pastoral/ DSL meet and review weekly.

11.0 Managing disclosures

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend or peer, to an adult in school or to a Peer Mentor, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Both staff and Peer Mentors understand the need to listen rather than to advise and not to ask leading questions.

Guidance on **Receiving a disclosure** and **Recording a concern** are detailed in the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) in Appendix 2. Peer mentors receive guidance on disclosures and

confidentiality as part of their training programme. All disclosures should be recorded in writing and shared with the DSL who will offer support and advice about next steps. All actions taken will be recorded on CPOMS and the person bringing the disclosure to the DSL will receive assurance that support is in place.

12.0 Confidentiality

It is very important to be honest about confidentiality. Pupils need to understand concerns or disclosures will be passed on and details about who will be told and when, what will be told to them and why there is a need to tell them must be discussed with the pupil. Ideally, consent should be gained from the pupil first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as when pupils are in danger of harm.

Sharing concerns or disclosures with the DSL, or Pastoral Team where appropriate, also safeguards staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague, this ensures one single member of staff is not solely responsible for individual pupils and continuity of care is maintained in the event of staff absence. It also allows access to other avenues of (external) support.

Parents are crucial to safeguarding their children and should be informed when school has safeguarding concerns for example in the event of self-harm, bullying or child on child abuse. However, in circumstances where informing parents puts the pupil (or others) at increased risk, it is not appropriate to inform parents without referring to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Leicestershire Children's Social Care and/ or the Police.

13.0 Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to liaise with parents, staff members need to be sensitive in their approach as hearing about a disclosure for the first time can be distressing. Consideration of the following should take place first:

- Can we meet with the parents face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place in school?
- Who should be present?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support networks can be helpful at this point. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should parents have further questions or concerns as well as consideration of a follow-up meeting or phone call. Each meeting should finish with agreed next steps and a record of the meeting recorded on

CPOMS. An individual care plan or safety plan Individual Care Plan can be created at this point if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents and families

We will continue to work in partnership with parents to promote emotional health and wellbeing by highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues in our school communications. We will also continue to signpost parents to external sources of support as appropriate.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a pupil is experiencing mental health issues and has shared with others, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. In conversations with the pupil and their parents, support for peers can be provided in one to one or group settings sharing advice about:

- 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

Additionally, we highlight for peers:

- where and how to access support for themselves
- healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

15.0 Supporting Staff

Positive staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for retaining and motivating staff and for promoting pupil wellbeing and academic attainment. The school recognises that there are times when an individual member of staff's personal life places additional demands on their role in school - we seek to support the individual in these circumstances. A member of SLT is designated as Head of Staff.

SLT has an open-door policy and staff are encouraged to discuss concerns and worries with them. Early problem solving and support is in place to de-escalate difficulties and staff have clear information about how they can get help inside and outside the school should they need it.

At the Dixie, staff recognition and praise forms part of our school's culture and staff are encouraged to support each other for example through academic and pastoral teams, setting aside regular time in meetings, a positive performance management system and a range of social opportunities.

16.0 Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues to enable them to help to keep pupils safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of continuing professional development.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school INSET should be discussed with the Head of Staff and Head of Pastoral who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

17.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of adoption of this policy	August 2023
Date of last review of this policy	n/a
Date for next review of this policy	Academic year 2024-25
Policy owner (SLT)	Head of Pastoral
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Governing Body

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of SLT.