

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

*Mental health is 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 his or her community.*

(World Health Organisation)

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Whitgift School promotes the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of all within its community. We aim to provide an environment which encourages self-confidence, a feeling of self-worth and the knowledge that students' and staff concerns will be listened to and acted upon quickly. "Every student should feel safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing." (Every Child Matters, 2004, DfES).

The School recognises that the key to successful implementation of this is an awareness and understanding amongst staff, parents and students of current mental health issues, to facilitate early intervention, and active promotion to destigmatise these themes. Mental health issues can be destigmatised by educating students, staff and parents. Whitgift School seeks to achieve this through the Ideatum (PSHEE) programme, a range of visiting speakers, regular staff training and pastoral parental engagement.

Wellbeing plays a central role in the School's ethos and as such, is the responsibility of all, as recognised through our whole-school approach. The physical, mental and emotional health benefits of exercise are well-documented, and the School actively encourages sport for all. Our focus on mental health and wellbeing not only helps to provide a healthy and happy school environment for all and prepare the citizens of tomorrow with sound character and values, but also directly supports our more immediate mission: the promotion of effective learning and academic success.

This policy aims to:

- Describe the School's approach to social, emotional and mental health issues
- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues to facilitate early intervention of mental health concerns
- Alert staff to warning signs and risk factors

- Provide support and guidance to all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, dealing with students who suffer from mental health issues
- Provide support mechanisms to students who suffer from mental health issues, their peers and parents / guardians

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School Policies:

- Safeguarding Children policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions policy
- Substance Use and Misuse (Education) policy
- Substance Use and Misuse (Discipline) policy
- PSHEE policy
- Online Safety policy

### **Child Protection Responsibilities**

Whitgift School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Dayle Kirby (Pastoral Deputy / Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- David Cresswell (Senior Deputy / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Adrian Norris (Assistant Head Pastoral and Boarding / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Faye Carter (Designated Mental Health Lead / Director of Sixth Form / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Ross Munro (Director of Middle Years (appointed September 2023) – will become a DDSL in due course)
- Sami Michael (Director of Junior Years and Admissions / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Katy Lake (Senior School Nurse)
- Annabel Roditi, Nikki Berry, Giulia Dallas and Sharon Rennie (School Counsellors)
- Osman Bhatti (Head of Ideatum (PSHEE))
- Rev Alan Bayes (School Chaplain and designated member of staff for Looked After Children)
- Kirstie Richardson (Head of Learning Support)
- Tom Stead (Head of Fourth Form and teacher with responsibility for Prevent)

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed on a day to day basis.

The School has appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority (Pastoral Deputy / DSL) to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and safeguarding. He is supported by the Assistant Head Pastoral and Boarding, and the Directors of Junior Years, Middle Years and Sixth Form, who oversee the pastoral work of the year group teams. Parents are welcome to approach the Pastoral Deputy if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child in the School, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the child's form tutor, Head of Year or Director of Section, who will notify the Pastoral Deputy in accordance with these procedures.

### **Promoting students' mental health at Whitgift School**

Whitgift School works to mitigate against the risk of mental health problems in our students by supporting them to become more resilient and minimising problems as they arise. Whitgift School also has arrangements in place which reflect the importance of safeguarding and protecting the welfare of its students as set out in the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Whitgift School is committed to supporting the social, emotional and mental health of all within its community through:

- **A committed Senior Leadership Team** that sets a culture within the School that values all students, allows them to feel a sense of belonging and makes it possible to talk about problems in a non-stigmatising way.
- **An ethos of setting high expectations of attainment for all students with consistently applied support.** This includes clear policies on behaviour and bullying that set out the responsibilities of everyone in the School and the range of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for students.
- **An effective strategic role for the Head of Learning Support** ensuring all adults working in the School understand their responsibilities to the children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including students whose persistent mental health difficulties mean they need special educational provision.
- **Working with parents and guardians as well as with the students themselves** ensuring their opinions and wishes are considered and that they are kept fully informed so they can participate in the decisions made.

- **Continuous professional development for staff** that makes it clear that promoting good mental health is the responsibility of all members of the School staff and community, informs them about the early signs of mental health problems, what is and is not a cause for concern, and what to do if they think they have spotted a developing problem. A number of staff members are trained in Mental Health First Aid and others will continue to be so.
- **Clear systems and processes to help staff who identify children and young people with possible mental health problems**, providing routes to escalate issues with clear referral and accountability systems. Year group teams and tutors play a pivotal role in identifying patterns of behaviour which might point to mental health concerns. Whitgift Schoolworks closely with other professionals to have a range of support services that can be put in place depending on the identified need.
- **A healthy whole-school approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of all students in the School**, through co-ordinated teaching about the benefits of sport, exercise, healthy eating, managing stress, encouraging the active participation of all through the School's co-curricular programme, and education about substance misuse and online activity.

### Supporting individual students

All members of staff will work together to identify and monitor mental health concerns. Sensitive and prompt communication between members of staff will help to create a 'first line' in supporting individual students and responding to disclosures. Staff will record information accurately and regularly in order to track concerns. This will complement the School's pastoral tracking processes in iSAMS. In addition, senior staff and pastoral leaders will meet twice a term to discuss acute concerns and make suitable arrangements as required.

The key elements that enable Whitgift School to identify children at risk of mental health problems are: -

- **Effective use of data** so that changes in students' patterns of attainment, attendance, behaviour or presentation are noticed and can be acted upon.
- **An effective pastoral system that prioritises individualised care** so that tutors know the boys in their forms well and can quickly pick up on poor or unusual behaviour. Tutors will also ensure that they establish close communication with all families of tutees early on to facilitate the sharing of information. Effective handovers will also take place between Heads of Year from one year to the next.
- **An effective system of behaviour and sanctions** which provides the structure through which staff can escalate issues and address the root

causes of poor performance.

All staff will be encouraged to look out for a number of early warning signs which may signify mental health issues. A list of these can be found in Appendix I

It is important that all those who work with children and young people are alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by the students themselves.

Whitgift School is mindful that some groups of children are more vulnerable to mental health difficulties than others. These include, but are not limited to, looked-after children, children with learning difficulties, children who have experienced significant life events, and self-driven, high achieving and / or anxious individuals. These students are carefully monitored and their progress reviewed regularly by key pastoral staff.

### **Special educational needs (SEN)**

Persistent mental health difficulties may lead to students having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. Whitgift School will consider whether the student will benefit from being identified as having an additional educational need, taking into account the views and wishes of the students and parents.

Where Whitgift School has identified that a student needs additional educational provision due to their mental health problems, this will comprise provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age. This means provision that goes beyond the differentiated approaches and learning arrangements normally provided as part of high quality, personalised teaching. It may take the form of additional support from within the setting or require the involvement of specialist staff or support services.

### **Whitgift School has a range of means to support such students through strong pastoral support, including:**

- Access to counselling (with the exception of adopted children and children in care – ref. Ofsted, or any children of School staff)
- The Medical Centre
- Learning Support Department
- Tutors and Year group teams
- School Chaplain
- Sixth Form mentoring scheme
- Trained Mental Health First Aiders

Whitgift School has a good understanding of the mental health support services that are available in its local area, both through the NHS, private and voluntary sector organisations. The School works closely with our own counsellors and with local health partners to ensure that they are clear when referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are appropriate.

Most children with additional educational needs will have them met through the School and will not need Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plans) or Statements.

### **Mental Health First Aid**

In order to ensure adequate mental health first aid provision and awareness, it is our policy that members of trained personnel (teaching and support staff) in Youth Mental Health First Aid are available to support those students who are experiencing mental and /or emotional difficulties. These trained staff members will be made known to the students through the wearing of a yellow lanyard.

A qualified youth mental health first aider is someone who has undertaken a training module approved by MHFA England and holds a valid certificate of competence. MHFA does not prepare people to become therapists. It does, however, enable people to recognise the symptoms of mental ill health, how to provide initial help (first aid) and how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help. The certificate must be issued by an approved organisation. See Appendix II for a list of current Youth Mental Health First Aiders.

### **Counselling Provision**

Whitgift has two designated counselling rooms with the aim of promoting feelings of trust, safety, containment and confidentiality.

For students who suffer from emotional or psychological difficulties and distress, counselling offers an accepting, confidential space for one-to-one weekly sessions during term time. Whitgift counselling takes a person-centred approach which is non-directive and non-judgmental. Counselling is an opportunity for students to explore anything that is troubling them, how they feel about themselves, their relationships, patterns of thinking, explore feelings, behaviour, life choices, difficult experiences and can facilitate change.

The counsellors are skilled listeners who help students connect with feelings and to clarify thinking, while providing support to find their own meaning to explore misunderstanding, and recognising choices, facilitating personal growth and self-awareness.

Students of 16 and over are entitled to consent to therapy independently from their parents. Under the age of 16, students deemed 'Gillick competent' (a term originating in medical law to determine if a child has the maturity to consent to treatment without need for parental permission) have the legal right to request counselling without their parents being informed – this is assessed on an individual basis.

Further details regarding the School's counsellors can be found in Appendix II

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

Parents are advised to disclose to the School any known mental health problem or any concerns they may have about a student's mental health or emotional wellbeing. This includes any changes in family circumstances that may impact the student's wellbeing. This will allow the School to put the necessary support mechanisms in place.

Students may choose to confide in a member of the School staff if they are concerned about their own welfare or that of a peer. Students should be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. **If a member of staff considers a student is at serious risk of causing themselves harm, then confidentiality cannot be kept.** Staff will not make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a student puts pressure on a member of staff to do so.

Parents should be involved wherever possible, although the student's wishes should always be taken into account. The School will balance the student's right of confidentiality against the School's overarching duties to safeguard students' health, safety and welfare and to protect students from suffering significant harm.

In the event of a mental health crisis presenting in School, parents will be contacted and requested to accompany their son to Accident and Emergency. In the event of being unable to contact parents, the School reserves the right to accompany the student in need to appropriate medical care.

### **Documents consulted in drawing up this policy:**

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Sept 2023) (DfE)
- *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper and next steps* (Dec 2017) (DfE)
- *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools* (Nov 2018) (DfE)
- *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: a whole school and college approach* (September 2021)
- *Behaviour solutions – Understanding and supporting Mental Health in Children and Young People*

- *Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future (DfE)*
- *School Counselling for All (BACP)*
- *Suicide risk management (BMJ)*
- *MOSA School Mental Health Policy*
- Current Whitgift School policies



## Appendix I

### **Risk factors which make children more vulnerable to mental health difficulties**

- Low self-esteem
- Life changes: changing schools; birth of a sibling
- Physical illness
- Bullying and/or discrimination
- Peer pressure / peer-on-peer abuse
- Loss of friendship / bullying
- Learning difficulties
- Poor ability to relate to others / poor attachment
- Dysfunctional family life; including domestic violence
- Disadvantaged background
- Neglect; including hostile or rejecting relationships at home
- Severe psychological trauma – e.g. physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Death in the family
- Family separation
- Long-term illness
- Cultural/social expectations
- Substance misuse (drugs and/or alcohol) – by the child or their parents
- Genetics – family history of mental illness, including parental psychiatric illness
- Being in care or adopted
- Being extremely/pathologically self-driven
- Academic failure or exclusion
- Disability
- Early behavioural difficulties
- Harsh or inconsistent discipline
- Young carer

## Early signs of poor mental health

- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Sleep problems
- Losing interest in activities and tasks that were previously enjoyed
- Increased anxiety, looking or feeling 'jumpy' or agitated, sometimes including panic attacks
- Changes in eating habits and/or appetite: over-eating, bingeing, not eating
- Deteriorating performance at school/ changes in attendance, behaviour or appearance
- Mood swings that are very extreme or fast and out of character
- Isolating behaviour / isolation from peers
- Aggression; anti-social behaviour
- Compulsive behaviour
- Wanting to go out a lot more, needing very little sleep, feeling highly energetic, creative and sociable, making new friends rapidly, trusting strangers or spending excessively – this may signal that the person is becoming 'high'
- Self-harming behaviour, such as cutting, burning, drug-overdose (wearing baggy or long clothing/avoiding PE)
- Physical injuries
- Verbalising thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- Verbalising extreme ideas
- erratic, unaccountable behaviour (e.g. leaving lessons suddenly)
- signs of dysfunctionality in family life
- changes in clothing
- signs of misusing alcohol or drugs (legal or illegal)

All these signs can vary in severity. Often, they can be relatively minor, or pass quickly. However, if they are more than this, becoming severe, distressing or ongoing, it is important to seek further support.

Only medical professionals can make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition.

## Appendix II

### Youth Mental Health First Aiders

Rev. Alan Bayes	Chaplain
Leyla Blake	Office Support staff
Oli Brown	History / Third Form
Faye Carter Designated Mental Health Lead	Languages / Sixth Form
Anna Cook	Learning Support
Amanda Glenin	Learning Support
Andrew Hunt	Languages
Katy Lake	Medical
Susan Mann	Science support staff
Sami Michael	English / Junior Years & Admissions
Angela Nicholls	DT support staff
Marianne Ofner	EAL / Languages
Siobhan Patrick	English / Sixth Form
Kirstie Richardson	Learning Support
Angie Robe	Boarding
Daniel Webb	PE
<i>Osman Bhatti (Head of Ideatum (PSHEE))</i>	<i>NCFE CACHE Understanding Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace</i>

## **Appendix III**

### **The Counsellors**

Our counsellors, Annabel Roditi, Nikki Berry, Giulia Dallas and Sharon Rennie provide a dedicated service to Whitgift School. They follow school policies and procedures as well as the codes of conduct and ethics, professional standards and regulations, as required by their various professional registering bodies. If you would like to discuss their professional accreditation, please contact the School. As required by the psychotherapy and counselling profession, they all receive professional supervision with an external, qualified supervisor, who is also bound by the same professional codes of conduct and confidentiality. Annabel is the Counselling Service Lead and has also trained in the supervision of other therapists.

### **Data Protection**

In-line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) and in accordance with the principles set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) Annabel, Nikki, Giulia and Sharon have considered the use and storage of data for the Whitgift Counselling Service and follow the School's Data Processing Policy with a few additional considerations:

A consent form; attendance records; any questionnaires used; and brief counselling notes all constitute clinical records and are kept securely and specific only to the counselling service. Only Annabel, Nikki, Giulia and Sharon have access to this sensitive data. Only the client has rights of access to these notes; they are exempt from a Subject Access Request submitted to Whitgift School under the 'healthy degree of privacy' aspect of GDPR.

The consent form and attendance records will be kept until the student turns 21 years old, but any questionnaires used, and the counselling notes will be securely disposed of at the client's request, as discussed with their counsellor, or upon them leaving the School.

### **Complaints regarding counselling**

If at any time you have any concerns or questions about Annabel's, Nikki's, Giulia's or Sharon's work, they would be happy to discuss these with you. Alternatively, Mr Kirby, Pastoral Deputy, would be happy to discuss any concerns. If you would prefer to contact any of the above-mentioned organisations directly, please find their details here:

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)  
[ftp@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:ftp@hcpc-uk.org)  
0800 328 4218

United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)  
[complaints@ukcp.org.uk](mailto:complaints@ukcp.org.uk)  
020 7014 9955

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)  
[complaints@bacp.co.uk](mailto:complaints@bacp.co.uk) or [ask@bacp.co.uk](mailto:ask@bacp.co.uk)  
01455 883300 (select option 3)

The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) and The Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education (IATE) are not regulatory bodies and therefore do not have a complaints procedure.

## APPENDIX IV

### Useful resources

- [Young Minds](#) is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health.
- [Place2Be](#) is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities.
- [Mind](#) is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health.
- [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues.
- [Anna Freud Centre](#) is a children's mental health charity providing specialist help and training
- [ChildLine](#) is a counselling service for parents, children and young people
- [Samaritans](#) is a confidential emotional support service
- [Papyrus](#) offers advice and information for parents, carers, teachers and friends of young people at risk of suicide
- [Shout](#) is a 24-hour mental health texting service for support in a crisis
- [Children's Mental Health Week](#) is an annual opportunity to encourage children, young people and adults to celebrate their uniqueness.

## APPENDIX V

### Whitgift School Pupil Counselling Consent Form Private and Confidential

Today's Date .....

Date of this Form and your Notes' Erasure.....

This form covers consent, confidentiality, record keeping and safety concerns.

Counselling offers an opportunity for you to explore your thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. This consent form explains important information about **your rights to privacy and confidentiality**.

Please read it carefully and if you have any questions, do ask your counsellor.

Student Name .....

Form.....

Date of Birth .....

16-18 years old ..... Parents informed: Yes..... No.....

10-15 years old ..... Parental consent: Yes..... No.....

Name of Referrer .....

10-15 years old ..... Gillick Competent: Yes.....No.....

Staff Initials: .....

This consent form and a record of your attendance at sessions will be kept in accordance with your retention wishes below.

#### **Your Notes Explained**

My counsellor will keep some brief notes of meetings to act as an aide memoire in order to provide me with the best possible support. These notes will be kept on the legal basis of my consent.

These counselling notes will be kept on a secure database, in secure cloud storage (within the UK/EU) and/or in locked cabinets and will only be seen by my individual counsellor. Before I give consent, I understand that I can discuss with my counsellor how long I would like my notes to be stored.

## Retention of Notes

I wish for my counselling notes (and any artwork produced in my sessions) to be securely stored until (delete as applicable):

- 7 years after I leave Whitgift School.
- I leave counselling.
- I leave the School.

This will be the retention period for any personal data collected in relation to this counselling.

## Confidentiality

I understand that in the following exceptional circumstances my counsellor may have to share information about me with another professional:

- If my counsellor thinks that I am at serious risk of harm, or that someone close to me is at risk.
- If my counsellor thinks that I am not able to take responsibility for my decisions.
- In an emergency or when ordered by a court of law.

My counsellor will always endeavour to involve me in decisions about information sharing whenever possible.

I understand that sometimes counsellors must provide reports on their work as part of their on-going professional training. If my counsellor's work with me is used for this purpose it will be anonymised so that my identity is disguised.

## Counsellor's Supervision

I understand that to ensure my counsellor works to the high standards set by their professional accrediting organisation (BACP, UKCP or another professional organisation) that my counsellor's work is overseen by another qualified counsellor, in the role of supervisor. I understand that I will only be identified by my initials or first name.

## My Rights

I understand that I have the right to access, rectify, erase, restrict or object to any of my personal data held in relation to these sessions. Erasure, restriction or objection may result in my counselling being terminated should this adversely affect the work of my counsellor. I have the right to withdraw consent at any time, but this may also terminate my counselling for the same reason.

## Complaints

If I wish to raise any concerns or questions regarding my counsellor or the processing of my personal data, I understand that I can contact either Mr D Kirby, Designated Safeguarding Lead at Whitgift School, or, if he is not available, another member of the designated safeguarding staff. For data protection issues I can also make a referral to or lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), although the ICO recommends that steps are taken to resolve the matter with the School before involving the regulator.

## Student Consent to Counselling:

Signature .....



Counselling Start Date: .....

Counselling End Date: .....

Whitgift School is a member of The John Whitgift Foundation, a registered charity (number 312612), with Head Office at North End, Croydon, CR9 1SS. The John Whitgift Foundation is registered with the UK Information Commissioner's Office as a Data Controller through the payment of the Data Protection Fee. It is committed to complying with all aspects of data protection and its responsibilities under both the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

Author: Mrs F Carter, Designated Mental Health Lead

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