



KING EDWARD VI HANDSWORTH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Positive mental health and wellbeing policy 2024

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Authorised by:		Sign and Date:	

The Schools' Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy.

Related Documents/Policies: please follow this [link](#) to all the policies below.

Reference	Title
	Behaviour for Learning Policy
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
	Anti-bullying Policy
	Online Safety Policy
	Bereavement and Loss Advice Policy
	Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping and Substances Policy
	Attendance and Punctuality Policy
	Suicide-Safer School Policy
	Self-harm Policy
	PSHCE and RSE policy

Please note that this and all other safeguarding and pastoral policies have been created with stakeholders in mind.

Policies are compliant with our legal and statutory guidance and adhere to best practice; however, they are laid out in a way that is accessible to those for whom the policies are intended: school staff and governors; students and parents. Please click on the headings/links in the contents table below/throughout the documents to take you to the section(s) you require.

We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out and identified in the following documents:

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(Sections 89, 90 and 91\)](#)
[Education Act 2011](#)

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Commission: Protected Characteristics \(2020\)](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[Children and Families Act 2014 \(Part 3\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)

[Statutory RSHE curriculum guidance](#)

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) MISSION STATEMENT

We celebrate diversity and value fairness and equal treatment for everyone at the school regardless of their race, age, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. We promote equality through our rich and diverse curriculum, equipping students with the skills, knowledge and understanding to succeed in a diverse world outside and beyond school. We challenge discrimination in all its forms so that all members of the school community feel safe and valued.

Unconscious Bias Key definitions:

There are two types of biases

- Conscious bias (also known as explicit bias) and
- Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias)

Conscious bias is an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. **Unconscious bias** is implicit bias. It is unintended and subtle, based on unconscious thought. People may have unfair beliefs about others but not be aware of them. Typically unconscious bias happens involuntarily without any awareness or intentional control. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups.

Under the 2010 Equality Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of nine areas termed in the legislation as protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

How to overcome unconscious bias

- Be aware of unconscious bias.
- Don't rush decisions, rather, take your time and consider issues properly.
- Justify decisions by evidence and record the reasons for your decisions
- Ensure that everyone knows what kind of behaviour is expected of them.
- Ensure that everyone knows how to report prejudice related incidents.
- Encourage people to work with a wider range of people and get to know them as individuals.
- Focus on the positive behaviour of people and not negative stereotypes.
- Employers should implement policies and procedures which limit the influence of individual characteristics and preferences.

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INTRODUCTION

King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls is dedicated to ensuring that our school environment supports learning and the wellbeing of students and staff through a strong sense of community cohesion. Cooperation, support, and respect are the foundations of our community and we work hard to provide a safe school where students and staff feel included in every aspect of school life and comfortable to voice their opinions.

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding and pastoral care policies available on our school website and the Foundation/Academy Trust policies for staff and students available to staff via iTrent.

We expect all in our Community to promote positive mental health and resilience and act to reduce the risk of poor mental health developing, particularly by reducing stigma surrounding mental health.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity... Mental health is defined as the 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 her or his community.
(WHO 2014)

Mental health is on a continuum, with good mental health at one end of the spectrum and mental illness at the other end. It is important to distinguish between someone who is **experiencing** a mental health issue, such as anxiety, and the **diagnosis** of a mental health issue. Some mental health issues are temporary or triggered by certain factors; others have greater permanency. **Everyone** has mental health but there are times when we are at different places on the continuum and, depending where this is, we may need more support than at other times. Being able to recognise when we need this help is absolutely crucial.

The number one priority for our school is that we want all staff, students and parents to understand the principle: mental health is a fundamental aspect of everyone's health.

Mental health is influenced by a range of social, biological and psychological factors including social connections and physical activity. If we know what factors are in our power to change and what resources we can draw on to support ourselves, we will have autonomy over our own wellbeing.

Risks to mental health could include:

- Conflict, including domestic abuse;
- Relationship breakdown;
- Parental mental health and substance misuse needs;
- Loss/bereavement;
- Child/adult poor physical health;
- Financial difficulties;
- Poor attendance and punctuality;
- Bullying (perceived or actual);
- Expectations;
- Learning needs/approach to learning (this applies to adults as well as children);
- School/work environment;
- Lack of predictability/routine.
- Where young people are growing up in areas of deprivation this has the greatest impact in terms of their health.

Children and young people's emotional wellbeing is now at the heart of education policy, and the pandemic has shone a light on just how important schools are in promoting mental health. Mental health is specifically referenced in the Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children: [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#), which includes reference to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.

THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, we need to be mindful of the ongoing and long-term impact lockdown has had on our young people, which will continue for many years to come. Ndidi Okezie, the chief executive of the charity UK Youth, states that "Today's young people are facing a series of immense challenges that cannot be underestimated," she said. "The lingering effects of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis are having a profound impact on young people's education, mental wellbeing, their financial security and indeed their confidence in the future."

The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2023 survey, published in November 2023 found that more than a fifth of children and young people are struggling with mental health problems.

- 20.3% of eight- to 16-year-olds had a probable mental disorder.
- Probable mental disorders were even more common among 17-19-year-olds, at 23.3%.
- Among the 17-25 age range, the rate of poor mental health in 2023 was around twice as high in girls and young women than in boys and young men.
- For 11-16-year-olds, probable mental disorders were present in 22.6% of those surveyed – with roughly equal distribution by gender.
- The survey explained that there had been a rise in probable mental disorders in children and young people between 2017 and 2020 and the rate had remained at the higher level since then.
- Meanwhile, the survey found that the prevalence of eating disorders had increased substantially.
- Among 17-19-year-olds, the rate of eating disorders rose from 0.8% in 2017 to 12.5% in 2023, and for 11-16-year-olds it increased from 0.5% to 2.6%.

In an article in the Nursing Times, Professor Kevin Gournay, a registered mental health nurse, psychologist and researcher, said the mental health of young people would have been influenced by the Covid-19 emergency

period, and in particular the first lockdowns in 2020. Addressing the eating disorder statistics especially, Professor Gournay said the longer-term impact of the pandemic was only now becoming clear. He said: "If you think about the impact of 2020, in particular, those who were aged eight, nine or 10 in that year are now coming into their teenage years, which is where you'll see more eating disorders develop.

There are currently approximately 2 million people on a waiting list for mental health services, so it is imperative that all in our school community monitor and support our young people in the best way we can. We must, however, recognise that we are not mental health experts, and the role of staff in school is to seek guidance and support from external agencies wherever possible and when a student is showing signs of complex and significant mental health needs.

AIMS

This policy therefore, aims to help all stakeholders to achieve the vision of the school, which is that the staff and Governors "are committed to the nurture and development of all those who learn here and seek to inspire all to be their best. We embrace the transformative power of education and value a love of learning and intellectual curiosity. We support all within the school to find, develop and enjoy their interests and passions. Our school offers vibrant extracurricular opportunities and participation is both valued and celebrated. We are a happy and caring school which values and takes pride in diversity and celebrates individuality.

Our purpose is developing students with empathy, understanding and appreciation for other views and opinions. We support students to develop friendships which will last long beyond their time here and empower them to grow into independent, strong people who are equipped with the flexibility and moral courage to deal with the challenges of the modern world."

Our aim is to nurture and develop learners within a happy and caring environment through good behaviour, high expectations and courtesy towards all members of our school community. We want to ensure that all our students leave the school with the key skills they need to continue to progress to the best of their ability in all areas of life.

OUR VISION FOR WELLBEING

Through the values, ethos and culture we advocate every day in line with our school vision, we aim to develop and nurture students and colleagues with sensitivity and mutual respect.

- The school is committed to promoting and protecting emotional wellbeing and mental health for which we have achieved the Wellbeing Award for Schools.
- The school has a clear vision and strategy for promoting and protecting emotional wellbeing and mental health, which is communicated to all involved with the school.
- The school has a positive culture which regards emotional wellbeing and mental health as the responsibility of all.
- The school actively promotes staff emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- The school prioritises professional learning and staff development on emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- The school understands the different types of emotional and mental health needs across the school and has systems in place to respond appropriately.
- The school actively seeks the ongoing participation of the whole-school community in its approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- The school works in partnerships with other schools, agencies and available specialist services to support emotional wellbeing and mental health.

As a school, in order to prioritise and be committed to the wellbeing of all members of our school community, staff and students are committed to the development of resilience through connectedness, kindness and compassion.

Building resilience

Kathryn McEwen defines resilience as “An Individual’s capacity to manage the everyday stress of home and work, remain healthy, adapt and learn from unexpected setbacks and prepare for future challenges proactively.”

Some people are more resilient than others. Everyone needs to be resilient in order to cope with difficult experiences. In school this would include exam pressures, mastering difficult subject content, dealing with negative interactions with others and dealing with challenging situations at home.

Work resilience is about strengthening future performance rather than coping better. It requires a systematic approach so we can be agile and creative. Learning resilience is a dynamic state. Fixed traits, like personality, do not define it. You can rewire the brain to cultivate resilience.

Resilient people do not overcome difficult situations in isolation; they do so with support from the wider social networks to which they are connected (Roffey, 2017). A common misunderstanding of resilience is the ability to ‘bounce back’ from difficult experiences (some theories also reference ‘bouncing forward’). However, resilience is actually a multi-dimensional construct (Luther, 1993); it is possible to be more resilient in certain situations and less resilient in others (Roffey, 2017). It is therefore important to help people to transfer the resilience strategies that they have developed in one situation, to another. Young people can’t simply learn to be resilient, they need to learn resilience through doing.

Academic resilience means students achieve good academic outcomes despite adversity. We will adhere to the research evidence based [boing boing resilience framework](#) to support all members of our school community and take opportunities to remind students of ways to build resilience through our curriculum and form time activities.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body approves this Policy and ensures it is reviewed annually. It ensures that it is communicated to all relevant parties and that the expectations of the school are made clear. Governors will support the school in maintaining positive staff and student mental health and wellbeing and ensuring the school community feels valued, trusted and treated with respect, compassion and empathy.

The Governing Body, Headteacher and staff will ensure there is no differential application of the policy and procedures in line with our EDI statement. They will also ensure that the concerns of students are listened to and appropriately addressed through the Student Council, Assistant Head responsible for Personal Development and EDI (Ms Pettit), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo), (Mrs Lomas) the Senior Leadership Pastoral Directors (Miss Glendenning, Years 7-11 and Mr Heppel, Years 12-13), the Wellbeing Link Governor (Ms Olivia Hinds) .

Greater school connectedness reduces the likelihood that young people will engage in health-compromising/ risk-taking behaviours and increases the likelihood of academic success. School ‘connectedness’ is when school plays a protective role in relation to physical, social and emotional health and enables young people to thrive academically. We want students to know that adults in our school care about them as individuals and care about their learning (not simply in terms of numbers on a spreadsheet). Students with low school connectedness are two to three times more likely to experience mental health symptoms compared to more connected peers (Glover et al, 1998). We measure and respond to the level of students’ school connectedness annually through the Birmingham Wellbeing Census.

Staff in school will help students to recognise what they can do, identify goals and support them in achieving solutions to things they find difficult while drawing on internal and external resources. This solutions-based approach places greater emphasis on achieving goals rather than overly focusing on the difficulties that an individual is experiencing. We therefore encourage young people’s voice; authentic involvement in learning; decision making; and peer-led approaches.

As part of the Early Help wellbeing offer to students, Key Stage Pastoral Leaders are able to facilitate more intense work on social and emotional skill development for young people in difficulty, including one-to-one and group

work. Specialist staff at the School's disposal will be utilised to initiate interventions and ensure they are implemented authentically, before transferring responsibility to mainstream staff whenever possible, to ensure sustainability and integration. Where young people experience difficulties, staff will work together to provide clear plans and pathways for help or referral, using a Team Around the Child approach.

We encourage a sense of community which includes genuine collaboration with parents/carers/families; particularly those of young people in difficulty. It is vital, therefore, that both parents/carers and students work with the school to meet the aims of our policy and work in partnership with us to support the wellbeing of our school community. This policy will be explained as part of the student and staff Induction Programmes. Parents/carers will be notified of the policy and information pertaining to wellbeing will be shared in weekly bulletins; parent/carer workshops; messages from the Headteacher; and during consultation evenings. Parents/carers also receive a daily update of any reward points their child has received and we encourage discussions at home and further praise for going above and beyond.

Lead members of staff:

- **Foundation Leader in Education - Safeguarding and Wellbeing for Schools of King Edward VI Birmingham/Senior Mental Health Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)/Director of Pastoral Care for Years 7-11:** Miss Jane Glendenning;
- **Senior Mental Health Lead/SENDCo:** Mrs Angela Lomas;
- **Senior Mental Health Lead/Associate Assistant Head with responsibility for Key Stage 2-3 transition:** Mrs Charlotte Osborn;
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:** Mr Nick Heppel, Lead DSL Tuesdays and Thursdays (Director of 6th form and Designated Person for Looked After Children); Mr Steven Ramsey, (Interim Deputy Head); Ms Alice Pettit (Assistant Head); Mrs Charlotte Osborn (Assistant Head); Mrs Claire Toy (Family Liaison Officer); Mrs R Ubhi (Key Stage 3 Pastoral Leader); Dr Mary Perrins (Key Stage 4 Pastoral Leader); Mrs Janet Samuels (Key Stage 5 Pastoral Leader).

Jane Glendenning, the Senior Mental Health Lead has a strategic role, liaising with national and local agencies including the Anna Freud Centre and Birmingham Education Partnership, the Academy Trust, governors and staff. Other staff identified, and pastoral staff liaise directly with students and parents, providing and signposting support when necessary.

PROMOTION OF POSITIVE WELLBEING

We cannot, and do not, diagnose any young person with a mental health illness; our role is to promote positive wellbeing (both physical and mental health) through our school culture, values and curriculum.

Our universal offer for all students is:

- Developing student's capability to have and make choices and proactively develop resilience helping them to cope with change and transition;
- All staff having the autonomy to create and implement specific programmes and interventions to support all students;
- Social and emotional skills, attitudes and values are taught in timetabled PSHCE lessons and through subject lessons by well-trained and enthusiastic teachers;
- A PSHCE and PE curriculum which provides students with opportunities to learn about physical and mental health;
- Supporting wellbeing outside of the classroom e.g. extra-curricular activities; student leadership opportunities; UCAS, apprenticeship and careers guidance;
- Comprehensive and supportive KS2 to KS3 and KS4 to KS5 transition programmes for new Year 7 and 12s;
- Assemblies including student lead assemblies and celebration assemblies;
- Form time sessions;
- Weekly Form Tutor discussions with Form Tutors who follow their forms through from Year 8 to 13 and who know their tutees well;
- Year group Pastoral Leaders who follow their year groups through from Year 8 to 13 and know their year groups well;

- A positive rewards system;
- Clear signposting to promote positive wellbeing around site and on Google Classrooms;
- Year 11 1:1 meeting with members of the Senior Leadership Team post-mocks;
- Opportunities for pupil voice about wellbeing in school and in the curriculum;
- Access to Wellbeing Form Captains in each form who advocate for their peers;
- Access to Year 12 prefects dedicated to each form group to be a listening ear;
- Access to Peer Mediators to support friendship difficulties;
- Access to trained Staff Wellbeing Leads who are available to support both staff and students in school;
- Access to staff trained in a range of disciplines to support young people, including: Mental Health First Aid; Suicide Safety; Bereavement; Safeguarding; Dysregulated Eating; Psychological First Aid; and Anxiety and Stress reduction.
- Policies and procedures that support and provide signposting for all students, for example bereavement and loss; suicide-safety; and Anti-bullying;
- A Behaviour for Learning policy that ensures our School ethos is one of respect, positive discipline and aspiration;
- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) mission statement embedded in our core values with a robust system for reporting, recording and responding to prejudice related incidents;
- A strong EDI student committee called IDEA, which contributes to the assembly and themes to celebrate equality and diversity throughout the school, e.g. Diwali, Black History Month, Disability Awareness, Pride;
- Providing students with access to self-referred support including advertising external support services, e.g. ChildLine, Kooth and Pause.

Our support for students with additional needs includes:

- Providing a safe, private, confidential and welcoming space in the lower or upper school Pastoral offices or the school Learning Hub;
- Staff working together to provide clear plans and pathways for help or referral, using a Team Around the Child approach;
- Providing specific support for mental health and wellbeing of children with Special Educational Needs;
- Targeted interventions on site for those identified with mental health needs, e.g. 1:1 pastoral meetings; workshops with school staff or The Wellbeing Crew in response to pupil voice/surveys;
- Evaluation of the outcomes of targeted interventions for children with identified mental health needs;
- Providing opportunities for young people to support each other e.g. peer mentoring with the Young Wellbeing Leads;
- When available, access to Student Social Workers in school who run targeted and bespoke workshops based on school data;
- Staff support to make a referral to [Building Connections](#) an online service for young people up to the age of 19, empowering them to find a way through loneliness.
- Access to referral systems such as Anna Freud Support and the School Health Support Service.

Our support for students with significant/complex needs is:

- To stay informed of changes to the local offer so that we can direct parents and young people to organisations who can support them;
- To have trained Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Safeguarding Leads who will communicate with Children and Adult Mental Health Services in relation to a young person with an identified mental health need;
- To have a suitably trained Family Liaison Officer who will work with families to signpost and support those affected by poor mental health and wellbeing;
- To have a clear plan and pathway for each child who is referred to an external agency, including requesting regular updates on progress made in relation to this support.

INFORMATION FOR STAFF AND GOVERNORS

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The Senior Mental Health Lead(s) will review this policy to assess its implementation and effectiveness and re-design further strategies to improve procedures if necessary.

The Senior Mental Health Lead(s) will use the Mental Wellbeing Checklist (source: Safeguarding Essentials and Optimus Education) when reviewing mental health and well-being provision. This checklist will be regularly reviewed to ensure policies, training and lesson delivery is up to date:

	✓
We have a designated member of staff for mental well-being in school.	✓
We have a clear policy that is reviewed every two years, or when local and/or national guidance changes.	✓
We have a scheme of work to cover mental health and well-being in school. This includes work on the effects of social media on mental health.	✓
We provide CPD training for all staff about mental well-being.	✓
We have regular training for staff on how to identify pupils with potential mental health issues. This also includes training from the SENDCo on how to support SEND pupils who may be more vulnerable to mental health problems if they are not supported in the classroom.	✓
We provide support on the school website for mental health including help for parents/carers.	✓
We make training available for governors on the mental well-being policy and education programme in school.	✓
We work on a local/national level with other agencies to promote mental well-being.	✓
We display posters around student areas offering advice and helpline support.	✓
We identify bespoke work for vulnerable students who may be at further risk of mental health issues and who may have parents with similar problems.	✓
Form tutors fulfil their pastoral responsibilities consistently well.	✓
Tests and exams are given appropriate and not excessive weight in the life of the school.	✓
Pupils know where to go if they have a personal problem and when to go.	✓
Staff model positive ways to deal with stress.	✓
Learning and teaching is varied and engaging.	✓
Pupils are taught the importance of stress, how to manage it and how to recognise the warning signs of too much stress.	✓
Data shows that pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in staff to deal promptly and effectively with bullying.	✓
PSHCE is taught systematically; no pupils miss out.	✓
Pupil voice reflects the view that school life lives up to the ideals taught in PSHCE.	✓

Staff voice is acted on to reduce unnecessary stress to adults in school.	✓
Supervision and duties are consistently and conscientiously performed.	✓
There is a culture of encouragement and of the celebration of achievement in school.	✓
Pupils facing external examinations are taught how to revise and how to manage the stress of the exam period.	✓
Peer mentoring and buddying schemes are effective in helping vulnerable individuals make progress.	✓

The Governing Body and members of the Senior Leadership Team will support the Senior Mental Health Lead(s) in reviewing the effectiveness of this policy and the school's wellbeing strategies annually. The Headteacher will support the Senior Mental Health Lead(s) to implement the school's wellbeing strategy, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the school policy to support the wellbeing of colleagues, parents and pupils.