MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING POLICY

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Review of Policy Arrangements:

Date	January 2023
Review Date	January 2024

Amendments

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1. Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At The Ranch, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole community; users, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school timeand some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Education settings can be a place for students to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience.
For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils' well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role at The Ranch is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children and young people learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a setting where:
- All children, young people and adults are valued
- have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Children and young people feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued

- Bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and children can get advice and support

3. Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:
… 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 her or his community.

Mental health and well-being are not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

4. Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Links
with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because
behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may
be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

5. A Whole Ranch Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole Ranch approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children and young people to become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:
1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping children to be resilient learners
4. teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking site' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some students will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some students more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The Ranch's Mental Health Team (Designated Safeguarding Team):
- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole Ranch activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates

- keeps staff up to date with information about what support is available
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
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We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the academy environment, or with advice from external professionals.

Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of students
- Safeguarding team who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.

7. Supporting Students Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting children's and young person's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. The Ranch has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- Children-led Activities
- Support for vulnerable children and young people
- Referral meetings with parent/carers, students and relevant staff
- Individual Learning Plan
- Key Adults supporting students
- Class Activities
- Worry board
- Whole Ranch Wellbeing Focus
- Displays and information around the about positive mental health
- Small Group Activities
- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Safe Space for those children who are finding the larger spaces overwhelming
- Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help young people to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

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Our approach is to:

- provide a safe environment to enable children and young people to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people as paramount
- identify appropriate support for children based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve young people in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated

8. Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to those with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- Introduction meetings for children / families joining
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room and attendance
- Using evaluation tracking sheets
- Staff report concerns about individual children/young persons to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Team
- Weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children/ young people
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a student is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a child or young person will take this seriously and talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Team. These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- drug or alcohol misuse

- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a child/young person is in danger of immediate harm, then The Ranch's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to children or young people who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of students is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the student.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the students confidential safeguarding file, including date, name of child and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within The Ranch or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

9. Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a child's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

10. Involving Parents and Carers - Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:
- we will organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from voluntary services
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open Door Policy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised The Ranch will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

11. Involving children and young people

- we seek childrens' views and feedback about our approach and whole academy
- mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, class questions and suggestion boards

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12. Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and were possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy academy and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing with relaxation activities.

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs
Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk OCD UK www.ocduk.org
Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org
Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk
Self-Harm www.selfharm.co.uk

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Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems

www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health