MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

SLT author/reviewer	DSL	**Authorised by**	DHP
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Reviewed by:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Preya Dhanecha (DSL) September 2024

Headteacher: Mr Will Williams, September 2024

Nominated Safeguarding Director: Theo Brehony (Managing Director), September 2024

Policy statement and principles

At Kew House School we are committed to promoting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. This policy is available on the schoolwebsite and is included in the staff handbook. It focuses on the mental health of students and aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students across our school.
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of students.
- Maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Inform pupils and their parents/guardians about the support they can expect from our school in respect of their child's mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide resources that parents and students can access independently.

This policy was written by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the Senior Management and Senior Leadership Teams. It should be read alongside:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Relationships and Sex, Health and Education Policy (RSHE)
- Learning Support and Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy
- Attendance Policy

Intentions:

This policy is intended to establish a framework that prioritises mental health as an essential component of overall wellbeing. It will comprehensively state processes and procedures in place to prevent mental health difficulties and provide bespoke support should challenges arise.

This policy underscores the importance of mental health education, prevention strategies, and ongoing support. The ultimate goal is to reduce stigma, prevent mental illness, and empower students to live healthy, happy and successful lives. We are committed to continuously evaluating and improving our support provision to ensure it remains responsive, equitable, and effective for all.

Legislation and Guidance:

This policy was written regarding:

The Equality Act 2010

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

The Data Protection Act 2018

Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Kew House School Values

Kew House School staff understand that negative experiences and distressing life events can affect the mental health of Pupils and their Parents. Teachers will be conscious of this in setting expectations of Pupils' work where they are at home. Kew House School's learning and pastoral values help to prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school culture that is tailored to the needs of our individual pupils. All Staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Our values are shared with staff, parents and pupils regularly through open events, assemblies, curriculum lessons and enrichment activities. There is a clear Behaviour Policy in place, that embodies high expectations from all but is rooted in the school's ethos of support and nurturing. These expectations are conveyed consistently throughout the whole school community, together with being recognisedwithin the Class Charts, real-time rewards system. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions with clear expectations for all Staff, Parents and Pupils to play their part as much as they are able.

Placing these values at the heart of everything we do is an effective way of encouraging good mental health and avoiding circumstances where poor mental health is exacerbated.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and well-being across our school and for understanding risk factors.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

Headmaster: Will Williams

Senior Mental Health Lead: Preya Dhanecha

Deputy Head (Pastoral): Liz Atwell

Designated safeguarding Lead (DSL): Preya Dhanecha, Head of Safeguarding

Special educational needs Co-ordinator (SENCO): Claire de St Croix

Attendance Lead (SMT: Preya Dhanecha

All members of school staff are responsible for:

- Treating all pupils with empathy, respect and kindness.
- Encouraging pupils to disclose concerns or seek help when necessary
- Reporting any mental health concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead who is also the Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Log incidents appropriately on school's reporting system MyConcern.

Identifying Student Needs

All members of staff will work together to identify and monitor mental health concerns. Open communication between members of staff will help to create a 'first line' in supporting individual pupils and responding to disclosures. In addition, regular meetings with key members of senior staff as well as Heads of Year will take place. This is to ensure student concerns are raised, addressed and monitored regularly.

Staff will be encouraged to look out for:

- Erratic, unaccountable behaviour (e.g. leaving lessons suddenly).
- Signs of fatigue, lack of concentration.
- Disengagement from work or extracurricular activities.
- Unexpected or disproportionate reactions to ordinary situations.
- Aggressive or compulsive behaviour.
- A drop in academic achievement.
- A drop in attendance.
- Isolation from peers.
- Signs that family life is difficult.
- Talking about self-harm or suicide.
- Changes in appetite.
- Changes in general appearance and presentation.
- Signs of substance misuse.

Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file on the software, My Concern.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

Confidentiality

Kew House School staff will not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure around mental health a secret. In all cases, the expectations of a student will be managed, and limitations of confidentiality will be openly discussed at the earliest possible time within the conversation.

A disclosure around mental health cannot be kept secret because of, but not restricted to, the following reasons:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing.
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school.
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question.

Staff will always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done so on a need-to-know basis by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Kew House School will make every attempt to appropriately inform and involve parents/carer in support of their child's mental health and wellbeing. In some cases, the school will decide on the contrary. The reasons for these rare exceptions are detailed in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Supporting Students:

Early intervention is crucial in preventing escalation of mental health difficulties. Our in-house support includes, but is not limited to:

- Time-Out Card.
- Bespoke timetable
- Reasonable adjustments for students to work in school (e.g. work in library)
- Access to School Nurse
- Risk Assessments and Safety Plans (further details below)
- In-House Counselling Support (further details below)

In addition, we may also:

- Signpost students to online sources of support (See Appendix 2)
- Offer pastoral support through Personal Tutors and Heads of Year
- Work cohesively with external agencies (Child Mental Health Services, privately sourced mental health professionals, Children's Social Care) to ensure a streamlined support plan is in place.
- Provide avenues where students can provide feedback on any element of our school that may be negatively impacting their mental health and overall wellbeing.
- Access local provision for mental health support
- Engage with external providers who can deliver workshops/assemblies/lessons on mental health

In-House Counselling Service

Kew House School has a very limited on-site counselling service. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head oversee this service.

Referral requests may come from students, parents, guardians and/or staff, and requests should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. While we encourage students to use this valuable service, please note that it is limited and there is a waiting list. Students will be prioritised in consideration of, but not restricted to, the following:

- Complexity of need
- Impact on attendance and attainment
- Safety considerations (e.g. Self harm, suicidal ideation, potential harm to others)
- Other agency support

Students will be given an initial 8 sessions before support is reviewed with the counsellor who will make a joint decision with the student on how to move forward.

If a case is closed and the student requires further support in the future, they will be placed on the waiting list again.

The school is unable to provide a time frame on waiting list times due to emerging needs.

Kew House School operates from a place of transparency with parents and guardians. In every case possible, we will work collaboratively with students and families. That said, the counselling service is a confidential service and as such, Kew House School requires student consent to share with parents/guardians that they are accessing the service.

The counsellors operate within the framework set out by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACCP), therefore, referrals and discussions remain confidential from the school, parents, guardians and other students.

The only exception to this is if there are safeguarding concerns (see the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) and in line with Kew House School safeguarding processes, these will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff will proactively encourage transparency in this respect with parents/guardians, however, it remains within the jurisdiction of the child as to whether their access to the counselling service is shared.

Students will need to be considered Gillick competent to exercise their right to confidentiality. The appropriate member of staff will make this judgement.

Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation

Self-Harm:

There are times when young people will harm themselves physically in order to cope with emotional difficulties. Incidents of self-harm can include, but are not restricted to:

- Cutting, scratching or stabbing with a sharp object, one of the most common methods.
- Burning with lit matches, cigarettes or heated, sharp objects such as knives.
- Carving words or symbols on the skin.
- Self-hitting, punching, biting or head banging.
- Piercing the skin with sharp objects.
- Inserting objects under the skin.
- Substance/drug overdose.

In more serious cases, students may express a desire to end their own life.

Due to the heightened need to prevent significant harm or child death, the school will follow a robust process which parents are required to comply with.

Process for Cases of Self-harm and/or Suicidal Ideation:

On discovering actual or intended self-harm or suicidal ideation:

1) The child will be taken to the School Nurse to ensure that they receive immediate medical attention/first aid where there is an injury.
2) The Safeguarding Team will be informed and the DSL or DDSL will attend.
3) The DSL will contact home to explain the nature of harm caused *or* intended.
4) Parents will be requested to collect the child from school to avoid unsupervised travel home.
5) Parents will be requested to ensure the child is medically checked by the relevant professional or otherwise seek immediate support.
6) A safety plan will be agreed with the parent and child on, or before the child returns to school.

The emergency services will be called in the event of any situation where a child is at immediate risk. In these cases, parents will need to attend the school or the hospital immediately and without delay. In cases where parents are not contactable, other listed contact will be called to attend.

In cases where parents disagree on safety plans/measures outlined by the school, they agree to take full responsibility for the safety and welfare of their child.

Risk Assessments and Safety Plans

In cases where children have harmed themselves significantly, repeatedly and or expressed suicidial ideation, the school will complete a risk assessment and create a safety plan.

INSERT PRO-FORMA AS APPENDIX

The risk assessment will be completed jointly with the parent and, where appropriate, relevant mental health specialists. This may include CAMHS, the school counsellor, school nurse and/or therapists that have been privately sought by parents.

The risk assessment will remain a confidential document that will only be shared amongst the safeguarding team.

A safety plan will be drawn up using the information on the risk assessment to ensure staff know what support measures are in place for the child and how best to mitigate risk.

Where to Access Support

Useful Links

- 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.
- Children's Mental Health Week is an annual opportunity to encourage children, young people and adults to celebrate their uniqueness.
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues.
- https://giveusashout.org/ Text Service: 85258 is a 24/7 UK text messaging service for times when people feel they need immediate support.
- Home - Kooth – A free, confidential and anonymous online mental health and wellbeing services.