



## PARMITER'S SCHOOL

### Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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#### 1. Introduction

At Parmiter's School we believe that it is essential to support students with their emotional wellbeing to enable them to reach their full potential. Improved mental health and wellbeing is associated with a range of better outcomes for people of all ages and backgrounds. These include improved physical health and life expectancy, better educational achievement, increased skills, reduced health risk behaviours such as smoking and alcohol misuse, reduced risk of mental health problems and suicide, improved employment rates and productivity, reduced anti-social behaviour and criminality, and higher levels of social interaction and participation.

As a school we understand that some mental health difficulties are temporary due to exceptional circumstances, while others reflect emerging longer term mental health illness. Many students will be able to cope with mental health problems with minimal support but others will need more intensive support.

#### 2. Aims

At Parmiter's, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders. This policy focuses on students' mental health and wellbeing.

It 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 students' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which students feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Inform students and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of students' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources.

### 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a student's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

**The Headteacher** has overall responsibility for the mental health and wellbeing of the students at Parmiter's.

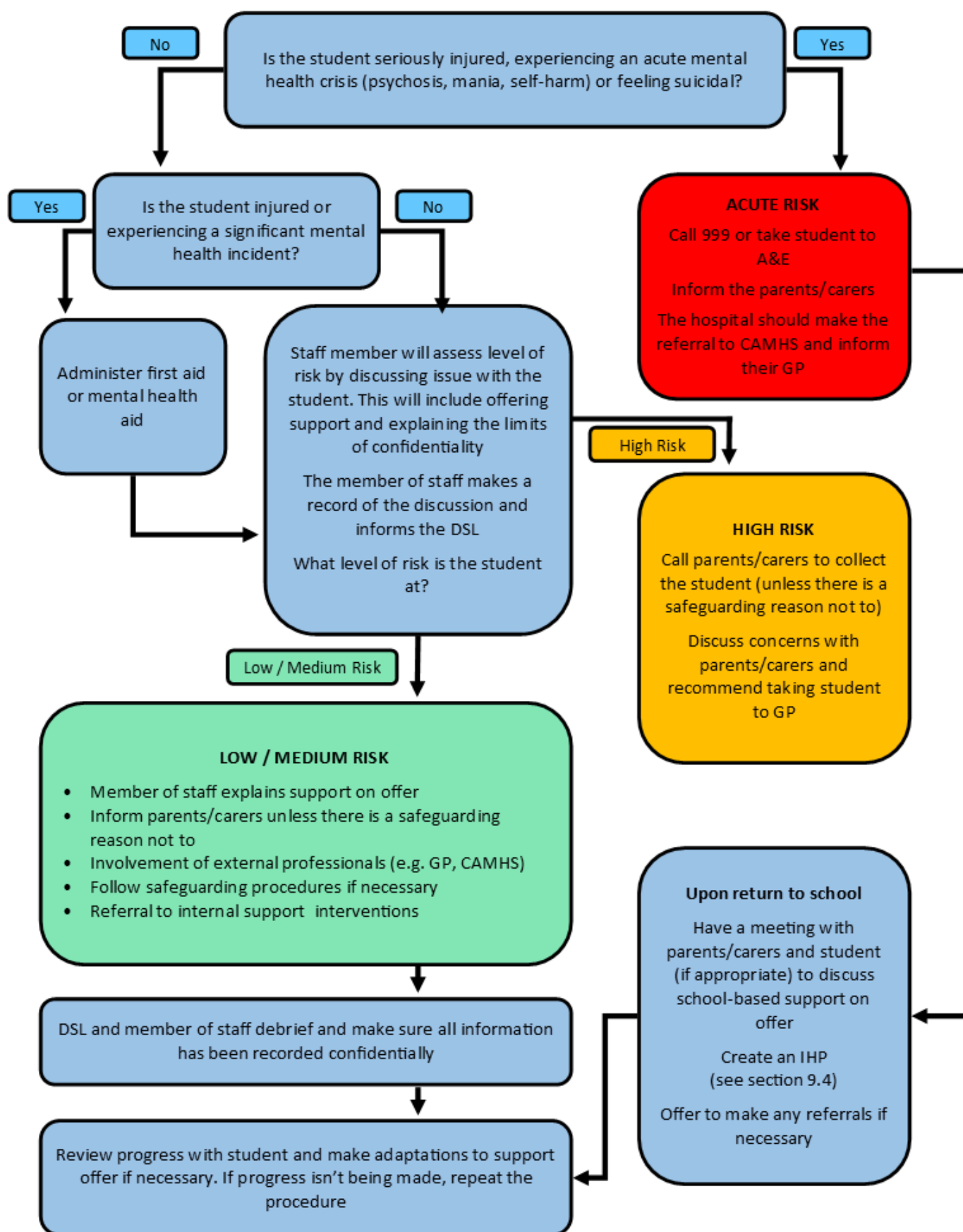
**The Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL)** (Ms G Absalom) and **The Deputy Designated Mental Health Lead** (Miss M Hall) will lead on whole school policy and procedures relating to mental health and wellbeing. They will ensure that:

- This policy is kept under review and updated regularly
- Appropriate training is organised for all staff
- Appropriate assessment and support measures are put in place where concerns are raised.

**The SENCO** will lead on monitoring the mental health and wellbeing of students on the SEND register and liaise closely with the Designated Mental Health Lead where students require additional support.

The school **Matron** (Mrs F Craigie) is able to support students who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges. We also have **Student Support Officers** (Mrs C Doran, main school and Mrs T Cave, Sixth Form) as further sources of help and advice.

## 5. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



## **6. Warning signs**

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a student's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include but are not limited to:

- Changes in:
  - Mood or energy level
  - Eating or sleeping patterns
  - Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Concerning online behaviours or internet searches.

## **7. Managing disclosures**

If a student 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 student'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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and pass on all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). All disclosures are recorded and stored in the student's confidential child protection file.

All disclosures will be recorded on CPOMS and will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the student(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.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Staff will not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student'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 student will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question

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

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

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

## **9. Supporting students**

### **9.1 Support for all students**

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, our school offers support to all students by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, Form Time, Personal Development lessons and awareness weeks
- Signposting all students to sources of online support
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Championing the importance of student voice and providing avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring all students' mental health through assessments and surveys
- Appointing a Designated Mental Health Lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support, through Form Tutors, Heads of Year and the wider Pastoral Team.

### **9.2 Assessing what further support is needed**

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the DMHL will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

### **9.3 Internal mental health interventions**

Where appropriate, a student will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Mentoring programmes
- Consideration of temporary reduced timetables
- Time-out cards

- Designated spaces at break and lunch times
- Intervention from our Educational Mental Health Practitioner which may include:
  - Workshops
  - Group sessions
  - 1:1 sessions
  - Referral to sessions led by the wider Mental Health Support Team.

#### **9.4 Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)**

IHPs are written in collaboration with the student (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals. Not all students who access additional support will require an IHP, IHPs will be offered in cases where a student's needs are substantial or where there are complicating factors relating to their support.

The student's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The student's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the student's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

#### **9.5 Making external referrals**

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- Their GP or a paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Local NHS services
- Local or national mental health charities
- Local counselling services

### **10. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers**

We will work with parents/carers to support students' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in Personal Development lessons, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour where possible to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the student's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section 10.4).

## **11. Supporting peers and siblings**

Watching a friend or sibling experience poor mental health can be very challenging for students. Students may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all students impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

## **12. Signposting**

Sources of support are displayed around our school and linked to on our school website, so students and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

Heads of Year and Key Stage Leads are able to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

## **13. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness**

### **13.1 Mental health awareness in Personal Development lessons and Form Time**

We follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

Students are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe
- For more information, see our [Personal Development curriculum](#)

### **13.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health**

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging students to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating
- Fostering a culture in which all members of the Parmiter's Family treat each other with empathy, kindness and respect.

#### **14. Training**

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help
- We work in partnership with the Three Rivers Mental Health Support Team and utilise their expertise in identifying training needs.

#### **15. Support for staff**

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Endeavour to create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme

#### **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by Designated Mental Health Lead annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Community Governors Committee.

#### **17. Links to other policies**

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy