



# Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

**Approved by:** Daniela Schwartz **Date:** July 2025

**Next review due by:** July 2027

## **Policy statement**

At Parayhouse School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to school staff on our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school
- Inform students and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of mental health and wellbeing

Read this policy in conjunction with:

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Staff wellbeing policy

## **Policy aims**

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where students feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
- Celebrate all of our students' achievements at our school, both inside and outside the classroom
- Allow our students to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting Student Voice
- Give students the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Spread awareness of the various ways mental health issues can manifest
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues of our students

- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues
- Provide support, and access to resources, to students experiencing mental ill health, alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

### **Legal basis**

This policy was written in alignment with:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

### **Roles and responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the 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.

Selected members of staff have additional duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in our school. These members of staff include:

- Headteacher
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

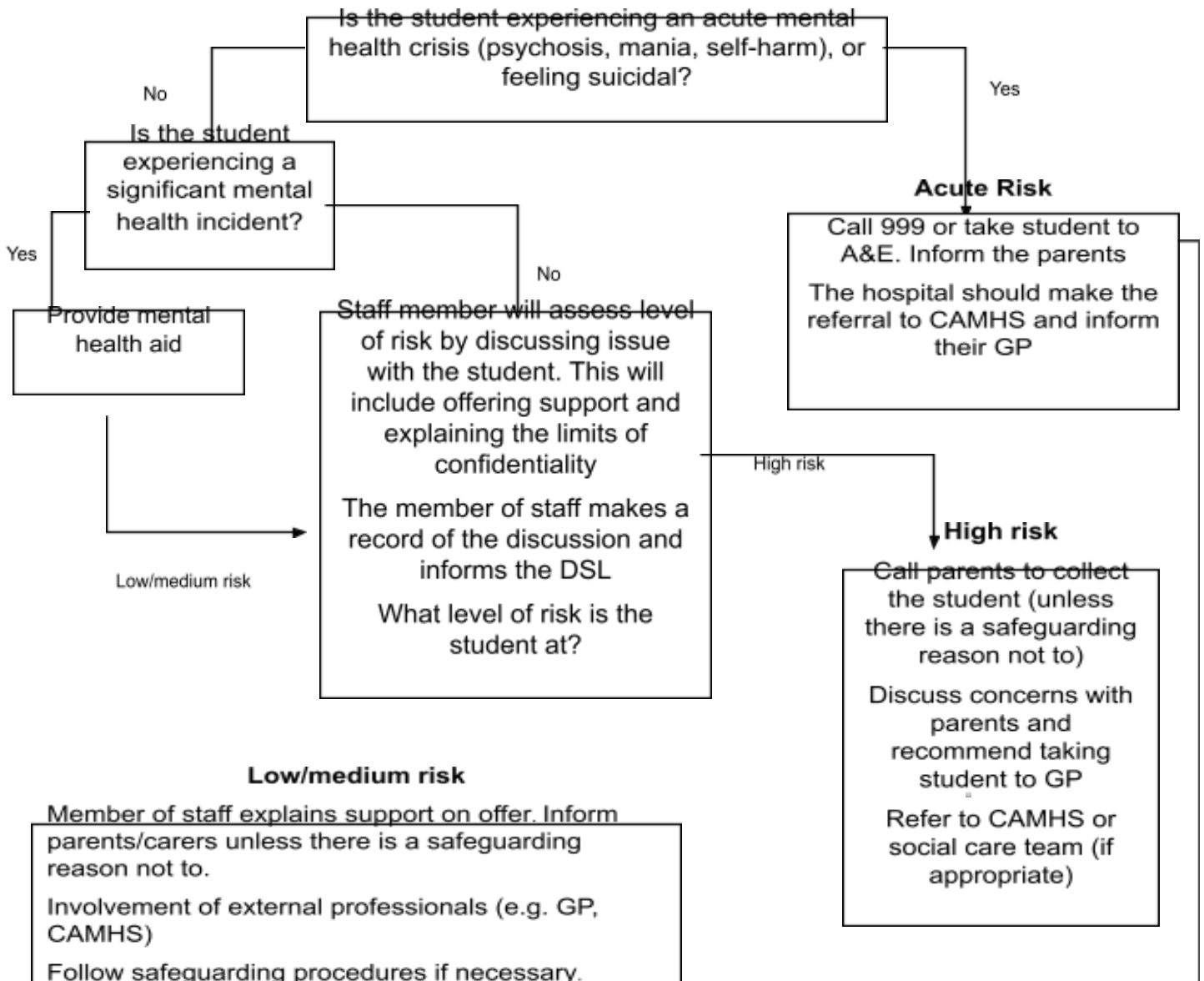
### **Warning signs**

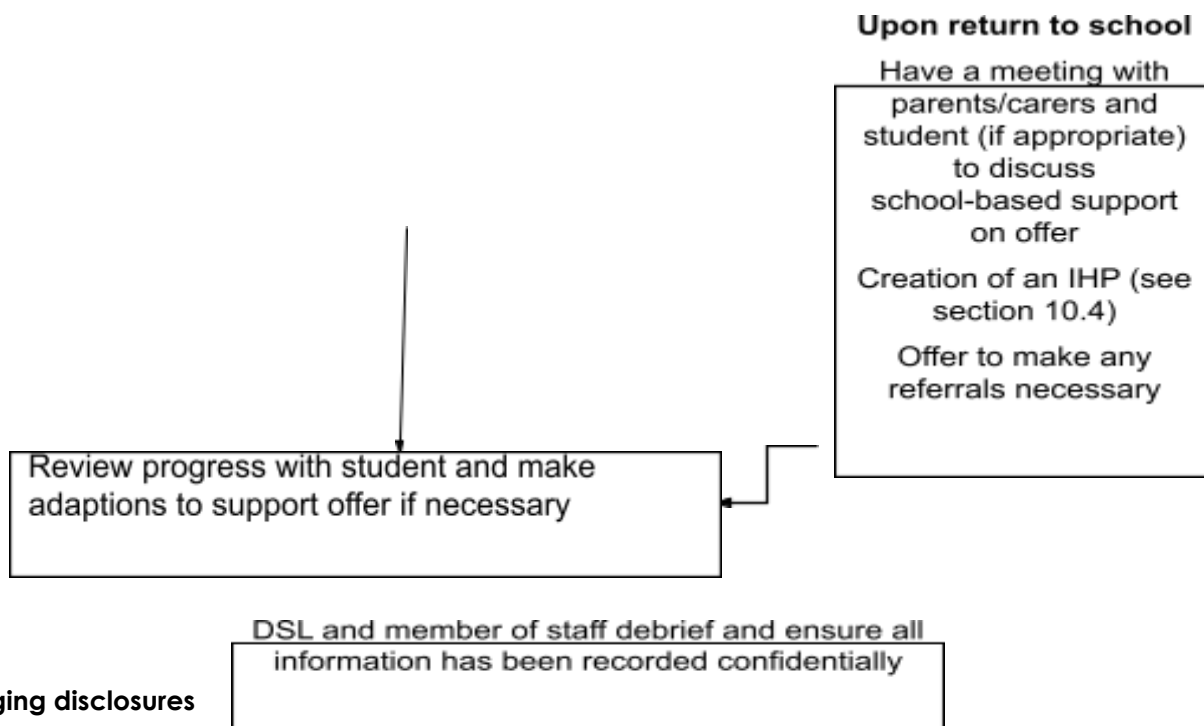
All staff are trained to detect early warning signals of a student's mental health deterioration. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in 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
- 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

**Procedure to follow in a case of an acute mental health crisis**





### 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 the school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the student's confidential file.

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 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

### Confidentiality

Staff should 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:

- There may be safeguarding issues to consider
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question
- 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

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

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 will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

### **Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures**

1. Student makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)

7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

### **Baseline support for all students**

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

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE and other pastoral and curriculum activities
- Signposting all students to sources of online support where appropriate
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing students with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of the school that might negatively impact their mental health
- Monitoring of all students' mental health through daily observations, completion of Boxall profiles and Zones of Regulation sessions
- Appointing the DSL to have strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing

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

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL, along with the Key Teacher and Medical Lead, will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1.

The 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

### **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:

- Drama Therapy
- Adjusted timetable
- Calm and Sensory Rooms

### **Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)**

A student will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) if they are experiencing challenges with their mental health.

IHPs are written in collaboration with the student (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

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 the school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

### **Making external referrals**

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

A student could be referred to:

- GP or pediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))

- Local counselling services

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

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

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health issues 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 on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- 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 forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavor to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents 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).

### **Supporting peers**

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely 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

### **Signposting**

Sources of support will be displayed around the school so students and parents are aware of how they can get help.

The designated safeguarding lead will be available to provide further information to students and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

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

#### **Mental health is taught in PSHE**

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

Students will be taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE curriculum.

#### **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 they think their mental health is deteriorating

### **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

### **Support for staff**

We recognise that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff.

To help manage this, we will (see also our staff Mental Health and Wellbeing policy):

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment

## **Appendix 1: Referral to Dramatherapy Form**

Name of Referrer:

Date of Referral:

Student's Name:	D.O.B: Age:
Diagnosis:	Class Teacher: Class:
Child in Need? Yes / No Child Protection? Yes / No	Main Carer: Interpreter required: Language?
Who lives in the house?	Has the child consented? Yes / No / NA Has the parent consented? Yes / No

Other agencies involved or previously involved (please circle):

SALT	TAMHS	Psychotherapy
OT	Physiotherapy	Parental Support
CAMHS	Ed Psychologist	Adult Mental Health
Police	Hearing Impairment	Visual impairment
Social Care		

Reason for Referral:

Explain the student's presentation and why you feel that they need support:

What strategies have you already tried?

What communication has there been with parents/carers about your concerns?

Is this referral urgent: Yes / No

If yes, state why:

PRIORITY: HIGH MEDIUM LOW