



**St Peter & St Paul**  
Catholic Voluntary Academy  
*Pro Petro Paulo Patria*

Policy Document  
Status: Approved  
Confidentiality level: Public

# Students' Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

*Policy Ref No. PMH01*

## **'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'**

John 10:10

### **The Ethos of St Peter and St Paul**

*"Our academy is a community where Jesus Christ is our role model and his message the guiding principle behind all we do.*

*Every member of our community is responsible for creating an environment that is caring, fair and respectful of each individual.*

*We develop our potential, celebrate our talents and go forward together in faith."*

Christ is the foundation of everything we do and the Gospels provide us with our influence and inspiration. We are therefore committed to promoting:

### **The uniqueness of the individual**

We believe that every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.

### **The search for excellence**

We are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We celebrate the enrichment of the total community, which flows from diversity of age, gender, racial and social origins, abilities, culture and religion. We are therefore committed to ensure that all are to be given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

### **The education of the whole person**

We offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values and working in harmony. Through this and a variety of educational experiences and interactions we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in communities which maybe diverse socially, culturally and religiously. We recognise that it is also important to help pupils to understand their own ethnic identity and cultural heritage as well as helping them to understand that of others irrespective of whether the academy serves or is located in an ethnically diverse community.

### **The education of all**

We have the duty of care for all to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically, emotionally or financially disadvantaged.

### **Moral principles**

Our belief in the Gospel message commits us to be in the forefront of the movement for social and racial justice and harmony. We believe this is fundamental to the common good. We aim to prepare our young people to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

### **Consequently, we still strive to ensure that:**

Any person recruited to the service of the academy, whether as a member of staff or as a volunteer, is made fully aware of our aims and objectives and required to support them;

Children who are admitted to the academy and their families are fully aware of our aims and objectives and undertake to support them;

All of our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under constant review in order to see that no individual is subject in any way to unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and to ensure that all are enabled to reach their full potential.

**Contents**

Contents ..... 3

Promoting Positive Health ..... 4

What is Self-Harm? ..... 4

What is an eating disorder?..... 5

The Process of Referral ..... 5

Supporting students with mental health issues..... 6

Supporting staff who are working with students with mental health issues ..... 6

Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability ..... 7

Linked Policies ..... 7

Suggested Resources..... 7

**'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'**

John 10:10

## **Promoting Positive Health**

As part of our Academy culture and ethos, and continued dedication to the health and happiness of our students, this guidance provides a clear set of protocols for ensuring the well-being and welfare of all students. Progress and achievement in academies depends on this.

Only medical professionals should make a diagnosis of a mental health difficulty however academies are well placed to observe young people day to day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be suffering from a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

This guidance should be followed with close reference to the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy'.

This guidance is in eight parts:

1. What is self-harm?
2. What is an eating disorder?
3. The process of referral
4. Advice and Guidance for staff
5. Supporting pupils with mental health issues
6. Supporting staff who are working with students with mental health issues
7. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability
8. Linked policies

## **What is Self-Harm?**

Self-harm describes a wide range of behaviours that people use with the intent of deliberately causing harm to one's own body. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin
- Swallowing inedible objects
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances
- Burning or scalding
- Hair-pulling
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively

Recent research indicates that up to one in ten young people in the UK engage in self-harming behaviours; one in fifteen young people have deliberately self-harmed at some point. The most common age is between the ages of 11 and 25. Around four times as many girls as boys self-harm.

Self-harm is a coping mechanism and it is more important to recognise and respond to the underlying reasons. The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm.

- Depression/anxiety
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity

**'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'**

John 10:10

- Family factors
- Social factors

## **What is an eating disorder?**

The most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Eating disorders can emerge when worries about weight begin to dominate a person's life. Someone with anorexia nervosa worries persistently about being fat and eats very little. They lose a lot of weight and if female, their periods may stop. Someone with bulimia nervosa also worries persistently about weight. They alternate between eating very little, and then bingeing. They vomit or take laxatives to control their weight. Both of these eating disorders affect girls and boys but are more common in girls.

The strongest evidence supports:

- The primary aim of intervention is restoration of weight and in many cases inpatient treatment might be necessary;
- For young people with anorexia nervosa, therapeutic work with the family, taking either a structural systemic or behavioural approach may be helpful even when there is family conflict; and
- For young people with bulimia nervosa, individual therapeutic work focusing on cognition and behaviour, for example to change thinking patterns and responses.

Evidence also supports:

- Early intervention because of the significant risk of ill-health and even death among sufferers of anorexia;
- Academy-based peer support groups as a preventive measure (i.e. before any disordered eating patterns become evident) may help improve body esteem and self-esteem; and
- When family interventions are impracticable, cognitive-behavioural therapy may be effective.

## **The Process of Referral**

As an Academy we aim to detect and address problems in their earliest stages. There is a fine line between appropriate responsiveness and inappropriate intrusiveness into the personal lives of students and their families however all staff must respond to well-being and welfare concerns of our students no matter what.

Any staff member concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student should speak to the student's form teacher, who has daily contact with the student, to share their concerns. Form teachers are well placed to spot changes in behaviour which may indicate a problem. The form tutor should in turn discuss the student with the appropriate Head of House.

If any member of staff feels that the student is in immediate danger of harm then normal 'Safeguarding' procedures should be followed.

**'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'**

John 10:10

If the student has seriously self-harmed then staff should follow the normal procedures for medical emergencies, including seeking advice from the named member of staff responsible for First Aid.

## **Supporting students with mental health issues**

Academys offer important opportunities to prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience. Providing pupils with inner resources that they can draw on as a buffer when negative or stressful things happen can help them to thrive even in the face of significant challenges. However these strategies do not work for all young people and for some they may not feel able to cope with their problems.

It is important when responding to students who are self-harming that you remain calm and non-judgemental. You should not:-

- **dismiss** concerns or disclosures as insignificant, they may provide a vital link to other information;
- **keep** such concerns to themselves;
- **promise** secrecy to children or adults making disclosures but reassure them that information will be shared appropriately and confidentially.

The Academy aims to increase the appropriate level of support available to students with mental health issues in partnership with outside health agencies and support groups. We are able to signpost and/or refer students, parents and carers to other agencies who support young people with mental health issues, including self-harm and eating disorders.

Support available includes, but is not exclusive to:

- Mentoring
- Girls Group / Boys Group (Internal and external)
- Counselling
- Behaviour support
- GP Services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Healthy Minds Lincolnshire (established October 2017)

## **Supporting staff who are working with students with mental health issues**

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Voluntary Academy acknowledges that staff who are working closely with distressed students can themselves be placed under emotional strain.

SSPP aims to increase the level of awareness and understanding amongst staff of issues involving the mental health of young people, in particular concerns with self-harm and eating disorders.

SSPP will provide a range of opportunities for staff to access training in dealing with students with mental health problems, including opportunities to talk with other specialist professionals working with students with recognised mental health issues.

**'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'**

John 10:10

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability**

The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be carried out by the Assistant Head Teacher (Safeguarding Lead) and reported as requested by Governors.

## **Linked Policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy  
SRE Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Additional Needs Policy  
Self-Harm Process

## **Suggested Resources**

MindEd, a free online training tool to enable academy staff to learn more about specific health problems  
Counselling MindEd  
Kooth  
Childline  
Education Endowment Foundation  
YoungMinds  
HeadMeds  
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)  
Relate  
Healthy Minds Lincolnshire