**A Guide to Creating a Mental Health Policy for your School**

**Contents**

Where should you start?

What is a MH Policy for Schools?

Why have a MH Policy?

What other policies does it link to?

What should be in it?

Who should be involved?

How will it be implemented / made a ‘living resource’?

Useful links / resources

Sample Policies

**Where should you start?**

With a **Whole School Approach** to wellbeing

Diagram

Description automatically generated

***Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach***. Public Health England 2015 [(www.headstartkernow.org.uk/sec-sch-support/universal-/](http://(www.headstartkernow.org.uk/sec-sch-support/universal-/))

Diagram

Description automatically generated

**What is a Mental Health Policy for Schools?**

It is not statutory so why have one?

**Why have a MH Policy?**

*It is the JD / route map for a MH Lead…*

**What should be in a MH Policy?**

Roles and responsibilities and key contacts

What is MH?

Understanding of some MH issues e.g. anxiety; low mood / depression; self-harm; eating disorders; OCD

Recognising need

Graduated response

* **Universal**: whole school – all staff / learners
* **Targeted**: support in school
* **Specialist**: partnerships with families and external agencies

Provision mapping and individual support plans / pupil passports etc.

If I’m worried about a child… easy ways for everyone (staff / students / parents) to know how to support / signpost to the right people in school.

Mental Health Education in the Curriculum

training for staff and students e.g.

* Trauma informed practice
* Emotion Coaching
* MH First Aid
* Youth MH First Aid
* Peer Support
* Suicide Awareness
* Etc. as appropriate to needs of schools

Transitions: into / within / out of the school – as appropriate

Evaluating / Measuring Impact of the Policy e.g. using tools like the WMF / I wish my teacher knew

And:

**Links to other policies**

* **Behaviour / relationships** - relationships are key. Need a relationships policy or element (not bolt on) in the behaviour policy
* Safeguarding
* SEND
* Equality / Diversity
* Nurture
* Anti-Bullying
* Self-harm
* PSHE
* Transition
* Staff wellbeing
* *Teaching and Learning*

It is important that there is a consistency and coherence across all policies. The most obvious example being a ‘draconian’ ‘no excuses’ Behaviour Policy with isolation as a core strategy.

**Who should be involved?**

Everyone. There needs to be a Whole School Approach so everyone needs a voice including the hardly reached students / families

SLT / all school staff / governors

YP / Parents / School Nurse

MHST workers / CAPs where appropriate

Education Psychology Service

External Agencies

Feeder schools / clusters / MAT schools

**Top Tips**

Notes to assist when creating a policy for your setting:

* Don’t make it too lengthy, keep it concise and practical – easy to use
* Involve students, staff and parents/carers – invite them to contribute and offer their feedback
* Ensure key members of staff are named so colleagues know who is responsible for what and how concerns can be reported
* Set an annual date to review the policy, and ensure it’s updated should any changes to staff etc. take place.
* Ensure the policy is accessible – communicate it well internally and make it available for students and parents/carers to view

**Sample Policies**

<https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/mh-leads>

<https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/mh-policies>

**Further Reading / useful links**

**The Cornwall Educational Psychology Service**

The EPS are developing work around relational policies alongside other aspects of their service. Contact your EP to find out more.

**Tina Rae**

**The Wellbeing Toolkit for Mental Health Leads:** A Comprehensive Training Resource to Support Emotional Wellbeing in Education & Social Care

Dr Tina Rae, Dr Amy Such & Dr Jo Wood

Including a module entitled: The Role of the Mental Health Lead: Developing a whole-school policy to support the wellbeing of pupils and staff.

<http://www.hintonpublishers.com/isbn_template.php?isbn=978-1-912112-65-4>

**Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy**

<https://ww3.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/Behaviour%20Regulation%20Policy%20Guidance%20-%20Sep%2018_1.pdf>

**Guidance for Developing Relational Practice and Policy**

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/inclusion-and-ehwb/relational-learning>

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_l_d_p/Core-Downloads/Covid/Back-to-School/vlog5/Guidance-for-Developing-Relational-Practice-and-Policy.pdf>

**EPS**

**Louise Michelle Bombèr (**[**https://touchbase.org.uk/**](https://touchbase.org.uk/)**)**

**“Know Me to Teach Me: Differentiated discipline for those recovering from adverse childhood experiences”,** **Louise Michelle Bombèr 2020** (<https://touchbase.org.uk/publications/>)

This is a truly outstanding book. A must read. Includes a sample relational policy to adapt.

**Paul Dix**

When the Adults Change, Everything Changes: seismic shifts in school behaviour, Paul Dix

<https://whentheadultschange.com/>

Again simply outstanding!

**Pooky Knightsmith**

**1. Whole School Approach**

[The Mentally Healthy Schools Workbook](https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/sec-sch-support/universal-/) by Dr Pooky Knightsmith

[How Mentally Healthy is Your School? A Simple Audit](https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/HSK%20uploads/How-Mentally-Healthy-is-Your-School-A-Simple-Audit-f3w6ue.pdf) by Dr Pooky Knightsmith

**2. MH Policy guidance and template:**

<https://www.pookyknightsmith.com/post/school-mental-health-policy-guidance>

Short You Tube Video: Writing a MH Policy <https://youtu.be/y-4cqYWvrkk>

**Anna Freud**

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/5-steps-to-mental-health-and-wellbeing/leading-change/ensure-there-is-a-robust-mental-health-and-wellbeing-policy/>

**TIS UK**

Practitioners will have been provided with a sample relationships policy and some additional guidance docs based on their TIS training.

**Governors’ Resources**

<https://governorsforschools.org.uk/wellbeing-governors/external-mental-health-wellbeing-resources/>

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Pupil-success-and-wellbeing/Pupil-wellbeing/Mental-health/Promoting-positive-mental-health.aspx>