

# **Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing**



**Bottisham Village College**

**This policy document** is the outcome of collaboration between Bottisham Village College and the CAMH Learning and Development team, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust.

It is intended as a template for other secondary schools and will therefore be made available across the county. Recommendations for adaptations for Primary Schools will be made available in due course.

However, it is not meant to be adopted without due process and careful and thorough consideration of the individual school's needs in relation to the emotional wellbeing and mental health of its pupils and staff.

It is important that it embodies and reflects the school's own culture since it will provide a window through which others will understand its ethos and approach in relation to these issues.



*Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization, 2014)*

At our college, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average class of 30, 15 year-old students:

- Three could have a mental disorder
- Ten are likely to have witnessed their parents separate
- One could have experienced the death of a parent
- Seven are likely to have been bullied
- Six may be self-harming

*(Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, a whole school and college approach. Public Health England, March 2015)*

By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

## **Scope**

As part of our overall safeguarding strategy, this document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff, volunteers and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

Other related policies include:

Anti-bullying policy  
PSHE and SRE policy  
Safeguarding policy  
Behaviour policy  
Attendance Policy  
Staff wellbeing policy  
Confidentiality Policy  
Lone working policy

## **The Policy Aims to:**

- Describe the College's role in promoting and supporting positive mental health in our school community
- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students to enable everyone to thrive
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues to facilitate early intervention
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues

- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Jenny Rankine - Principal
- Dom Fullman - Deputy Principal / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Imogen Axton - Mental health lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the safeguarding lead/CLT line manager in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated **safeguarding lead**. If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Safeguarding protocols should be followed.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by members of the inclusion and safeguarding teams.

## Individual Care Plans

It is good practice to draw up an individual risk reduction plan which is regularly reviewed, for student's causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals with the DSL/SENCO/HOL/CLT line manager as required. This can include:

- Details of a student's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play
- Existing role played by other professionals
- Identifying the gap and mitigating

## Teaching about Mental Health

All staff have a responsibility to support social and emotional development, to build resilience and promote wellbeing through the wider curriculum.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Our curriculum is built upon the PSHE and RSE county framework, and we teach in a safe and sensitive way so that we help rather than harm.

Any concerns raised/comments made by students during PSHE sessions will be referred to the Designated Person following safeguarding protocols (see warning signs and managing disclosures below).

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined on the mental health pages of our website.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, offices and toilets. We will also regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum and during assemblies and to parents at e.g. information evenings. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

Who to turn to for help

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next



## Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns by using safeguarding procedures. Concerns should all be logged on My Concern.

### Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- A change in behaviour
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Difficult or dangerous behaviour

## Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' All staff receive Safeguarding training annually. For support with dealing with a disclosure please speak to a member of the safeguarding team.

### **All disclosures should be recorded on My Concern**

**When logging a concern please include information including**

- Who was there
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Any actions taken

Once logged, concerns are triaged by designated safeguarding leads, and appropriate actions will be allocated to members of staff. You will receive an email if you have been given any actions to complete following making a log of concern.

## Confidentiality and consent

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel there is a risk to self or others, it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on due to safeguarding. We should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. We will work in accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education 2025 and the schools safeguarding and child protection policy.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 principles. The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take advice from the Information Governance Team and together a decision will be made about what information to share. This decision will consider the balance between the potential risk to the child and the principle of working openly and honestly with parents.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with the designated safeguarding lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Logs of concern are stored on My Concern database.

## Working with Parents

Parents play an important role in supporting their children with mental health issues. Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face?
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? (Consider parents, the student, other agencies, other members of staff).
- What are the aims of the meeting?
- The Designated Person should consider whether the lone working policy be referred to/risk assessment completed?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's chronology, or My Concern log.

## Working With All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information, agencies, and how to access support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to access if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

## Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what would be better kept confidential
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset

- Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## Training

All staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe. As part of personal development, staff can request training on issues that would enhance their skills and knowledge.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis to reflect e.g. personnel changes. This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, is available to parents on request and is published on the school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the school, for example on an educational visit.

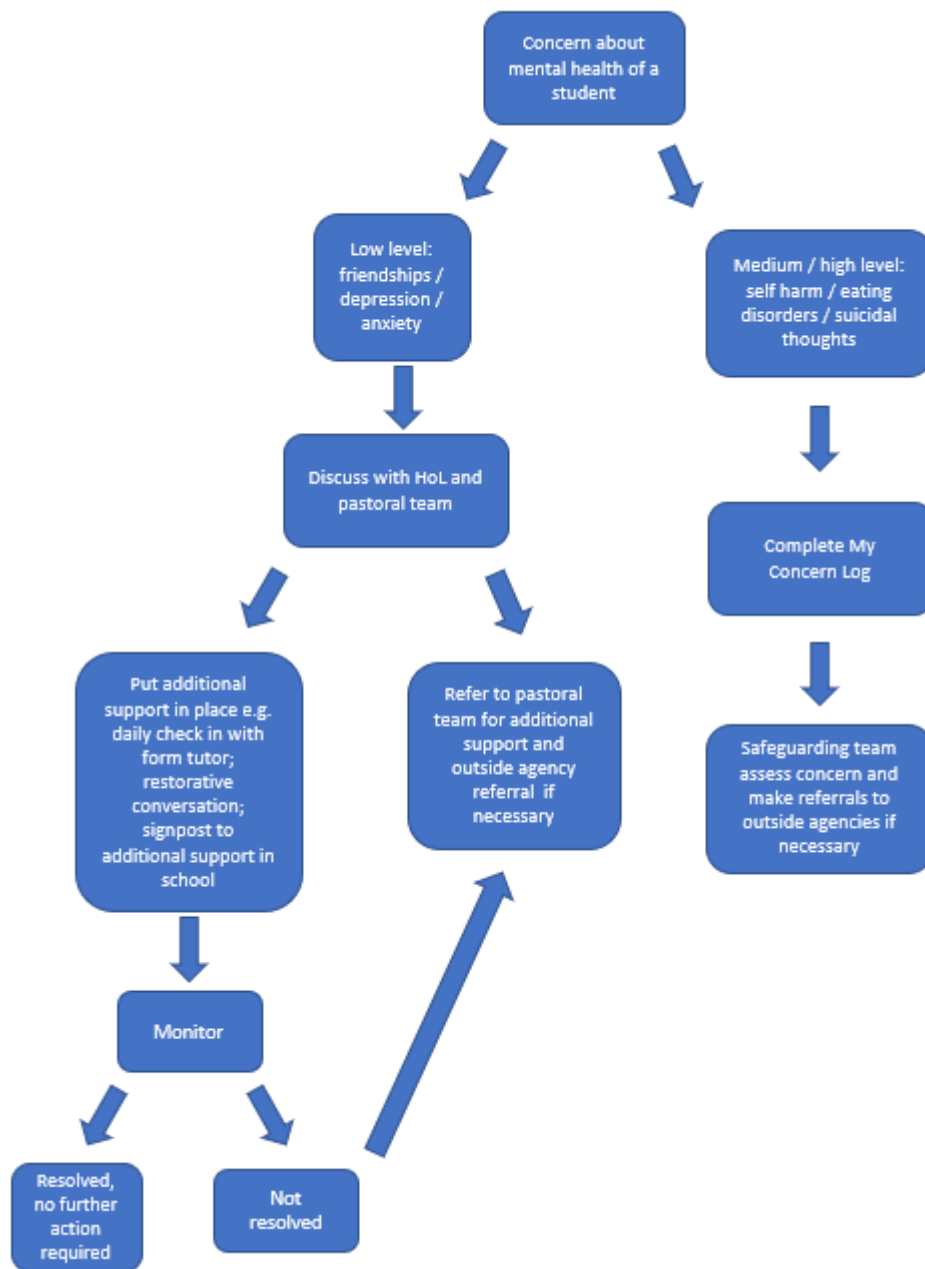
**Next review date September 2026**

## Further information about mental health issues and sources of support can be found on the school website

It is important to keep up to date with new guidance and policy changes and we recommend using the Keep Your Head website for current information. <https://keep-your-head.com/>



Flow Chart for managing concerns about a student's mental health:



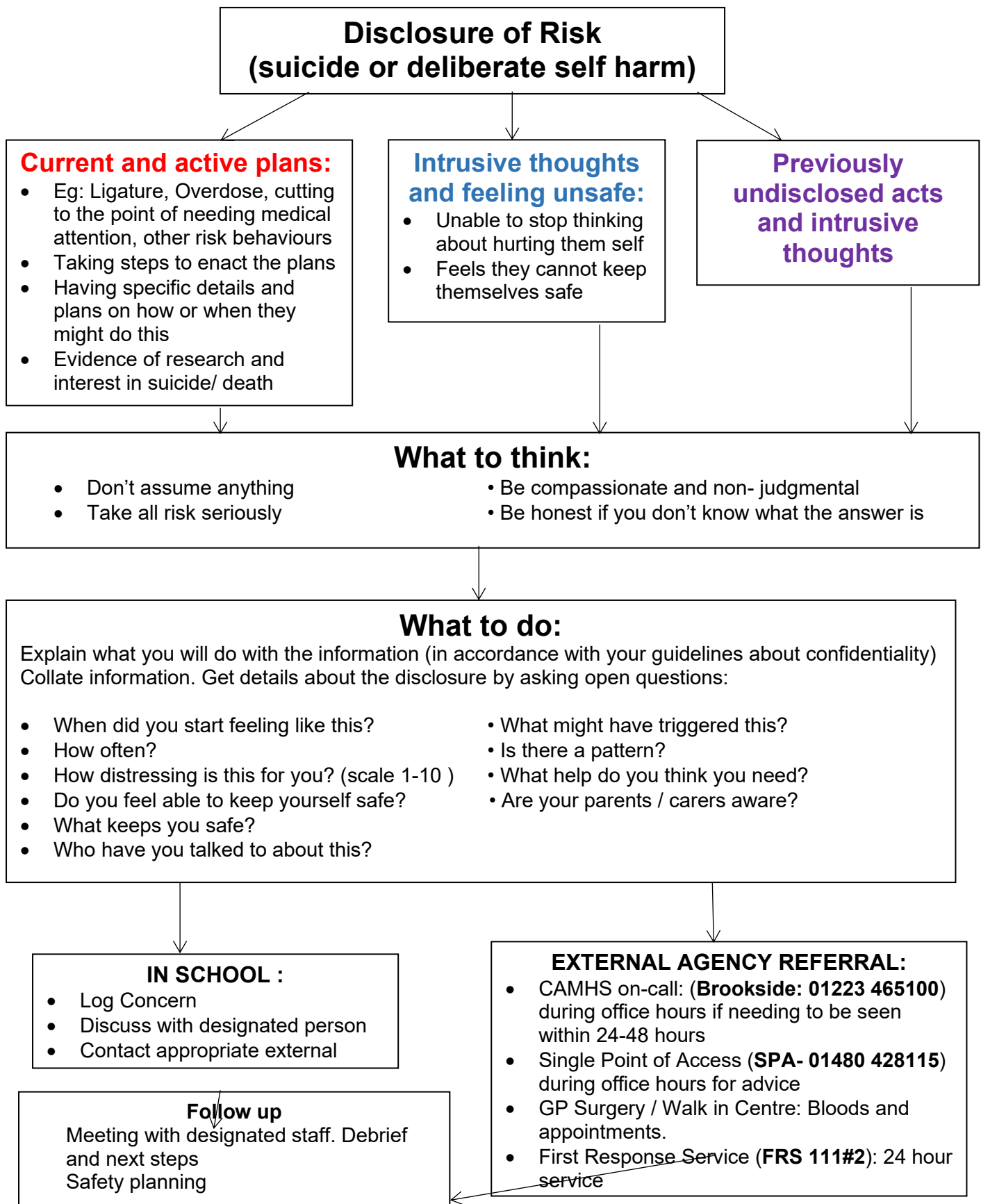
## In School Support:

- **Safeguarding disclosures:** Any trusted adult
- **Friendship/ worries or problems family/general:** Pastoral support workers/form tutor
- **Young carers:** Identified by HOL, passed onto Young carers' team
- **Emotional Literacy Support interventions** -Referrals through Assistant Principals for Inclusion
- **Nurture Support and SEMH interventions** - Referrals through Assistant Principals for Inclusion
- **Pastoral support team** offers appointments for students who need additional support in school
- **Student drop- in** for support from our pastoral support workers: before school and at break and lunch
- **Phil Priestley** – Inclusion and Behaviour Specialist – referrals made through assistant principals for inclusion
- **Lisa Deepinder Brackley – Shine Inside Out Life Coach** – referrals made through assistant principals for inclusion
- **YMCA Counsellor in school** – referrals made through Pastoral Support Team

Contact the Pastoral Support Team @ [pastoralsupportworkers@bottishamvc.org](mailto:pastoralsupportworkers@bottishamvc.org)



## Process for clarifying the nature of the Suicide Risk to determine response



### Purpose and Principles

The wellbeing of professionals working within the college is of paramount importance, staff are the most important resource at the college. Without a personal sense of wellbeing, it is difficult to nurture wellbeing in others. Employers have a legal "duty of care" towards employees which requires them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of their staff. Wellbeing at work is therefore essential if we are to reach our best potential and help students to do the same. There is a definite correlation between positive staff, student achievement and a school's continued improvement.

Managing staff wellbeing and promoting a healthy work-Life balance will help attract and retain the calibre of staff needed for an outstanding education system. Supporting wellbeing of staff will:

- Reduce staff absenteeism and turnover
- Develop a more motivated workforce with high morale, able to deliver a challenging education for our students
- Improve team work, staff development and co-operation
- Recognise that excessive hours of work can reduce staff effectiveness
- Support positive communication and therefore positive outcome
- Provide positive role models for students

Causes of negative stress at work can vary widely and include:

- Physical and emotional demands of the job
- Parent's behaviour
- Work load
- Work place bullying
- School environment
- Lack of professional development and learning opportunities
- Low morale
- Excessive change
- Culture of blame
- Striving for perfection
- Poor communication

There are many positive outcomes for staff in their varying roles and responsibilities, the dynamics between the highs and lows throughout the year are important in the overall balance of jobs staff do.

### **Nurturing resilience**

- The college has a named HR manager who makes employee health and wellbeing a core priority.
- College professional development has encouraged small groups to discuss challenges within teaching and work collectively towards solutions. The leadership team aim to develop a culture where it is acceptable to seek help if it is required and encourage mutual support.
- The wider management team work together to creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress has been increased through training opportunities.

- The college has developed a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- There are a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes. Staff are encouraged to voice their opinions through e.g. staff meetings/faculty meetings etc. Staff engagement forums are included in development plans. Employee opinions are sought through for example, staff meetings and faculty meetings.
- Professional development can be an effective way of boosting wellbeing at work and developing resilience in staff. Staff at all levels in the college have access to continued professional development some of which forms part of performance management goals and objectives. Performance management is linked to clear job specifications.
- Professional learning opportunities are encouraged within school throughout the school day alongside opportunities to attend relevant courses and conferences. Staff meetings provide opportunities for professional dialogue between staff members.
- The leadership team manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism. There is zero tolerance of bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism.
- Where workplace stressors are identified, risk assessment will be undertaken to help eliminate the stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed by the college leadership team.



### **Promoting health and happiness**

The college leadership team make line managers aware that supporting employee health and wellbeing is a central part of their role.

The school supports employee health, happiness and wellbeing by:

- Providing up-to-date job descriptions, with duties and responsibilities relating to individual teacher's roles clearly identified
- The physical environment at the college provides a positive working environment. If there are concerns, there are systems in place for issues to be raised and resolved.
- Perfectionism is discouraged, being the best you can be is rewarding but, understanding when to leave a task is an essential skill.

- Working hours are monitored and staff are encouraged to take breaks as required by legislation.
- Staff have access to support via HR who can advise on how to seek professional support.
- Staff have the option to participate in wellbeing activities e.g. sport activities, social activities.
- Ensure staff are provided with the resources and training required to carry out their job.
- Staff are provided with appropriate safeguarding training and work collaboratively when dealing with stressful incidents.
- Review of work load and time spent on paperwork and systems, allows the leadership team to develop practical alternative solutions through the college improvement plan.
- Appraisal reviews offer the opportunity for staff to discuss with reviewers, any concerns regarding workload
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the college.
- Staff achievements are valued and acknowledged by the leadership team e.g. during staff briefings. There is a culture of inspiring and celebrating at the college.
- Staff are offered quiet spaces where they can work. The staffroom is a welcoming space during break and lunch time.
- Staff are encouraged to experience new things and develop new skills through professional responsibilities like participating in trips, activities, Duke of Edinburgh award, taking on new responsibilities.
- New staff are supported with appropriate induction training and a mentor scheme.
- Staff recruitment and retention is overseen by a senior manager.
- Organisation of CPD and INSET takes account of staff wellbeing. For example, there are early closure at the end of each term, a Christmas lunch and refreshments available on training days. A range of opportunities are available through the 'Happy, Healthy Bottisham' initiative including sport and social events.
- Ensuring that patterns of meetings are appropriate to the requirements of the whole school and published in advance
- A weekly bulletin is provided for all staff
- Peer observation will be actively encouraged and the system of 'lesson study' will encourage shared development of effective teaching practice

#### **Line managers support employee health and wellbeing by:**

- Effective timing and use of PD days to allow time for staff to meet and share ideas
- Offering employees help and encouragement to build supportive relationships
- Being open and approachable to ensure employees feel free to share ideas
- Consulting regularly on daily procedures and problems
- Recognising and praising good performance
- Identifying and addressing issues and concerns and taking any action needed as soon as possible to prevent problems escalating
- Identifying sources of internal and external support
- Agreeing relevant and realistic job targets
- Promoting effective communication and ensuring that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both a School-wide and departmental level

### **Employee's have a duty to support their own health and wellbeing by:**

- Staff are encouraged to be mindful of their personal work life balance. Work life balance is key for those wanting to reduce negative stress.
- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety at work, to co-operate and follow any reasonable instructions to safeguard their health and safety and to seek guidance from health professionals where appropriate
- Cooperating with the College in any measures taken to improve their psychological wellbeing
- Cooperating with the College if the College wishes to seek further information to support their wellbeing.

### **Managing staff absence**

Staff absence is dealt with through the 'Discretionary leave policy' and 'Management of Sickness and Absence policy'

- The College responds sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives whilst also ensuring the efficient running of the college.
- The College will provide support and discuss options as appropriate if problems arise for staff. In some cases this might include external support e.g. from the Local Authority for counselling, occupational health etc. The College will continue to support even when external services are involved.
- During the time staff are absent, the college will maintain confidentiality and the rights and dignity of the staff involved.

### **Related Policies**

Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Governing Body takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty. These include:

- Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- eSafety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Communication with Parents and Carers Policy

### **Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing**

- by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:
- Management of sickness and absence policy
- Discretionary leave policy
- Disciplinary and capability Procedures
- Pay Policy
- Performance Management Policies for Teaching and Support Staff
- Whistle blowing policy

### **Monitoring and reviewing the staff Well-being policy**

The Governing Body recognises its duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees in the school. The staff Well-being policy will be reviewed annually by the College Management team in conjunction with the Director of Human Resources and Governors.

This review will involve feedback from Staff Surveys, consultation with Heads of Faculty and Pastoral leaders together with the findings from risk assessments.

### **Support**

Depending on needs there are a range of adult services that can help support staff including specific services for Eating Disorders, Psychosis and Affective Disorders (for example anxiety or depression). Usually, individuals are referred to the service that is most appropriate to them by their GP.

## **Glossary of terms**

**PSHE** Personal, social, health and economic education

**SRE** Sex and relationship education

**SENCo** Special Educational needs co-ordinator

**HOL** Head of learning

**CLT** College leadership team

**CAMHS** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. (NB this term can be used both to refer to “comprehensive CAMHS” i.e. all organisations which work with children and therefore have a responsibility for their emotional wellbeing and also Community CAMHS, the specialist service.)

**SEND** Special educational needs and disability

**CPFT** Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

