

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing: Commitment Statement

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This is an OA central template, which should be reviewed at a local level and updated accordingly – with the local version returned to OA central for filing.	

1. Policy statement

At Olive Academies, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and volunteers. Our open culture allows all voices to be heard and using effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to ensuring members of the Olive community can participate fully in school, be that as a recipient or provider of education. We also recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing of those around us at home contributes to our ability to engage at school.

Olive Academies provide education to children and young people who are at risk or who have been excluded from mainstream schools, and to those with complex additional needs. As a result of this, a focus on promoting positive mental health is core to all our work. This need was even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be at the heart of all that we do.

2. Our aims

In our academies, we aim to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.

- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from senior leaders that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing
- Instil a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around the academies.

3. Legal frameworks and relevant policies

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2024) 'Education staff wellbeing charter'
- DfE (2024) 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff'

The promotion of mental health and emotional wellbeing is embedded in our day-to-day work with our students. Guidance about identifying mental ill health and procedures for supporting students and staff with mental health issues are provided in several of our policies. these include:

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust and academy policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Attendance and Absence Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Dynamic Working Policy
- Safeguarding and children
- Anti-bullying
- ICT and Online safety
- PSHE and RSE

4. Individual risk assessments

On arrival to an Olive academy, a risk assessment is completed for every student. This risk assessment considers information from the child's previous school and any local authority services and is completed in partnership with the student and their parents and carers. Within this risk assessment, any mental health concerns are identified, and a bespoke package of support put in place for students. All students have a named tutor/coach who has individual contact with them every day and all staff are updated on any concerns or issues via daily review meetings and CPOMS, the safeguarding information storage system the trust uses.

Risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis and support packages adapted as relevant. The type of support that can be put in place for our students includes:

- specialised therapy, e.g. art, music, cooking, sport
- counselling
- input from specialist providers, such as CAMHS workers

These risk assessments stored securely on a student's file alongside any medication plans.

5. Supporting our staff

We recognise that promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing for staff is core to ensuring successful outcomes for our students as well as benefiting staff themselves. We maintain a focus on the wellbeing of our staff on a day-to-day basis through building a collegiate culture, along with supportive line management.

There is an explicit focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing in several of our staff related guides and policies. These include:

- **Guidance on the staff intranet** – on how to access support as a staff member facing mental ill health
- **Dignity at work**- outlining our commitment to ensure that all should be treated with respect when at work
- **Alcohol, drug and substance misuse** – summarising support that will put in place for staff as needed

In addition, there are other initiatives which aim to support staff with their wellbeing: including:

- a well-being conversation is an integral part of every **line management** meeting
- there is a trust wide **career pathway** programme which enables staff to consider what options they would like to pursue in the future
- a range of **HR initiatives** to support return to work after any period of ill health, e.g. phased return, risk assessments
- the **Employee Assistance Programme** – staff can access counselling and other types of support confidentially through this service
- **wellbeing networks** within each academy – staff organising enjoyable activities to come together outside of work

Trust and school leaders are also keen to promote the mutual support for each other whereby acknowledgement and appreciation is integral to the culture within the trust.

6. Teaching about mental health

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

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

7. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

8. The National Wellbeing Award

Aligned with the trust's commitment to the wellbeing of our school communities, we are supporting all academies to work towards achieving the national Wellbeing Award. The academy in Thurrock was successful in achieving this in 2021 and other academies are now working on doing the same.

9. Monitoring and Review

This statement is shared with all staff via the staff intranet and feedback welcomed on any initiatives that are of value. This statement will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Within each academy, there is an annual external audit of safeguarding which incorporates consideration of the trust's approach to supporting mental health across staff and students – the outcomes of this are reported to the Academy Advisory Board and the Board of Trustees (Education performance and Standards committee).