



**THE CAMDEN  
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

# Mental Health Policy



**Lead Staff members: Lead/deputy**

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## **Introduction**

This policy provides the framework that supports work in Camden School for Girls to promote mental and physical good health and emotional well-being. This applies to all students and members of staff in our community. We aim to promote positive mental health through a combination of our "whole-school" approach and support for individuals which is tailored to suit their specific needs.

This policy has been drafted with colleagues from Camden Local Authority, including Senior Health and Wellbeing Adviser, and staff with senior pastoral responsibilities in Camden schools, and colleagues from CAMHS. It has been written with regard to the DfE Guidance "Mental health and behaviour in schools" (November 2018). Please see the following linked school policies: -

- Safeguarding
- Medical Needs
- SEND
- PSHE
- Behaviour
- E-safety
- Equalities
- Staff code of conduct

## 1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs through their school career/life and some face significant life events.

- The national prevalence of children and young people who have a diagnosable mental health condition is 9.6%. This equates to 4,652 children and young people in Camden
- The Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey 2020 showed that 1 in 6 5-16-year olds were identified as having a probable mental health disorder. This is an increase from 2017 when it was 1 in 9
- 92% of young people will experience a significant bereavement before the age of 16 years (Child Bereavement UK).

Mental Health difficulties can have an enormous impact on children and young people's quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that:

"Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing whole school approaches tailored to their particular needs, as well as considering the needs of individual pupils". DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools November 2018.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupil's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health difficulties and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health difficulties and be a school where:

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems and concerns without feeling any stigma
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

COVID and the lock downs have had and still continue to have a huge impact on many children and young people's mental health, as well as on their families and on staff. Some will have experienced anxiety, stress, loss and bereavement and trauma that continue to have a lasting impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

## **2. Purpose of the policy**

This policy sets out

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health difficulties
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health difficulties and spot early warning signs to help prevent them getting worse and support pupils
- Key information about some common mental health difficulties
- Where parents and carers, staff and pupils can get advice and support

The Policy covers two essential principles of Mental Health provision in schools

1. Promoting positive mental health for all
2. Identifying and providing targeted support for those with specific mental health needs

## **3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing *"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"*.

Mental health and wellbeing are not just the absence of mental health difficulties. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves and be able to look after their mental health
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- be able to cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- be aware of when they might need help and be confident to seek help
- learn and achieve

## **4. How the policy was developed and who was consulted**

The development of this policy was led by our Mental Health lead and SENDCO in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and carers, the school nurse and local mental health professionals (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Educational Psychologists. We used the Camden example policy as the basis of our policy.

We organised a series of consultations to gather their views

- School council gave their views on what to teach and the best ways to teach about mental health
- Parents and carers were invited to a consultation meeting and gave their views on what they wanted their children to be taught and what support would be helpful
- Staff discussed the draft policy at a staff meeting

In line with the school's process for policy development, the policy was discussed and approved by governors.

In developing this policy, we have taken account of

- State of the Nation 2020: Children and Young People's Wellbeing
- Teaching about mental health and wellbeing PSHE Association 2019
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges DfE 2021
- Mental Health and Behaviour in schools DfE 2018
- Camden's example Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy March 2022

- Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing Public Health England 2021

## **5. Links to other policies**

This policy links to our policies on safeguarding, supporting pupils with medical conditions, anti-bullying, behaviour, online safety, PSHE, SEND strategy and the staff code of conduct/staff handbook. It also links to our SEN Information Report. Links with the behaviour policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

## **6. Whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent difficulties before they arise or get worse.

This encompasses 7 aspects (that incorporate Public Health England's 8 principles of a whole school approach)

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands, including leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing and listen to the views of pupils
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. Early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services and monitoring the impact of interventions
6. Effectively working with parents and carers
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health difficulties and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health difficulties. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the scale of mental health difficulties and our aim is to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health to ensure that everyone feels able to ask for help if they need to be able to talk about their feelings and manage their emotions.

Our whole school approach also takes account of the stress and trauma that some pupils and staff are feeling as a result of the pandemic and incorporates 5 principles that have been found to support recovery

1. A sense of safety
2. A sense of calm
3. A sense of control
4. Feeling of belonging and there are people that can provide support
5. Promoting hope

## **7. Staff-their roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

## **All staff**

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health difficulties and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

Staff continue to be aware that all pupils' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic are different and that some pupils require additional support over a longer period of time. It is critical that the impact on wellbeing should not be under-estimated, and staff are aware that even those pupils who demonstrate positive mental wellbeing before the pandemic, may now require additional support.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience difficulties; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss (including illness related to Covid-19), including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy (*see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors*).

Staff are aware that supporting pupils' recovery from the impact of the pandemic entails focusing on

- Relationships-enabling pupils to build positive friendships
- Recognition-noticing when pupils are in distress
- Reflection-helping pupils reflect on their experiences
- Regulation-helping pupils to self-regulate and use healthy coping strategies
- Resilience-helping pupils cope with change and adversity and recover quickly

## **Mental Health Lead and Deputy Mental Health Lead**

- Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff about teaching and organises training and updates
- Provides coordination and signposting of mental health support
- Keeps staff up to date with information about what support is available
- Liaises with the PSHE Coordinator on teaching about mental health
- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Leads on and makes referrals to services
- Is involved in strategic decision making around mental health across the school
- Liaises with relevant staff including SENDCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Our Deputy Mental Health Lead has taken part in the national senior mental health lead training. The DMHL regularly attends Camden MHL trainings and MHL network meetings and implements appropriate innovations in our school, up to 4 times per year.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional difficulties can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

- Heads of Year
- Inclusion Lead
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health difficulties mean they need special educational provision

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)
- Our family support/home school link worker/parent support advisor supports families and leads mindfulness sessions for pupils
- School nurse who runs a health drop in once a month
- Sixth form school counsellor
- Place2Be
- School counsellor who provides 1:1 therapy for pupils who are referred and offers parent sessions
- Art psychotherapist
- Camden Educational Psychologist who offers 1:1 support through drop-in sessions
- Mental Health Support Team worker
- Psychotherapist from Camden's CAMHS who provides 1:1 therapy and group work to pupils who are referred and support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils- support can be offered in school or at an external agency

We ensure that every pupil knows who is responsible for and can help with mental health difficulties and publicise this through

- Assemblies
- Posters displayed around the school
- Announcements in form time
- The school website
- Information pupils are given when they first join the school
- PSHE Lessons
- Wellbeing sections on Google classroom

## **8. Supporting pupils' positive mental health**

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupil's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health difficulties. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

### *Pupil-led activities*

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring
- Pupil Wellbeing Champions
- Pupil newspaper/school website with articles written by pupils about wellbeing
- Wellbeing activities and fundraising led by the school council

### *Transition programmes*

- Transition Programme to secondary schools which includes all Year 6 pupils having a staff mentor to support a smooth transition to secondary school
- Transition programme from Key Stage 3 to 4
- Transition programme from Key Stage 4 and beyond

### *Class activities*

- Praise boxes checked each day/week
- Worry boxes checked each week
- Mindfulness sessions for pupils
- Mental health teaching programmes e.g. based on cognitive behavioural therapy

### *Whole school*

- Wellbeing week
- National Children's Mental Health Week/Mental Health Awareness Week
- Anti-bullying week and activities
- Our form tutors are key to supporting the wellbeing of students, particularly in Year 7, and they stay with the same form group all the way up the school providing a consistent support to them



- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health, how to take care of our mental health, wellbeing activities and where to go for help and support in school and outside school such as local mental health services and online
- Opportunities to do more physical activity and link being physically active to positive mental health eg daily mile
- Kindness and wellbeing projects
- Class charter
- Zones of Regulation and self-regulation as an approach to behaviour management

#### *Small group activities*

- MHST led Anxiety and transition groups

We also take opportunities to investigate new evidence-based approaches e.g. (Sendco Educational psychologist year 11 group, MHST groups, Anna Freud five steps whole school approach) and provide information, advice and emotional and practical support during stressful times such as exams and transition to secondary schools.

#### *Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing*

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health difficulties.

### **Secondary pupils learn**

#### Key Stage 3

- How to manage the transition to secondary school positively
- What is mental health?
- Importance of mental and emotional health for a healthy lifestyle
- What has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health, including social media?
- How to talk about their emotions and feelings and recognise if what they are feeling is appropriate and proportionate
- Understand about protective and risk factors
- Common types of mental health difficulties and diagnosable conditions-anxiety, depression, OCD
- How to recognise the early signs of mental health difficulties -signs of stress, anxiety, depression-how to get help, including helping others
- Healthy coping strategies, including managing difficult emotions in a healthy way and the benefits of physical activity, sufficient and good quality sleep, time with friends, being connected to others, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary activities on mental wellbeing and happiness
- Unhealthy coping strategies, including self-harm and eating disorders
- How to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- How to reduce the prejudice and stigma of mental health
- Understanding body image including the impact of the media and social media and ways to develop a positive body image
- Recognise when they need help and where to get help and advice

#### Key Stage 4

- To manage transition to KS4 and to KS5
- Healthy strategies for maintaining positive mental health including during exams and stressful situations
- Strategies for promoting positive mental health and preventing mental health difficulties
- The cause and symptoms of common mental health difficulties such as stress and managing stress, anxiety and depression

- Evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgments of others
- The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on individuals and families
- Recognise when we or someone we know needs help and where to access help
- Recognise what influences their body image, including the impact of social media

### Key Stage 5

- How to manage the transition to sixth form positively
- Importance of mental and emotional health for a healthy lifestyle
- What has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health, including social media?
- How to talk about their emotions and feelings and recognise if what they are feeling is appropriate and proportionate
- How to recognise the early signs of mental health difficulties -signs of stress, anxiety, depression-how to get help, including helping others
- Healthy coping strategies, including managing difficult emotions in a healthy way and the benefits of physical activity, sufficient and good quality sleep, time with friends, being connected to others, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary activities on mental wellbeing and happiness
- How to reduce the prejudice and stigma of mental health
- Understanding body image including the impact of the media and social media and ways to develop a positive body image
- Recognise when they need help and where to get help and advice
- Healthy strategies for maintaining positive mental health including during exams and stressful situations
- Strategies for promoting positive mental health and preventing mental health difficulties
- The cause and symptoms of common mental health difficulties such as stress and managing stress, anxiety and depression
- Evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgments of others

## 9. Identifying, referring, and supporting pupils with mental health needs

There will be some children who need extra support for dealing with their mental health. In these cases, we have systems to identify and refer children for specific and targeted support.

### Our approach is to:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

### Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including (See Appendix 1 referral flow chart):

- Using the Pupil Attitude to School Survey and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, to identify individuals that might need support
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, safeguarding concerns, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions
- Pupil progress and wellbeing meetings between Senior Leadership and staff
- Using the Leuven scales to assess children's wellbeing and involvement in the Early Years and Foundation Stage and identify who might need support

- Staff report any concerns about individual pupils to the Mental Health lead
- Educational Psychologist self-referral boxes
- Teachers and wellbeing team meet to identify children who show potential mental health indicators to discuss how these children are best supported in school
- Worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the Mental Health Lead each day/week (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular class)
- Support to pupils if they are bullied and support to the pupil who has bullied to ensure the bullying stops
- A confidential email for pupils to raise concerns that is monitored by the Mental Health Lead
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns or self-refer through drop-in sessions at lunch time with school ELSA
- Weekly inclusion meetings for staff to raise concerns
- Weekly meetings with Heads of Year, SENDCO and Inclusions/Pupil Premium coordinator
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- Parental meetings in Early Years and Foundation Stage
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns or self-refer through school nurse, form tutor, class teacher, Head of Year, directly to the Mental Health lead or to any member of staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school nurse, form tutor, class teacher, Head of Year or directly to the Mental Health lead
- Using pupil wellbeing questionnaires to identify concerns
- A confidential Post-box/ email for pupils to raise concerns that is monitored by the Mental Health Lead

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Express “hearing voices”
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits/hygiene
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Drugs or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Repeated physical pain e.g. stomach aches and headaches or nausea with no evident cause
- Persistent anxiety over Covid-19
- Anxiety around the impact of social media, such as online bullying

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include difficulties with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the school's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

### **Disclosures by pupils and confidentiality**

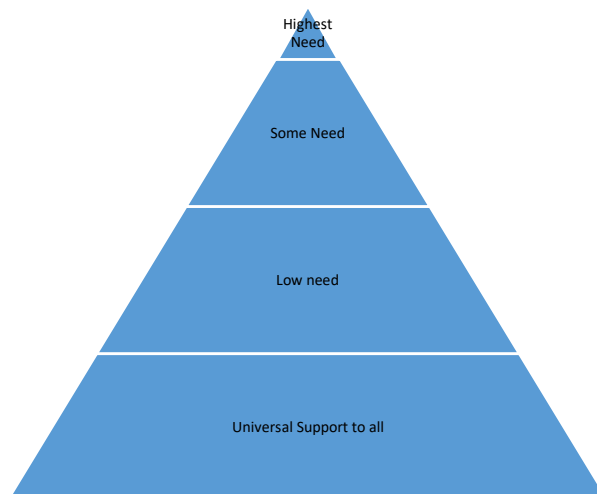
We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advice. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil, and that specific safeguarding disclosures will be shared with the Safeguarding Lead.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

### Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead and recorded. We then implement our assessment system which is based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent the difficulties getting worse.

Levels of Need



This suggested list of support and interventions describes the kinds of interventions and support that may be offered in relation to the level of need. However, children may move in and out and between levels.

Need	Evidence-based Intervention and Support-	Monitoring
<p>The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings/panel with key members of staff and incorporates Camden's Thrive Framework</p> <p>Highest need/Getting Risk Support/Getting more help Those with complex needs and risk and those that don't engage but have high need or who need more specialised support</p>	<p>the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents/carers and pupils</p> <p><i>For example</i></p> <p>CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies            School counsellor-1:1 support            External agency support such as Place2be that provides 1:1 support and group work,            Other interventions eg art therapy            Referral to Camden Schools Inclusion panel for educational support</p>	<p>All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The needs of the pupils</li> <li>● How the pupil will be supported</li> <li>● Actions to provide that support</li> </ul>

	If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any special requirements</li> </ul> Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact eg through a pre and post SDQ and if needed a different kind of support can be provided.
Some need /Getting Help Those who need some support that can be delivered in school	Access to in school nurture group, family support worker, school nurse, art therapy, educational psychologist, 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends, support from a key member of staff such as a form tutor or TA ELSA support Interventions from Mental Health Support Team, including parent support Emotional Based School Avoidance support/guidance Vulnerable children transition support	The Care Plan is overseen by the Mental Health Lead
Low need /Getting Advice Those who need advice and general support including signposting to services	General support e.g. school nurse drop in, class teacher/TA, form tutor Zones of Regulation Giving advice. Access to a supervised quiet room that pupils can go to if feeling overwhelmed and in need of some quiet time	
<b>Universal support to all</b> Thriving-support to all to maintain positive mental health Activities that support all pupils' positive mental health (see above section 8)		

Pupils are informed that the mental health Lead is available when a pupil is dissatisfied with the level of care and support.

### **Support for friends**

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.

We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and carers and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help

We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling. Students can also access our Peer Support and Peer Mentoring programmes.

### **Support for pupils after inpatient treatment**

We recognise that some pupils will need ongoing support and the Mental Health Lead will meet with pupils on a regular basis. We are careful not to "label" pupils.

We have a duty of care to support pupils and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support pupils. We will carry out a risk assessment and produce a care plan to support pupils to re-integrate successfully back to school.

When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school we discuss and produce an individual plan for what needs to happen so the transition is smooth and positive.

## 10. Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

We have access to a range of specialist services and with the pupil's and family's consent, will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' Individual Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by Triage (including the MHL, DHML, SENDCO, therapists) following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service examples such as	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
School Counsellor	Accessed through triage
Place2be	Accessed through triage
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through triage
MHST	Accessed through triage
Art psychotherapist	Accessed through triage

### Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and mental health

Persistent mental health difficulties may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning, than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need or disability

Parents and carers can access specialist services in our school local offer ([link to school website](#)) or Camden's local offer ([link to school website](#))

## 11. Involving parents and carers

### *Promoting mental health*

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

On first entry to the school, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family (see appendix 1). It is very helpful if parents and carers share information with the school in order for adequate support to be put in place.

To support parents and carers:

- We share weekly, a range of activities/information from the Local authority with parents, students and staff (Friday news) to support their mental health.
- We host parent workshops, alongside outside professionals, to provide guidance on supporting children's mental health and more in-depth information on subjects such as body image, stress and anxiety
- We provide information and websites on mental health difficulties and local wellbeing and parenting programmes and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves
- The school has produced a leaflet for parents on mental health, which can also be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHE curriculum, on the school website
- When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.
- Our annual parent questionnaire includes questions about how well the school supports children's mental health

#### *Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs*

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health difficulty and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also help to reassure by explaining that mental health difficulties are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised the school will

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them

*In most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.*

*Children over the age of 16 are entitled to consent to their own treatment.*

- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls
- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree an individual mental health care plan together with next steps
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed about any support and interventions the school has organised for their child, whether from within school or from external agencies

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and pupils may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give pupils the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health need for themselves or go along with them.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern are pupils, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information

on our school website for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

## **12. Involving pupils**

Every year we train up a group of pupils as our wellbeing champions who lead on whole school campaigns on health and wellbeing. Last year the Champions led a campaign on promoting mental health, reducing stigma and the importance of talking to someone if you feel worried and helped plan ways to reduce stress before SATs/exams.

We seek pupil's views about our approach, policy, curriculum and promoting whole school mental health activities and involve them in producing information about taking care of their mental health and how to get help if they need it.

We have an annual pupil questionnaire that includes questions about how well pupils think the school supports their mental health.

We always seek feedback from pupils who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

Our school website has information about where young people can find advice and support

## **13. Supporting and training staff**

Our aim is both to support staff to be confident and skilled to support the mental health of children and young people but also to support staff's own wellbeing.

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 3). All teaching and support staff have completed the national Mental Health First Aid training and have annual updates, to enable staff to offer an effective first response if pupils disclose they are struggling with their mental health.

In 2024-2025 CSG all teaching staff will have some TIPIC training. Trauma-informed project in Camden (TIPiC) is a multi-agency approach supporting schools to support and, most importantly, embed trauma-informed care across all levels. The model aims to develop an organisational and strengths-based approach to care. A team of Camden staff will work with the project to identify and improve areas of our practice.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals. Our Deputy Mental Health Lead has completed national training and attend Camden learning MHL trainings.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing, such as yoga, mindfulness, and physical activities.

Staff questionnaires are used to help identify concerns and opportunities to improve our staff wellbeing provision.

Wellbeing strategies that support all staff

- Termly Staff Wellbeing Groups with all areas of the school represented (teaching and non-teaching staff)



- Regular meetings or drop-in times with SLT, half-termly meeting with key stage leaders/Heads of Year/Heads of Department and opportunities to meet and discuss concerns with their line manager
- Regular wellbeing check-ins led by SLT and line managers
- Training, including INSET days, support staff meetings and access to Camden's wellbeing and mental health workshops and support to staff programme
- Wellbeing breakfasts every term and end of term social events
- Wellbeing sessions including mindfulness, yoga and stress relieving activities
- Regular information updates on mental health and wellbeing
- Staff noticeboard board to share information and to recognise each other's achievements
- Annual wellbeing surveys and suggestion box
- Buddy scheme for new staff
- Opportunity to discuss wellbeing as part of twice-yearly performance reviews
- Peer supervision and problem-solving discussions
- Information on mental health on the school's shared drive

Where staff need additional support, they have access to:

- Drop in CAMHS consultations
- Advice in the staff handbook and staff section of the school website
- The school counsellor and coaching
- Camden counselling service and other free mental health support

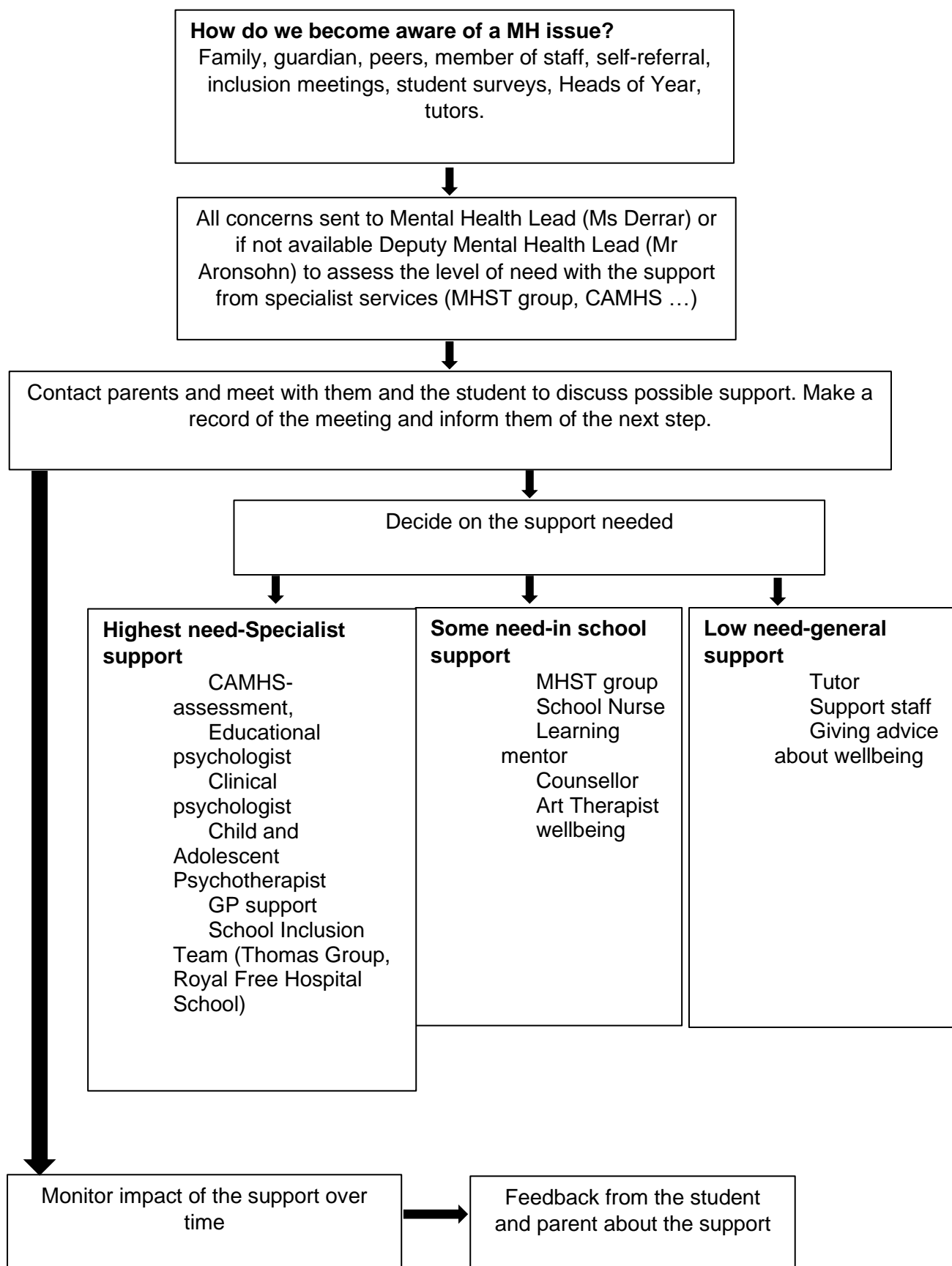
#### **14. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Mental Health Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

# Mental Health Referral Flowchart

## Appendix A mental health referral flow chart



**Appendix B Protective and Risk factors** (adapted from *Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016*)

	<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Protective Factors</b>
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Genetic influences</li> <li>● Specific development delay</li> <li>● Communication difficulties</li> <li>● Physical illness</li> <li>● Academic failure</li> <li>● Low self-esteem</li> <li>● SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Being female (in younger children)</li> <li>● Secure attachment experience</li> <li>● Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>● Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>● Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>● Humour</li> <li>● Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>● Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>● Faith or spirituality</li> <li>● Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>● Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>● Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>● Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>● Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>● Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>● Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>● Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>● Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>● Affection</li> <li>● Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>● Support for education</li> <li>● Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bullying</li> <li>● Discrimination</li> <li>● Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>● Negative peer influences</li> <li>● Peer pressure</li> <li>● Poor pupil to teacher relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>● 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>● A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>● Positive classroom management</li> <li>● A sense of belonging</li> <li>● Positive peer influences</li> </ul>
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>● Homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wider supportive network</li> <li>● Good housing</li> <li>● High standard of living</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>● Discrimination</li> <li>● Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>● Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>● Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>
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### ***Appendix C Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children***

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs  
Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for

- Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder OCD)
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Misuse
- Self-Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought

#### *Suicide and Suicidal Thoughts*

Suicide is the leading cause of young deaths in the UK. It is estimated that 1 in 4 young people experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their life. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, some may show signs, such as, suicidal behaviours and attempts at suicide, while some young people may die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.

### ***Appendix D Where to get information and support***

*For support on specific mental health needs*

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

[www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts [Prevention of young suicide UK – PYPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

*For general information and support*

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health

[www.brandon-centre.org.uk](http://www.brandon-centre.org.uk) 'Here for Young People'

## **Appendix E Mental Health covered in the PSHE programme curriculum**

Mental Health is a key focus of PSHE lessons and tutor time in the mornings. Form tutors regularly check in with how students are feeling, providing an informal opportunity and space for students to consider their emotions and practise communicating these if they wish to. Additionally, form tutors may also practice some mindfulness exercises, including meditations or colouring, with their forms on a semi-regular basis.

Most of the topics covered in the PSHE curriculum are directly or indirectly related to mental health, as all topics are focused on providing students with the knowledge and skills to become happy and resilient teenagers and adults. Below is a list of the direct links to mental health in the curriculum. For the full list of topics covered in PSHE, please see the relevant page on the school website.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Aspect of mental health</b>	<b>Module</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	Establishing new routines	Transition + Building Relationships
	The importance of positive thinking	
	Identifying and dealing with emotions	
	Establishing respectful and happy friendships + bullying	
	Dealing with the emotional effects of puberty	Health, Puberty + Emotional Wellbeing
	How good quality sleep, diet + exercise contribute to positive mental health	
	Dealing with stress and anxiety	
	Exploring different aspects of our identity and promoting a sense of self	Identity
<b>Year 8</b>	Exploring how different relationships can affect our mental wellbeing and how to manage them, including managing conflict productively	Healthy + Unhealthy Relationships
	How taking drugs and alcohol can affect mental wellbeing	Drugs + Alcohol
	Exploring common mental health issues	Mental Health + Body Image
	Recognising healthy and unhealthy coping strategies (including self-harm + eating disorders)	
	Body Image, including the role of the media	
	Challenging stigmas on mental health	
<b>Year 9</b>	How living a healthy lifestyle contributes to positive mental wellbeing	Physical and Mental

	Understanding common mental disabilities	Health
	Exploring how to make responsible choices on choosing intimate partners + sexual health	Relationships and Sex Education
	The emotional effects of sex	
<b>Year 10</b>	Managing the challenges of adolescence	Mental Health
	Signs of emotional and mental ill health	
	Reframing negative thinking	
	Challenging stereotypes in the media about mental ill health	
	How substance abuse and involvement in gangs can affect our wellbeing and those of the people around us	Managing Influence
	Recognising relationship abuse and how that can affect our mental health and self-esteem	Healthy + Unhealthy Relationships
	How experiencing discrimination negatively affects mental wellbeing	Promoting Tolerance + Diversity
<b>Year 11</b>	Developing resilience and self-motivation and the effect this has on our self-image	Building for the Future
	Maintaining a work/life balance	
	Causes of stress + management techniques	
	Understanding your core values and emotions	Healthy Relationships + Families
	Healthy and unhealthy relationships and how this contributes to positive/negative mental health	

## **Resilience in the PSHE SOW (scheme of work)**

### ***What is resilience?***

#### ***Basics***

- *In order for students to feel more resilient, basic structures need to be put in place such as good enough housing (in this context translated as a safe and comfortable school and tutor room), enough sleep (students who have slept well will feel more alert and motivated to learn) and healthy diet (can improve behaviour, mood, ability to learn).*
- *If these basic structures are in place, then students will feel a greater sense of security and peace of mind and can better deal with the challenges of school life.*
- *Although some of these improvements may seem beyond the reach of 'school duty' and are linked to family life and social circumstances they can still be addressed through taking an interest or exploring sensitively with students and could make significant changes to your student's wellbeing and enhance their ability to learn.*

#### ***Belonging***

- *Belonging is an important aspect of resilience-building. When a student has good relationships in their life, and they belong to a group that accept them as they are, this helps create a good sense of self and identity.*
- *Tutors can help by trying to encourage good relationships with friends, teachers and other members of staff.*
- *It is important that students have somewhere they feel they belong (clubs, activities and favourite places in school) and that they meet people who are good influences, who can help them make sense of where they have come from and their place in the world.*
- *It is really important for the student to find something they are good at, an activity or a talent, a way of expressing themselves, whether it's sport, music, writing, helping out in the library... it can be almost anything. The important thing is that being part of a group where they do or talk this activity can have a positive effect.*

#### ***Learning***

- *Learning is a fundamental part of the student being able to function successfully in the world.*
- *Helping our students to develop talents, interests and life skills, encouraging them to learn how to cope, how to express their emotions, understand boundaries and have aspirations, are crucial parts of helping them become more resilient.*
- *Helping our student have life plans, visions and getting organised allows them to develop new skills that are an essential part of them increasing their learning.*

#### ***Coping***

- *Coping helps the student build up a particular set of skills to help them with the challenges of everyday life.*
- *Encouraging the student to cope helps them develop a sense of bravery, an ability to solve problems, to stand up for their own views and beliefs, foster interests and make themselves feel better.*

#### ***Core self***

- *Core self focuses on the importance of the student understanding of who they are and their own personal strengths.*
- *Encouraging the student to put themselves in other people's shoes and be sensitive to how other people feel can help raise awareness of how they feel and how their behaviour can affect other people's feelings.*
- *It is important to help them be self-aware and take responsibility for themselves and their behaviour towards others while at the same time believing in them.*
- *Help them try out different things and they might find something they are talented at.*

From 'The Resilient Classroom' a Resource Pack for Tutor Groups and Pastoral School Staff Written by Sam Taylor, Angie Hart and Hove Park School

Published by BOND and Young Minds © Taylor, Hart & Hove Park School

		<b>BASICS</b>		<b>BELONGING</b>		<b>LEARNING</b>		<b>COPING</b>		<b>CORE SELF</b>	
<b>S P E C I F I C A P P R O A C H E S</b>	BA1	Good enough environment (at home and at school)	BE1	Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	L1	Make school/college life work as well as possible	C1	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	CO1	Instil a sense of hope	
			BE2	Help child/YP understand their place in the world							
	BA2	Enough money to live	BE3	Tap into good influences	L2	Engage mentors for children/YP	C2	Being brave	CO2	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings	
	BA3	Being safe	BE4	Keep relationships going			C3	Solving problems			
	BA4	Access & transport	BE5	The more healthy relationships the better	L3	Map out career or life plan	C4	Putting on rose-tinted glasses(seeing things in a positive light)	CO3	Help the child/YP to know her/himself	
	BA5	Healthy diet	BE6	Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope			C5	Fostering their interests			
	BA6	Exercise and fresh air	BE7	Get together people the child/YP can count on	L4	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	C6	Calming down & self-soothing	CO4	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself	
			BE8	Responsibilities & obligations							
	BA7	Enough sleep	BE9	Focus on good times and places	L5	Highlight achievements	C7	Remember tomorrow is another day	CO5	Foster their talents	
	BA8	Play & leisure	BE10	Make sense of where child/YP has come from							
BA9	Being free from prejudice & discrimination	BE11	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	L6	Develop life skills	C8	Lean on others when necessary	CO6	There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them		
		BE12	Make friends and mix with other children/YPs			C9	Have a laugh				

**What are the overall aspects of Resilience?**

from Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow with Thomas 2007

[www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk)



## Websites that will provide help and support

- Young Minds  
[http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for\\_parents/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/)
- My CAMHS Choices  
<http://mycamhschoices.org/>
- Choosing what's best for you  
<http://www.choosing.org.uk/>
- Time to Change  
<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>
- Doc Ready  
<http://www.docready.org/#/home>
- Youth Wellbeing Directory  
<http://www.youthwellbeingdirectory.co.uk/>
- NHS Young People & Mental Health  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx>
- Samaritans for parents  
<http://www.samaritans.org/media-centre/our-campaigns/information-suicide-and-self-harm-parents>



## Appendix F SUPPORTING YOUR DAUGHTER'S MENTAL HEALTH



*An advice leaflet from Camden School for Girls PSHE Department*

## **What is mental health?**

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. It is about our range of emotions and affects the way we think and feel about ourselves and others, and how we deal with life.

When we experience a mental health problem, it can affect our thinking and feelings, our mood, and our ability to relate to others as we usually would.

The most commonly diagnosed mental health problems are depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), eating disorders, personality disorders and schizophrenia. (You can find out more about these on the Mind or Young Minds websites). You might be surprised how common these experiences are.

One in ten young people will experience a mental health problem before the age of 16. So, even if mental health problems aren't affecting your family directly, you're very likely to know people who are going through the experience right now.

It's perhaps worth remembering that mental health can fluctuate in all of us, whoever we are – over the course of our lives, or even from day to day.

## **Common mental health concerns**

I'm worried that my daughter:

- Is not eating properly
- Is spending too long working
- Is not sleeping
- Is very tearful and moody
- Is having panic attacks
- Is carrying out self-harm
- Might be smoking
- Might be taking legal/illegal substances
- Is avoiding work

## **What do I do if I think my daughter is experiencing a mental health problem?**

### **1 Show you're open to talking**

One of the most significant things for young people is that they know they can come to talk to someone if they are worried about the mental health or the mental health of someone they know. Being open to talking about mental health, and showing you care, will mean a lot.

- Remind them you care
- Be patient: there are times when they won't feel like talking
- Everyday questions can help – like 'How are you doing?' or 'How was it today?'

If the opportunity to talk arises, here are five tips that might help:

1. **Listening:** It can be more important and significant than talking
2. **Small and informal:** You don't have to set aside hours to chat, and informal spaces can be great – like in the car, over a meal, or while you're watching TV
3. **Put experiences in context:** We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health. Mental wellbeing doesn't mean feeling happy all the time, and mental health problems are actually quite common
4. **Depersonalise:** You might find it easier to talk about hypothetical situations rather than their direct questions about their feelings. Like saying 'Exams can be really stressful, can't they?' or chatting about the experiences of a TV character
5. **Hearing what's real to them:** You might not understand or agree with their feelings or way of seeing things, but this might be real for them in that moment

Remember, you don't need to be an expert. It's OK not to know or

- Feeling isolated

understand things. Everyday words are often helpful – like stress, feeling low, depressed or anxious. You could even learn together.

# **Camden School for Girls**

**Promoting positive mental health, and dealing with things when they aren't so positive -**

## **A Sixth Form Guide**



*This is an advice booklet devised by the school PSHE department, and contact numbers for agencies that can help with all of the issues detailed in here are listed at the end.*

## **Positive Mental Well-Being**

Most people see the benefit of eating 5 fruit and vegetables a day, brushing their teeth twice a day (hopefully!), or going to the gym to look after their physical health. However, few people set aside time each day to keep their minds healthy - often the focus is on responding to difficulties as and when they crop up - instead of trying to prevent those difficulties in the first place.

At the start of Year 12, all students attend a session on adopting a growth mindset – a training session that gives you knowledge about how your mind works and how to use it more healthily and effectively. Our actions and the environment around us affect our mental health and so it is within our power to make positive moves to improve our mental health. To look after ourselves, each day we should make sure we have:

- ★ Had enough sleep
- ★ Drunk enough water
- ★ Eaten enough and healthily
- ★ Had enough natural light
- ★ Been physically active in *some* way. Even if it's just walking a bit.

We must also determine what are our own breathers and restorers are that help us stay healthy and allow us to create our own positive mental health regime. These are things we can do each day that encourage well being. They might be walking, being with friends, playing sport, listening to music, etc.

## **The NHS**

The National Health Service puts huge emphasis on well-being, and Sarah Stewart-Brown, professor of public health, offers the following definition: "Feeling happy is a part of mental well being. But it's far from the whole. Feelings of contentment, enjoyment, confidence and engagement with the world are all a part of mental wellbeing. Self-esteem and self-confidence are, too.

So is a feeling that you can do the things you want to do. And so are good relationships, which bring joy to you and those around you.”

Of course, good mental wellbeing does not mean that you never experience feelings or situations that you find difficult, but it does mean that you feel you have the resilience to cope when times are tougher than usual."

It can help to think about "being well" as something you do, rather than something you are. The more you put in, the more you are likely to get out.

The NHS recommends the following five steps, which research has shown can really help to boost well-being:

- ★ **Connect** – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.
- ★ **Be active** – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
- ★ **Keep learning** – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for a cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?
- ★ **Give to others** – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a phone call to someone you suspect might be lonely, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at a charity shop or a local food bank, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.
- ★ **Be mindful** – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Resilience can be learned! Your outlook and daily activities affect your mental wellbeing so make sure you take time to look after your mental health.



**We are aware, however, that most people struggle with their mental health at some point in their lives, and resilience strategies might not always work. The rest of this booklet is focussed on some concerns you may have, together with advice offered by experts and some agencies you can refer to if you require further support.**

## **Concerns you might have over your own mental health**

### **Problems with Sleeping**

This can range to include insomnia, finding it hard to wake up in the mornings, being tired all the time. The most important thing if this is something you're concerned about is to establish how *much* of a problem it is. Our memories can be really faulty when it comes to sleep, so try keeping a journal for a couple of weeks to log what time (roughly) you go to bed and what time you wake up. Rank the night from 1-10, with 1 being a terrible night, with many wakeful moments and 10 being an uninterrupted sleep-through. Being able to reflect back on a collection of nights (rather than just one or two) can help you to identify patterns (is Sunday a particularly bad night on a regular basis?), and to work out how best to fix it.

Consider the following:

- ★ Sleep hygiene: keep the light low for half an hour at least (preferably an hour) before bed. Obviously turn off your screens from smartphones and iPads as the blue light suppresses melatonin levels, which is the hormone responsible for regulating our sleep patterns. The blue light filter on your phone is helpful, but not sufficient.
- ★ Regular exercise and general activity during the day will help when it's time to sleep in the evening.
- ★ Drinking and smoking before bed will lead to interrupted sleep, despite the perception that they may relax you.



- ★ If your body temperature is slightly lower (often after a warm shower or a bath) than usual, you might find it easier to fall asleep.
- ★ Finally, over-worrying about poor sleep only exacerbates the problem. Try to tell yourself that one or two days feeling tired in school is not the end of the world, and the problem may well go away of its own accord.

## **Eating Disorders**

This can include punitive eating patterns, such as fasting, bingeing, or purging. A combination of all three isn't unusual either. Orthorexia (an obsession with only eating the 'right' foods) can become life-limiting too, as can excessive exercise.

Consider this issue carefully:

- ★ You are allowed to decide what you eat and what you don't eat, but when it starts to dictate your behaviour and your choices you might benefit from receiving some help.
- ★ Many of you will change weight significantly at this stage in your life due to natural hormonal shifts. Remember that what is 'normal' is a wide range of weights and BMIs, not just one.
- ★ Eating disorders aren't just to do with mental ill-health: they take a huge toll on the body as well. Excessive weight loss can lead to problems with bone density, hair loss, increased body hair and hormonal deficiencies. For young women in particular, it can affect fertility.
- ★ There are many places you can receive help for issues like this (see the contacts list in this booklet), and it's recommended that you seek out some support from an adult.
  
- ★ It can be difficult supporting a friend with an eating disorder too: many of you will know that not only do you worry about the person suffering, but it can make you concerned with your own weight and general eating habits. The helplines are available to you too.

## **Self-Harm**

Self-harm can occur at any age but is most common in adolescence and young adulthood, and, inevitably, young people who self-harm give a

wide range of reasons for their behaviour.

Some young people repeatedly injure to escape from painful feelings such as hopelessness and low self-esteem. Because self-harm can reduce tension and sometimes help to control moods, it can become self-reinforcing and habit-forming.

It is important to remember:

- ★ Recovery from self-harm is completely achievable, and practical strategies for recovery include: talking to someone who listens without judgement, resisting the urge to self-harm by distraction techniques such as writing a journal, squeezing a stress-ball or an ice-cube, exercise and being around people.
- ★ If you're self-harming, you should see your GP for help. They can refer you to healthcare professionals at a local community mental health service for further assessment.

### **Panic or Anxiety Attacks**

These can have triggers, such as going on a crowded underground or being in other stressful situations, or can arise out of a seemingly innocuous situation. Some people will have these frequently, others occasionally, and some not at all.

- ★ If you are afflicted, the important thing is to *strategise*. Be prepared for situations you know can trigger attacks, and have an arsenal of measures to help you if you do. Self-help books or websites based on cognitive behavioural therapy can prove very useful.
- ★ Practising mindfulness and meditation can help significantly. Lowering your heart rate and staying calm on a regular basis can be a great way of managing.
- ★ Ideally, it's important to get to the root of what is causing these - but it's equally important to understand that Sixth Form is a stressful time in your life and they may be no obvious reason you can find to explain these reactions.

### **The Impact of Workload**

The final two years of school can be a very stressful time in terms of workload. University aspirations, teacher and parental expectations, the leap from GCSE to A-level can all impact on your ability to cope with what you have to do. Struggling with work can be a product of a deeper issue, or it can be the cause of it. If you do feel yourself not to be coping, make sure you do the following:

- ★ Communicate with your teachers and form tutor. No one at school *wants* you to not to manage, and will be able to help support you with some of the burdens.
  - ★ Make getting organised a priority: use your planner and your free periods, attend homework clubs, make revision timetables.
  - ★ Consider working with a mentor to manage your time through a regular weekly meeting.
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- This information isn't designed to be comprehensive: many young people will struggle with other issues, such as **very low moods, feelings of isolation, and abuse of drugs and alcohol**.
- Some presentations of poor mental health may well be the product of **problems with identity**: gender, sexual, racial and personal identity are very complex, and are often felt the most keenly at this time.
- If you have suffered a **trauma**, whether mental or physical, it is not unlikely that you may need some emotional support to overcome that too.

Talk to someone. Family, friends, teachers: there are many people who can help you if you're going through a difficult time. Alternatively there are many organisations that can offer professional and impartial support.

### Contact Details of Useful People and Organisations

FORWARD (FWD) - Drugs & alcohol

[ypsmt@camden.gov.uk](mailto:ypsmt@camden.gov.uk)

<http://www.talktofrank.com/treatment-centre/forward-drug-and-alcohol-service-young-people-camden>

FWD provides one-to-one structured support and group work sessions to young people affected by substance misuse (including the impact of parental substance misuse).

## CHILDLINE

Freephone 0800 1111 (24 hours)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Childline is the UK's free helpline for children and young people. It provides confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

## GET CONNECTED

Freephone 0808 808 4994 (7 days a week 1pm-11pm)

[www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

Free, confidential telephone and email helpline finding young people the best help whatever the problem. Can text information to callers' mobile phones.

## HEADMEDS

[www.headmeds.org.uk](http://www.headmeds.org.uk)

Straight talk on mental health medication. Look up your medication to find out about side effects and things you might not feel comfortable asking your GP about, and listen to other people's experiences.

## SAMARITANS

Tel: 116 123 (24 hrs 7 days a week) or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) Samaritans volunteers listen in confidence to anyone in any type of emotional distress, without judging or telling people what to do.

## MIND

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Many of you will have heard of the mental health charity Mind - perhaps some of you will have fund-raised for them in the past. If you want to discuss any element of a mental health issue and how to access more support, you can ring them on 0300 123 3393 (9am-6pm on weekdays) or text 86463.

#### FRANK

Freephone 0800 77 66 00 (24 hour service, free if call from a landline and won't show up on the phone bill, provides translation for non-English speakers) [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or solvent misuse.

#### STONEWALL

Use Stonewall's area database to find local lesbian, gay, and bisexual community groups, other generic services, and gay friendly solicitors.

#### B-EAT YOUTH HELPLINE

0845 634 7650 (Monday to Friday evenings from 4.30pm to 8.30pm and Saturdays 1.00pm - 4.30pm). Email [fyp@b-eat.co.uk](mailto:fyp@b-eat.co.uk)

Information, help and support for anyone affected by eating disorders.

#### THESITE.ORG

[TheSite.org](http://TheSite.org) is an online guide to life for 16 to 25 year-olds. It provides non-judgemental support and information on everything from sex and exam stress to debt and drugs.

#### YOUTH ACCESS

Visit [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk) to search their directory of services. Signposting service: 0208 772 9900 (Mon – Fri from 9am-1pm & 2-5pm)

A national membership organisation for youth information, advice and counselling agencies. Provides information on youth agencies to children aged 11-25 and their carers but does not provide direct advice.

#### CHILDREN'S LEGAL CENTRE

Child Law Advice Line 08088 020 008 (freephone) [www.lawstuff.org.uk](http://www.lawstuff.org.uk) The Children's Legal Centre is a charity that promotes children's rights and gives legal advice and representation to children and young people.

## YOUNG MINDS

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers. They have a helpline for parents, and a website with a wealth of materials for you. 0808 802 5544

## HARMLESS

Harmless is a user led organisation that provides a range of services about self harm and suicide prevention including support, information, training and consultancy to people who self harm, their friends and families and professionals and those at risk of suicide.

Email [info@harmless.org.uk](mailto:info@harmless.org.uk)

More useful organisations and further advice on mental health problems can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/>