AET Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are all remarkable

September 2024

For review September 2025

Contents

Page

Appendix 1: Eight factors to promote health and well-being in schools

Appendix 2: The support structure to address pupils' needs

Appendix 3: Possible warning signs of mental health concerns

Appendix 4: Self review tool

1.   Introduction

1.1 This policy is a guide to all Trust colleagues, including School Support Services, academy staff (teaching and non teaching) and governors. The policy outlines our approach to promoting the mental health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils. It should be read with reference to other Trust policies outlined in Section 8 below.

1.2 This policy draws upon the guidance and advice of several key government documents, most notably: Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools(2018); Teaching about wellbeing (2020); Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing(2015); Supporting mental health in schools and colleges(2017): Education_staff_wellbeing_charter (2021)

1.3 This policy also reflects Mental health and behaviour in schools (2016) and relates to the eight identified principles that put children at risk of developing mental health problems (see Appendix 1) as well as the 'protective factors that enable children to be resilient when they encounter problems and challenges' in the school context:

● Bullying ● Discrimination ● Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships ● Deviant peer influences Peer pressure ● Poor pupil to teacher relationships	● Clear policies on behaviour and bullying ● 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems ● A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health ● Positive classroom management ● A sense of belonging ● Positive peer influences

All of the protective factors listed above have been incorporated into this policy.

2. Policy statement

We are aware of the complex relationship between emotions, thinking and learning. Where staff and pupils feel good about themselves they perform better. Creating school cultures where everyone is valued, motivated and inspired to achieve, is central to this process. By creating and maintaining cohesive and connected school communities the chances of pupils developing mental health concerns is reduced.

We encourage pupils to be open within the caring and respectful cultures that our academies have developed and we want every pupil to have their voice heard.

We appreciate that everyone may experience different life challenges and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. Therefore, we understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. Throughout our Trust, positive mental health and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play. Each of our academies is unique; each serves a different community and has developed practices and approaches that it has found to be successful over time. This policy outlines the broad approach to well-being and mental health that we expect all of our academies to follow, and then to translate into their own context in an appropriate bespoke way.

3. The aim of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to securing positive mental health and wellbeing for our staff and pupils. Therefore we aim to support academies to :

3.1 promote well-being and positive mental health in all pupils and staff

3.2 prevent mental health problems from arising

3.3 educate all members of our school communities about well-being and mental health issues

3.4 enable staff to identify early warning signs to mental ill health in pupils

3.5 swiftly and effectively provide support to pupils with mental health concerns

3.6 We will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our staff and students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

3.7 We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all pupils and

staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our pupils' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every pupil feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any pupil that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

4.   Roles and responsibilities

4.1.   All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils and each other. This is our whole Trust ethos.

4.2.   The Trust team to promote positive mental health and wellbeing are:
- National Director of Inclusion: Maria Rodrigues
- Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jill Fuller
- Trust Regional Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jane Caryle
- Trust Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (mental health): Claire Reid
- Trust Mental Health First Aider: Natalie Straker
- Specialist leader of mental health: Frankie Arundel

4.3.   Although this will vary slightly between academies, key members of staff have specific roles and responsibilities in relation to areas such as strategy, systems and processes, referrals and curriculum and planning.

4.4.   Certain staff members play a specific role in this process:

- The academy Mental Health Lead focuses on developing and monitoring the overall strategy identifying strengths and areas for

development within the academy
and coordinating the work and training of the Mental Health First Aiders and Head of years.

- The Pastoral/Inclusion Lead (or equivalent) ensures behaviour systems and approaches to pastoral care are effective. As mentioned earlier, in a situation where there is a concern that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the standard child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The academy SENDCO ensures that pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs have an appropriate curriculum including impactful interventions in social and emotional health.
- The PSHE/Curriculum Lead ensures that pupils learn about well-being and mental health in a developmental way and in response to the needs of pupils and the key issues in any school community.

4.4 If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil, then in the first instance they should talk to the designated Mental Health Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the academy.

4.5 If a pupil presents as a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed including involving the emergency services.

5. **Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing** (preventative). We create and maintain healthy, vibrant and cohesive learning communities based on an awareness of all of the protective factors; this strong foundation enables our schools to prevent or reduce mental health issues from occurring.

5.1 We are aware of the impact that different aspects of school life have on pupil well-being. We monitor and manage these areas of school-life to ensure that the well-being of pupils is paramount to all of our work. We believe that this approach will help to prevent some pupils from developing mental health issues.

5.2 We believe that pupils benefit from:
- feeling respected and included
- being taught by staff who are themselves healthy
- understanding how to keep themselves healthy and make informed choices about their emotional and mental well-being
- knowing that their views matter and that they are listened to
- feeling safe at all times

We believe that staff benefit from:

- knowing that their views matter and that they are listened to
- understanding how to keep themselves healthy and make informed choices about their emotional and mental well-being
- feeling respected and included
- feeling safe at all times

5.3 Culture of mutual respect and inclusivity
Creating and managing a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity helps to create a strong foundation for positive mental health and well-being.

5.4 Monitoring the quality of relationships between all stakeholders is important in order to maintain a cohesive and supportive community. Academies will approach this in different ways and will include some of the following:

- surveying staff and pupils to establish the strengths and areas for development in staff-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships;
- ensuring that *pupil voice* has a high status in the school so that staff are aware of pupil perspectives and concerns;
- promoting *unconditional positive regard* for pupils;
- CPD/initiatives on the impact of language (both verbal and non-verbal) used by staff when interacting with pupils;
- learning walks with a focus on staff-pupil relationships;
- restorative justice practices

5.5 Celebrating diversity is crucial to ensuring positive wellbeing and mental health and an important protective measure. This ensures that all sections of the school community feel valued and represented and helps create a sense of belonging for all pupils and especially for those pupils and staff with protected characteristics. This is a whole school approach embedded in our educational provision.

5.6 Exclusion is viewed as a last resort as a method of modifying pupil behaviour. Whilst positive reinforcement and pupil 'buy-in' are the most effective strategies, there are times when exclusion is necessary. Internal and external 'exclusion' practices will be monitored and managed carefully so as to ensure that pupils' learning is not compromised and that pupil well-being is always taken into account.

5.7 Maintaining positive relationships and good communication with parents and carers is important in ensuring that parents/carers a) understand school decisions and practices, b) can contribute their views and c) so that the messages of the school are reinforced at home. It also provides opportunities to communicate ideas

(for example via the academy website,
parents'/carers' evenings and designated family liaison staff) about how to promote
well-being at home to complement school-based initiatives.

5.4 Staff well being

'Promoting staff health and well-being is also an integral principle of the whole school approach to emotional health and well-being'

5.4.1 Promoting children and young people's emotional health and well-being (2015)
In order to create and maintain healthy school communities, our academies
recognise that it is important to provide 'opportunities for assessing the emotional
health and wellbeing needs of staff' (for example via surveys, questionnaires, staff
fora and meetings with line-managers) and promote 'a work-life balance for staff'.

5.4.2 It is recognised that staff engaged in promoting pupil well-being (e.g. teaching
about specific mental health topics) and addressing pupils' mental health concerns
(e.g. dealing with a disclosure) may at times become personally affected. Academies
will ensure that staff are provided with effective systems of support to address this
important issue.

5.4.3 Staff can be supported in a number of ways, such as by being provided with
mentoring or supervision, by being given opportunities to reflect on their practice and
by being offered counselling should they need this.

5.4.4Further, it is important that staff have a manageable workload and that they
work in an atmosphere built on praise and positivity. Leaders will collate and review
the views of staff on a regular basis.

5.4.5 Further advice, resources and guidance for staff is available here. For support
in coming to terms with bereavement and loss further resources are available here.

5.4.6 Protected Characteristics Equality Act 2010. We uphold the rights of all - it is
against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:
- Age (including menopause-related conditions)
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability (including menopause-related conditions)

- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

5.5 Well-being curriculum

5.5.1 Mental health and well-being in the curriculum is taught through the PSHE and RSHE curriculum. The delivery focuses on providing pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training. Our curriculum is underpinned by the DfE guidance on *Teaching about wellbeing* and the updated guidance relating to the delivery of Physical health and mental wellbeing as part of RSHE.

5.5.2 Our approaches are developmental to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding is properly embedded and they have the confidence to seek help for themselves and for others.

5.5.3 Pupils' progress will be assessed via teacher and pupil self-assessment. Pupils will be encouraged to write about and/or discuss new strategies that they have acquired as a result of the well-being curriculum.

5.5.4 Parents and carers will be informed of the topics that will be taught in order to encourage dialogue within families and reinforce important messages.

5.5.5 Mental health awareness days/weeks, assemblies and workshops will also compliment the work done during curriculum time.

5.5.6 There will be focus on specific themes that are deemed to be of importance to particular age groups such as to do with the risks of online interactions and behaviour (e.g. social media).

5.5.7 At all times, staff will ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner which is helpful rather than harmful (e.g. avoiding discussing methods used in eating disorders, self-harm and suicide)

5.5.8 In addition to formal learning about mental health and well-being there will be opportunities for pupils to experience activities that promote well-being (such as mindfulness, yoga, etc.) and engage in creative and physical pursuits.

5.6 Strong pupil voice

5.6.1 Self-efficacy is important for mental health and well-being. The extent to which pupils feel they have influence and that their views are heard is important for their sense of self-efficacy.

5.6.2 Pupil voice systems, initiatives and approaches have an essential role to play in this respect. It is important that pupils are genuinely consulted and involved in making decisions about certain aspects of their school life. This helps pupils to build a sense of school connection - an important preventative measure to help build resilience to mental health problems.

5.6.3 Pupil voice enhances pupils' sense of self, develops their social skills and can also contribute to school improvement.

5.6.4 Some of the practical measures that our academies will use to promote this include having impactful school council and/or pupil fora, pupil questionnaires/surveys, pupil-led initiatives and peer support systems. All of these measures help our schools to gain a clear sense of pupils' experiences and concerns about issues ranging from an awareness of the impact of exam and assessment pressures on pupils' well-being to the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment.

5.7 Safe and calm environment

5.7.1 Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies are an important protective factor for pupil mental health. These policies are regularly reviewed with careful consideration given to the role they play in maintaining pupil well-being.

5.7.2 Behaviour policies will incorporate an appropriate balance of reward/positive reinforcement and sanctions.

5.7.3 The underlying causes of problematic or challenging behaviour will be explored and used to inform individual pupil strategies.

5.7.4 Anti-bullying policies and practices must always be impactful and should involve close monitoring of the victim of bullying over time so as to ensure that their mental health and well-being does not suffer.

5.7.5 Familiar school and classroom routines, smooth pupil flow (movement) around the school and quiet spaces for vulnerable pupils are some of the key elements used in order to create and maintain safe, calm and vibrant school environments.

6.   Addressing mental health concerns (responsive)

6.1 Some pupils will still develop mental health issues. The diagram at Appendix 2 depicts how we have key people and systems in place to act swiftly, effectively and compassionately to address pupils' needs.

6.2 Staff training/awareness
All staff receive regular training in identifying and responding to signs that suggest that pupils may have mental health concerns.

6.2.3 Staff are alert to a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:
   6.2.3i physical signs of harm
   6.2.3ii changes in eating and sleeping habits
   6.2.3iii Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
   6.2.3iv changes in mood
   6.2.3v talking and/ or joking about self harm and/or suidide
   6.2.3vi drug and alcohol abuse
   6.2.3vii feelings of failure, uselessness and loss of hope
   6.2.3viii secretive behaviour
   6.2.3ix clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer
   6.2.3x negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption
   Staff are also alert to identifying a range of issues including:
   6.2.3x1 declining attendance and increased absenteeism including truanting
   6.2.3xii punctuality and lateness
   6.2.xiii changes in educational attainment and attitudes towards education
   6.2.xiv family and relationship problems
   6.2.xv coping with bereavement and health difficulties.
   The diagram in Appendix 3 illustrates some of these possible warning signs:
6.2.4 These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff observing them will communicate any concerns that they have with the appropriate member of staff in their school (e.g. Designated Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead). In a situation where there is a concern that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the standard child protection procedures will be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child safeguarding lead.

6.2.5 Additional training will be arranged for key members of staff in specific areas in response to developing situations with one or more pupils and the wider mental health needs of the school community. Free online training can be found on the MindEd website (www.minded.org.uk). Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk) and

Mind (www.mind.org.uk) also have information
and resources on a range of issues in relation to well-being and mental health.

6.3 **Referral processes** All referral processes are clearly signposted.

6.3.1 Pupils are told how to raise concerns either about themselves or their peers; they know who they should talk to and are reassured about the process (via visual displays, assemblies, tutors/class teachers, curriculum topics, etc.).

6.3.2 The member of staff receiving a disclosure will always be calm and supportive.

6.3.3 Firstly, the focus will be on listening and the main priority will be the pupil's immediate well-being and safety rather than exploring complex underlying causes.

6.3.4 All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and in writing. They will be shared with the appropriate authorities only if it is deemed necessary to keep the child safe in line with our safeguarding policy.

6.3.5 The disclosure record will contain:
- The date of the disclosure
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps.

 6.3.4 If a reported concern is perceived to require onward referral, either to a colleague in the academy or externally, this must first be discussed with the pupil to include:
- Who will be told
- What will be disclosed
- Why it is necessary to disclose this information
- When this contact will be made

6.3.5 However, if a pupil is at immediate risk, it may not be possible to gain their consent first. Protecting a pupil's safety is our foremost priority so a disclosure would be shared if we felt their safety was in urgent danger.

6.3.6 It is important to share disclosures with the Designated Mental Health lead or deputy to a) ensure continuity of care if the recipient of the disclosure is absent in the future and b) to safeguard the recipient's emotional well-being as they are no longer solely responsible for the pupil.

6.3.7 Parents should always be informed
about the disclosure; pupils should be given the opportunity to share this information with parents/carers but either way, the academy must contact parents/carers as soon as is practicably possible.

6.3.8 Parents/carers will be informed about how to raise a concern themselves about their child either via the academy website, visual displays, written correspondence or from information disseminated during meetings with parents/carers. Further, parents/carers will be made aware of what support is available in school, locally (e.g. local services and charities) and nationally (mental health organisations).

6.3.9 Staff observing any of the warning signs mentioned earlier and /or due to other reasons should refer their concerns to the appropriate member of staff.

6.4 **Mental health monitoring**

6.4.1 All staff should be vigilant in monitoring the mental health and well-being of pupils on a daily basis, being vigilant for signs of concern. In addition to this, academies will adopt a range of systems and measures to monitor pupil well-being.
- It is important for staff to have opportunities to discuss individual pupils' well-being (for example, in appropriate staff forums but respecting confidentiality issues) and discuss concerns as and when they arise.
- Staff should also collaborate in compilation of any action plans or risk assessments from every child check in's
- Staff must be particularly alert to any every child check in assessments that are flagged to denote a pupil is exhibiting a composite risk (especially hidden autonomy and over regulation)

6.4.2 Robust tracking and analysis of attendance, exclusion, behaviour (and other forms of) data will play a key role in identifying causes for concern.

6.4.3 Pupils' mental health is also tracked through AS tracking with the information collated to inform support for individual pupils, curriculum planning and whole school approaches.

6.4.4 Mental health tools such as SDQs (Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires) and R-CAD (Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale) can also enable staff to capture the perspectives of pupils, parents/carers and staff.

6.4.5 Meetings with parents/carers provide
staff with the opportunity to gain insights into pupils' well-being outside of the school context and better understand their experiences and needs.

6.4.6 Individual care plans are completed for pupils exhibiting a mental health concern. This plan is compiled with input from pupils, parents/carers, teaching staff and health professionals, and should include some or all of the following key elements: a) Details of a pupil's concern; b) Special requirements and precautions; c) Medication and any side effects (if appropriate); d) What to do, and who to contact in an emergency; e) Interventions, strategies and approaches used in school; f) Measuring progress over time; g) Review dates.

6.5 **Range of interventions**

A range of support is offered for pupils with mental health concerns. This includes:

6.5.1 Support within the academy: academies have a range of internal support which are appropriate to their context. For each support service, academies can provide details as to: what support is available, how it can be accessed, its aims and purpose and how pupils are made aware of the service.

6.5.2 Support from external agencies and the local community for example: school nurse, paediatricians, CAMHS, counselling services, therapists, family support workers, PAUSE, STICK, FTB and KOOTH.

6.5.4 Interventions will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate and impactful with the best interests of the individual at the centre.

6.5.5 When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can also be a difficult time for their peers. Therefore, we will evaluate whether any additional support is needed by peers. This may be on a one to one or small group basis and will focus on building resilience and healthy coping strategies.

6.6 **Working with parents/carers**

6.6.7 Working closely with parents and carers is a key aspect of the Trust's approach to mental health and well-being. We ensure that parents'/carers' views and feelings are taken into account and that they are kept informed (when appropriate), so they can take part in decisions taken about their children.

6.6.8 To support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health that are available in the academy or trust wide
- Provide access to further support
- Ensure that parents have a clear line of communication if they wish to talk about their child
- Provide parents with guidance about how they can support their child's (or children's) positive mental health
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible
- Keep parents updated about how our staff are trained with regards to mental health and the coverage of mental health and wellbeing in our curriculum.

6.6.9 We will always approach the subject in a sensitive way. Where possible, meetings should take place face to face and careful consideration should be given to the location and time as well as the appropriate people to invite.

7. **Review**: We believe it is essential that we constantly review our effectiveness in relation to well-being and mental health. The self-review tables in Appendix 4 are intended to facilitate self review of provision by leaders in collaboration with the Trust lead.

Appendices

Appendix 1: *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and well-being* (2015) identifies eight principles to promote health and well-being in schools and colleges, as the following diagram illustrates:

Appendix 2: The diagram below illustrates how our academies have **key people and systems** in place to act **swiftly, effectively** and **compassionately** to address pupils' needs.
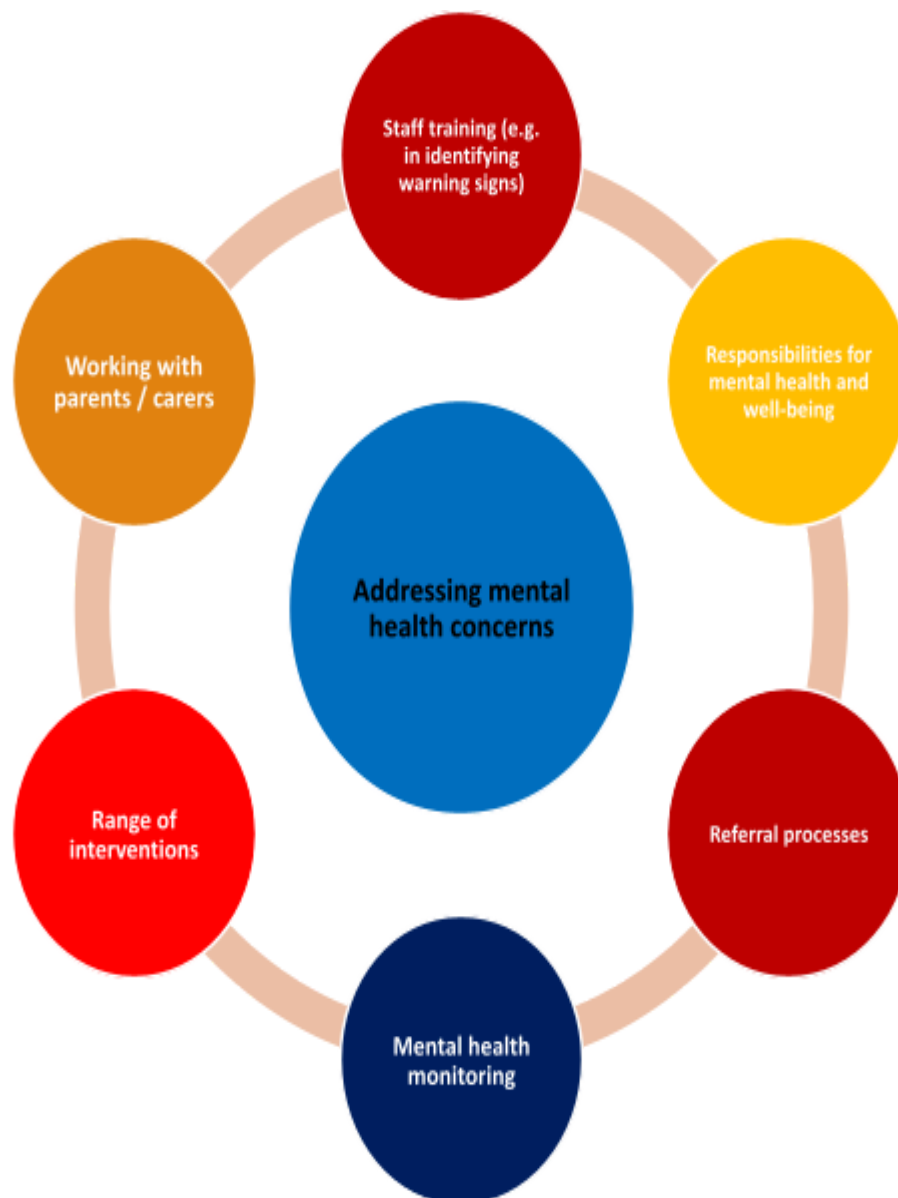
Appendix 3: Possible warning signs of a mental health concern in a pupil

Appendix 4: Self review tool

School Community Cohesion & Connectedness	Not Evident	Developing	Secure
Systems are in place to monitor the quality of relationships between all staff and pupils			x
There are a range of systems and strategies to ensure that exclusion from lessons and/or school is only a last resort			x
There are familiar school and class routines that ensure a calm and industrious environment			x
Anti-bullying systems are clear and robust; recipients of bullying are offered support and are monitored over time			x
Restorative justice approaches are used when appropriate			x
Minority groups' (within the pupil body) & under-performing groups' needs and experiences are catalogued, understood and addressed appropriately			x
Teaching/programmes/initiatives to promote diversity, tackle prejudice and remove stigma around mental health are in evidence across the academy			x
Pupil voice: There are regular and impactful pupil council meetings; pupil questionnaires/fora are used to gauge pupils' concerns/needs (e.g. around issues such as exam stress)			x
There are opportunities/initiatives for pupils to support each other (e.g. via peer mentoring, referring peers to safeguarding officers)			x
Family engagement: There is good communication between the academy and Families; there are a range of events/opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in the life of the academy; there is extensive outreach to struggling families.			X
Behaviour data is used to inform practice and improve behaviour systems			X
Behaviour systems are effective; there is consistency of application, clarity in roles & regular reviews of systems and interventions			X

Mental Health across the Academy	Not Evident	Developing	Secure
• A member of staff has responsibility for the strategic overview of the academy's mental health provision			x
• There are regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and lead to changes where necessary			x
• There are clear systems and processes for staff to follow when pupils present with possible mental health problems			x
• Assessment tool(s) and processes are used to provide clear analysis of pupils' mental health needs			x
• There is effective use of data so that changes in pupils' patterns of attainment, attendance or behaviour are noticed and can be acted upon			x
• There are appropriate fora for relevant staff to discuss pupils' well-being			x
• Interventions are assessed to ensure quality control and share best practice			x
• A graduated system of intervention - that maximises the use of academy staff and uses external agencies when appropriate - is used			x
• The academy has a good understanding of mental health support services locally and ensures the integrated working of all partners (e.g. external agencies / organisations)			x
• There is coordinated curriculum and pastoral planning to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of mental issues			x
• Pupils understand how to seek help and/or self-refer - in person or via correspondence/technology			x
• Pupils have access to staff trained in counselling and/or therapy			x
• There is a dedicated and protected space for pupils to meet with staff to discuss their problems			x
• There is a programme of on-going whole-staff mental health training and specialised training for staff delivering interventions.			x
• There are programmes for pupils that promote well-being (e.g. mindfulness, yoga, boxercise, 'the importance of sleep' programmes)			x
• There are opportunities for parents/carers to engage in promoting pupils' well-being and mental health.			x

• Pupils are aware of the risks surrounding online interactions and behaviour			x
• There are systems and processes in place to support staff well-being and tackle work-related stress			x