



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Reviewed by: S Roberts	Date: Sept 2025	Next review: Sept 2026
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Ethos

We foster key principles at Adcote School which include:

- A person centred approach, where everyone is treated as an individual
- Everybody is responsible for pastoral care and the wellbeing of students
- Proactive CLEAR programme which is integral to the curriculum.
- Resilience building and problem solving is focused on in class, extra-curricular activities and Challenge Days.

Those with day to day contact with students are likely to be best placed to spot any changes in behaviour which may indicate that a student is at risk of a mental health problem. They should report any concerns to the Assistant Head Pastoral in accordance with the terms of this policy.

Child Protection Responsibilities

1. Adcote School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, including their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and that students cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. We therefore aim to provide an environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of self-worth and the knowledge that students' concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

2. The Head is responsible for ensuring that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed on a day to day basis.

2.1 The school has appointed a senior member of staff, the Assistant Head Pastoral (Sally Roberts) who has the necessary status and authority to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. Parents are welcome to approach Miss Roberts if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child in the school, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the students' Personal Tutor or the Head, who will notify the DSL in accordance with these procedures.

3. Warning Signs: If there are signs and symptoms that last weeks or months; and if these issues interfere with the student's daily life, not only at home, but at school and with friends, a student might need help if they:

- Often feel anxious or worried
- Has very frequent expressions of anger or is intensely irritable much of the time
- Has frequent stomach aches or headaches with no physical explanation
- Are in constant motion; can't sit quietly for any length of time
- Has trouble sleeping, including frequent nightmares
- Loses interest in things she used to enjoy
- Avoids spending time with friends
- Has trouble doing well in school, or academic grades decline
- Fears gaining weight; exercises, diets obsessively
- Has low or no energy
- Has spells of intense, inexhaustible activity
- Engages in risky, destructive behaviour
- Harms self or others

Signs and symptoms of mental or emotional concerns:

- Anxiety and Depression
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Eating Disorders
- Self-harm

Curriculum and PSHE

Our CLEAR learning programme focuses on confidence, leadership, engagement, achievement and resilience. We aim to reduce the stigma surrounding mental ill health and to explore healthy coping strategies.

Spirituality is supported through our regular assemblies, led by our Headmistress, Mrs Victoria Taylor and our School Chaplain, Rev.'d Lucinda Burns.

Identification and Tracking

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) is a trained, school based learning support assistant. Their role is to support the emotional wellbeing of pupils. They are trained by a team of educational psychologists and receive ongoing group supervision. They provide talk support sessions and group activities to develop friendship and emotional mentoring.

A qualified nurse is available during term time. She will refer to other agencies if necessary.

Adcote offers access to the services of an external counsellor, who parents can employ to provide confidential counselling.

Raising Awareness

We celebrate children's mental health week which raises awareness about mental wellbeing issues. This is a whole school initiative which includes assemblies, form time activities and specific interventions.

Staff Wellbeing

Staff members should find a way of working which is mutually beneficial to the school and their own work-life balance. We have staff Wellbeing Champions who are available as a listening ear.

Working with families

The school acknowledges the important role families have to play to support their children and they are informed when appropriate. There may be times when it does not happen such as within the safeguarding parameters.

4. Procedures

The most important role school staff play is to familiarise themselves with the risk factors. The School may become aware of concerns over a pupil's mental health in a variety of different ways, including where:

- A pupil acknowledges that they have a problem and seeks help;
- A pupil exhibits consistent disruptive, unusual or withdrawn behaviour which may be indicative of an underlying problem and/or indicates that a pupil could be at risk of developing mental health problems;

- A member of staff, parent or another adult reports a concern about, or issues relating to, a child's mental health or behaviour;
- Where another pupil or child reports concerns about, or issues relating to, a pupil's mental health or behaviour. The School will take all reports of concerns over the mental health and wellbeing of its pupils seriously and not delay in investigating and, if appropriate, in putting support in place, including where necessary, taking immediate steps to safeguard a pupil.

4.1 Following a welfare concern referral, the DSL will decide on the appropriate course of action. If the pupil also has special educational needs/disability (SEND), the pupil will also be referred to the SENCO, who will act in accordance with the SEND policy.

4.2 An assessment of immediate risk will be made (in consultation with the Medical Officer (Ms. Julie Mansell) where appropriate, and a decision taken as to whether any further action is required, this may include:

- Immediate medical assistance and/or
- Contacting parents/guardians where appropriate
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor/nurse
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Giving advice to parents, teachers and other students
- The DSL will discuss the matter with the pupil to develop a strategy to support and assist them.
- Support for the friends of the affected pupil, where appropriate. Where it is decided that support and/or intervention is required, the DSL will ensure that the pupil is monitored and periodically review the welfare plan seeking feedback from the child, Matron and members of the Safeguarding team as necessary. The review will include consideration as to whether further therapeutic/medical intervention and/or external referrals should be sought. We recognise that our pupils (day and boarders) come from a wide variety of backgrounds (including overseas) with differing attitudes and approaches to mental health issues. It is important that the families of pupils who have, or have had, mental health problems are encouraged to share this information with the School's Medical Officer and/or DSL. The School needs to know of the pupil's circumstances in order to provide proper support and ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made to enable them to learn and study effectively.

Parents must disclose any known mental health problem or any concerns they may have about their child's mental health or emotional wellbeing. Pupils and their families can share relevant health information on the understanding that the information will be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. The School asks for academic information from a pupil's previous school and specifically asks whether there are any welfare or medical issues of which the School should be aware in order to discharge our duty of care. School Medical Officer/GP, DSL.

Confidentiality and information sharing Pupils may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare or that of a peer. Pupils should be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality in cases of pupil welfare. If a member of staff considers a pupil to be at serious risk of harm then confidentiality cannot be kept and the concern must be shared with the DSL immediately. It is important not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a pupil puts pressure on a member of staff to do so. A pupil may present at the medical centre in the first instance. This

gives the medical team a key role in identifying mental health issues early. If a pupil confides in a member of the school medical team then they should be encouraged to speak to their Matron or DSL. After nursing assessment, any immediate concern for a pupil's mental health should be reported to the school Medical Officer/GP and an appointment made.

Confidentiality will be maintained within the boundaries of safeguarding the pupil and guidelines on information sharing. Confidential information may be shared in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupil and others who may be affected by their actions. The school Medical Officer/GP will decide what information is appropriate to share with parents and/or the Deputy Head.

4.3 The School will balance a pupil's right of confidentiality against the School's overarching duties to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare and to protect pupils from suffering significant harm.

4.4 Where a pupil withholds consent and/or in any other circumstances where the School considers it necessary and proportionate to the need and level of risk, confidential information may be shared with parents, medical professionals and external agencies (such as Children's Social Services) on a need to know basis. 8. Pupil Absence If a pupil is absent from school for any length of time, then appropriate arrangements will be made to send work home. This may be in discussion with any medical professionals who may be treating a pupil.

Management of pupil mental health concerns in school and boarding Management of pupil mental and emotional health issues will be assessed on a case by case basis. The Headmistress and DSL Welfare will consider whether a pupil is fit to remain in school, and in particular whether they are fit to remain in boarding.

4.5 Reintegration to school should a pupil require some time out of school, the school will be fully supportive of this and every step will be taken in order to ensure a smooth reintegration back into school when they are ready. The DSL and Safeguarding team will draw up an appropriate welfare plan. The pupil should have as much ownership as possible with regards to the welfare plan so that they feel they have control over the situation. If a phased return to school is deemed appropriate, this will be agreed with the parents and medical/counselling professionals.

Anxiety: all children and young people get anxious at times; this is a normal part of their development. Welfare concerns are raised when anxiety is impairing their development, or having a significant effect on their schooling or relationships.

Anxiety symptoms can include:

- Mind racing or going blank
- Decreased concentration and memory
- Difficulty making decisions Irritability, impatience, anger
- Confusion · Restlessness or feeling on edge, nervousness
- Tiredness, sleep disturbances, vivid dreams
- Unwanted unpleasant repetitive thoughts Behavioural effects
- Avoidance of situations · Repetitive compulsive behaviour e.g. excessive checking

· Distress in social situations

Suicidal thoughts

Risk Factors:

- Experiencing other mental or emotional problems
- Divorce of parents · Perceived poor achievement at school
- Bullying
- Developing a long term physical illness
- Death of someone close
- Break up of a relationship some people will develop depression in a distressing situation, whereas others in the same situation may not.

Any suggestion that a pupil may be considering suicide should always be taken seriously. Pupils are instructed to inform a member of staff immediately if they are feeling suicidal, or if another pupil confides suicidal thoughts to them.

1. Assess the immediate risk and take whatever urgent action is necessary, which may include immediately calling 999 in an emergency if a suicide attempt has been made.
2. Report all incidents and disclosures immediately (by telephone and text) to the Head of Pastoral and, if appropriate, escort the pupil to the Medical Centre.
3. A full risk assessment will be undertaken by the Head of Pastoral and Safeguarding team.
4. The pupil may be asked to undertake counselling, and to that end, professional advice concerning the management of, and support for, the pupil will be sought.

Links with other policies

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection
2. Medical Policy
3. PSHE Policy
4. Anti-bullying Policy
5. Equal Opportunities Policy
6. Staff behaviour and Code of Conduct (in the staff handbook)