



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



## Document History

Version	Comments/Amendments	Name	Date
1	First Issue	Chris Kelly	22/04/2025

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### 1. Policy Statement

Oaktree Education Services recognises that emotional wellbeing and mental health are essential foundations for learning and lifelong development. We are committed to promoting the positive mental health of every learner and member of staff through inclusive, preventative, and responsive practices that reflect our core values of care, dignity, and aspiration.

This policy sets out how we create an emotionally healthy environment, how we identify and support learners with emerging or ongoing mental health needs, and how we equip our staff with the knowledge and tools to respond effectively and sensitively. It is grounded in principles of trauma-informed practice, neurodiversity, safeguarding, and person-centred support.

### 2. Aims

#### This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture that prioritises wellbeing for learners and staff
- Embed trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice across the setting
- Increase understanding of mental health and reduce stigma
- Enable early identification and appropriate intervention for mental health needs
- Provide coordinated and compassionate support for learners and staff
- Align with current DfE statutory guidance and Ofsted inspection criteria

### 3. Guiding Frameworks

**This policy is informed by:**

- *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools* (DfE, 2018)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2023)
- *Future in Mind* (DoH, 2015)
- *A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health* (NCB, 2016)
- *What Works in Promoting Social and Emotional Wellbeing* (Weare, 2015)
- NICE guidelines on supporting social and emotional wellbeing in education
- PSHE Association guidance for mental health education

### 4. Trauma-Informed Approach

We recognise that many learners in specialist settings have experienced adversity including trauma, neglect, exclusion, and loss. Our approach is underpinned by:

- **Safety:** Ensuring learners feel physically and emotionally safe
- **Relationships:** Building trust-based, consistent relationships with key adults
- **Empowerment:** Supporting learners to develop self-regulation and voice
- **Collaboration:** Involving families and external services in care planning

We deliver staff training in trauma-informed practice and support consistent use of relational behaviour approaches that avoid re-traumatisation.

### 5. Whole College Strategies

Our universal provision includes:

- A safe, nurturing physical environment with sensory regulation spaces
- Regular check-ins, keyworker systems, and daily routines
- Embedded emotional literacy through PSHE, tutorials, and social skills groups
- Visual supports, structured transitions, and predictable responses
- Peer mentoring and student voice opportunities

- Access to wellbeing resources and creative therapies
- Anti-stigma campaigns and awareness events

### 6. Targeted and Specialist Support

For learners requiring additional support, we provide:

- Individual Support Plans and Student Wellbeing Profiles
- Multi-agency collaboration including CAMHS, social care, and health services
- Counselling, mental health first aid, and signposting to external services
- Reintegration plans following absence or crisis
- Reasonable adjustments to reduce stressors and avoid exclusions
- Referrals to specialist assessment where indicated

### 7. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a duty to promote emotional wellbeing and respond to concerns. Key leads include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- SENDCo
- Mental Health Lead (trained in MHFA)
- Tutors and keyworkers
- SLT member responsible for staff wellbeing

#### Staff are supported through:

- CPD on trauma-informed education, mental health conditions, and de-escalation
- Access to staff supervision or counselling if needed
- Protected time for reflection and support during emotionally demanding periods

### 8. Recognising Early Warning Signs

Staff are trained to recognise common signs of mental distress, including:

- Withdrawal or changes in engagement
- Repetitive or self-injurious behaviours
- Verbal expressions of distress or hopelessness
- Marked changes in attendance, sleep, or appetite
- Sudden deterioration in mood or communication

Concerns are logged, monitored, and escalated in line with safeguarding procedures.

### 9. Supporting Learners in Crisis

If a learner is in crisis:

- Physical and emotional safety are prioritised
- Immediate support is provided by trained staff
- DSL is informed and safeguarding protocols followed
- Parents and carers are engaged where appropriate
- Multi-agency crisis intervention is sought if necessary

### 10. Working with Families

We work in partnership with families and carers through:

- Transparent communication and consent processes
- Supportive, non-judgemental engagement during difficult conversations
- Signposting to family support services and resources
- Collaborative planning and shared decision-making

### 11. Promoting Staff Wellbeing

We are committed to supporting the mental health of all staff by:

- Promoting work-life balance and manageable workloads
- Providing regular wellbeing check-ins and access to occupational health
- Offering CPD, coaching, and emotional support
- Creating a culture where staff can speak openly and access help

### 12. Monitoring and Evaluation

We evaluate our approach through:

- Regular feedback from learners, staff, and families
- Analysis of incident and attendance data
- Annual policy reviews
- Reporting to governors and adapting strategy in response to need

### 13. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** (or sooner, if required by legislative changes or significant developments in best practice).
- The review process will involve **teaching staff, support staff, senior leaders, and governors**, alongside student representatives (where appropriate).

### Approval and Signature

- **Principle of Head of College:**  
*Chris Kelly, 22/04/2025*
- **Chair of Governors/Trust Board:**  
*Name, Signature, Date*