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## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROCEDURE 2025-26

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Approved by	LAB
Date of next review:	March 2026
Responsible Officer:	Z Beamish

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### Summary of changes from last review:

- 1 – provision map is now submitted as separate document to avoid errors with personnel.
- 2 – Working with partners updated to include NHS MHST

### Introduction

What is mental health and why is it important to what we do at Comberton Village College and Sixth Form?

*“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes 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.” WHO 2013*

For all individuals, mental, physical and social health are vital and interwoven strands of life. As our understanding of this relationship grows, it becomes ever more apparent that mental health is crucial to the overall well-being of individuals, societies and countries. Schools, as well as other institutions in society, have a crucial role in supporting the development of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Prevalence of poor mental health in young people has grown rapidly in the last decade. 2020 figures from NHS digital suggest that rates of probable mental disorders have increased since 2017. In 2020, one in six (16.0%) of children aged 5 to 16 years were identified as having a probable mental health disorder, increasing from one in nine (10.8%) in 2017. The increase is evident across all genders.

School staff are the professionals who spend the most time with children and young people. Schools are often the first to identify difficulties and support and influence children and young people. There is a strong case that we should focus on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our pupils (those in our 11-16 school) and students (those attending our sixth form, CSF). The Education Endowment Fund for instance identifies Social and Emotional Learning interventions as having an ‘identifiable and valuable impact on attitudes to learning... [and] on attainment’.

Comberton Village College and Sixth Form recognises the positive role that schools/colleges play in relation to mental health and wellbeing (henceforth referred to as MHWB). At the heart of our work lie the six core principles of The Cam Academy Trust. These drive everything that we do, the framework for mental health relates to the following core principles:

**The excellence principle** - Education must be of the very highest standard. Education and support around MHWB should be of the highest standard offered.

**The comprehensive principle** - Education must be for all kinds and abilities. Provision for MHWB should recognise the diverse school communities within the Trust and seek to support appropriately.

**The broad education principle** - Education must incorporate a broad range of subject areas and personal development. Positive psychoeducation has a lifelong impact and should be considered as a part of pupil's and student's entitlement.

**The community principle** - Every Academy must be at the heart of its local community and serve it well. We recognise the impact that positive mental health has on communities and seek to support parents/carers in our community with knowledge and skills to support positive MHWB.

**The partnership principle** - Each Academy must seek to work positively in partnership with others for mutual benefit. The framework and the work that schools do related to MHWB is predicated on strong partnerships between schools and external support providers.

We want to ensure that every individual pupil and student achieves their full, positive potential through a broad and high-quality education including access to support with MHWB.

We also recognise that staff are our most valuable resource at Comberton Village College and this procedure also outlines the ways in which the school seeks to promote the positive mental health and wellbeing of all employees.

This procedure has been developed in line with the CAM Academy Trust's Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing Procedure.

### **Defined Roles and Responsibilities**

*"Dealing with mental health is everyone's business"* – Time to change (2021)

A whole school, joined-up approach to MHWB has a demonstrably positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of all within the community (DfE: 2018). This is only possible because of access to appropriate training, support and understanding about how to refer on concerns to the right person, team or external partner. This procedure seeks to outline responsibilities of staff at every level in the school as well as the role that pupils and students can play in supporting positive MHWB.

#### **All staff**

All staff in schools have a clear responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of their pupils and students (Keeping Children Safe in Education: 2018). Schools should recognise the positive role that all members of staff play in promoting MHWB through their everyday behaviour and professional practice.

A pupil or student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil or student chooses to disclose concerns about their own MHWB or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive, and non-judgmental. Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's or student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

In line with the '*Mental Health Training Competency Framework for School staff*'- *Core Training* outlining that as a minimum standard all staff should:

- Have an understanding and awareness of what is meant by mental health and positive mental health.
- Have an understanding and awareness of how to look after their own mental health (self-care)
- Have an understanding and awareness of how to identify children and young people who might be struggling with their mental health.
- Have an understanding and awareness of the factors that promote and protect mental health and build resilience.
- Are able to identify factors that might increase the risk of developing a mental health problem.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities – their own and those of others – in meeting mental health needs of children and young people.
- Are able to consider their own values and attitudes about mental health and how these might influence their work.
- Are aware of barriers that may exist for different minority groups in terms of accessing services.
- Know who they should speak to in the school if they identify a child or young person with mental health difficulties (and what information to include within the conversation)
- Have an understanding of the safeguarding issues and how to respond in their setting to a child or young person in distress or in a mental health crisis including the risk of suicide.
- Have a general awareness of key local services and resources that can support better mental health in children and young people.

- Are able to signpost children, young people or their parents/carers to sources of support and advice.

To enable this all staff should:

- Have access to training on MHWB and the role that schools have in promoting positive mental health, this could be as part of annual safeguarding updates and training.
- Have opportunities to discuss concerns about the MHWB of children and young people in their school at an appropriate level, for instance at team meetings.
- Have access to appropriate supervision and support when responding to disclosures or events related to safeguarding or mental health needs.
- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to their individual schools' MHWB procedure.

### **Staff with pastoral responsibilities**

Those who play a significant role in a pupil's or student's 'educational journey' and who are working directly with children and young people on a daily basis should have a deeper understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

At Comberton Village College this includes Heads of Year, the SENDCO, KS3&KS4 Support provision managers, Head of the Cabin and appropriate CSS staff.

In the Sixth Form, this includes members of the Sixth Form Leadership Team, Academic Tutors, and staff who work in Sixth Form Support or Sixth Form Cabin roles.

In line with the *Mental Health Training Competency Framework for School staff -Enhanced competencies* these staff should have a deeper understanding and practical application of:

- A range of relevant mental health problems (e.g. anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide etc)
- Factors that make a young person more vulnerable to poor mental health
- Services and care pathways that are able to support children, young people and how to access them.
- Strategies to help build resilience and improve mental health of children and young people.
- How to build emotional literacy in children and young people through the curriculum (including PSHE lessons)
- Impact of attachment, adverse childhood experiences, trauma and loss
- Value of active listening and communication skills
- Knowledge of how to assess basic mental health needs.
- Solution focused/restorative approaches to behaviour management.
- Ability to reflect and use supervision for support and advice.

Staff should be able to access regular suitable supervision to reflect on their own practice and identify areas which they require further training in.

Mental Health Leads should regularly review emerging needs within their schools and support staff in developing confidence with managing these needs. This could be through regular forums where staff reflect on current practice and training needs.

### **Mental Health Leads**

Following the recommendation from the Government's Green Paper: Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health (2017), each Academy in the Trust should include in their Mental Health procedure a named Mental Health Lead with overall responsibility for championing the MHWB needs of the whole school community. The Designated Mental Health Lead at Comberton Village College is Zach Beamish (Assistant principal). The Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) in schools is a strategic role which developed in line with Public Health England's eight principles to promoting a whole school approach to MHWB. The eight principles are:

- Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing.
- Identification of need and monitoring of the impact of interventions
- Understanding of targeted support and how to make appropriate referrals.
- Staff development to support pupil and staff wellbeing.
- Creating an ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity.

- Enabling pupil and student voice to influence decisions.
- Working with parents, families and carers
- Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning.

The DMHL will need to be situated in the school organisation where they can lead strategically on each of the eight principles. It is therefore recommended that the DMHL is part of the senior leadership team in each school. It may be appropriate for some primary schools within the Trust to work in partnership in designating a Mental Health Lead.

Common features of the role of the DMHL across academies will include, but not be limited to:

- Engaging with Mental Health Forums internally run within the Trust and as part of the Local Offer, working collaboratively with other Mental Health Leads across the Trust. These Forums will focus on emerging needs and evidence-based practice to meet these needs and share good practice.
- Commit to ongoing CPD (including DMHL training from DfE) and regular self-evaluation of competencies and skills when it comes to leading on MHWB matters with a target tied to promoting MHWB as part of annual Performance Management.
- Co-ordinate CPD and annual refreshers for the whole school community using the local competency framework to identify needs.
- Cascade knowledge of basic mental health awareness to other staff and parents/carers. This should include regularly reviewing information that is signposted to staff and parents/carers, for instance on the school's website/social media feeds.
- At least annually assess the MHWB needs of the whole school community by validated methodologies such as; The Local Authority Mental Health Blueprint, safeguarding patterns and trends, school council feedback, standardised well-being measures e.g. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale, Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale, Boxall Profile etc.
- Identify and work with specialist providers to clinically assess those members of the school community that have higher needs and monitor the impact of interventions using approved outcome measures.
- Ensure that there are clear routes of communication between specialist provisions (such as CAMH) and school. This may mean that the DMHL is the 'named' person for pupils and students who are under the care of a specialist provision.
- Use data on the whole school community to strategically formulate improvement plans and organise non-clinical evidence-based interventions designed to meet these needs at multiple levels: whole school (universal) or targeted/ specialised levels for specific members of the school community.
- Lead on procedure development, implementation and regular reviews of MHWB provision.
- Identify staff who are able to offer professional supervision in school and organising training and regular forum to develop practice in this area.

The DMHL will need to assess their competencies against the DfE proposed CPD framework (to be published in late 2021) and identify areas where they require training.

When Mental Health Support Teams are in place the Designated Mental Health Lead will work with the team to agree a strategic plan.

## **Senior Leaders**

The role of Senior leaders in supporting the work of the Mental Health Lead is crucial to ensure positive impact and embed good practice.

Senior leaders should:

- Support Mental Health leads to implement plans and strategies related to improving Mental Health and well-being across the school community.
- Participate in regular self-evaluation of MHWB provision as part of whole school self-evaluation and development planning.
- Promote the whole school ethos of championing positive mental health.
- Use their oversight to ensure that existing related procedures (e.g. Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Equality and Diversity, Behaviour Management) reference and promote positive mental health practices.
- Evaluate the efficacy and impact of the pastoral, PSHE and related curricula (Key Stage 3-5) in both its content and delivery as a means to ensuring universal provision for positive MHWB is well met.

- Encourage good communication, collaboration and appropriate liaison between staff involved in pastoral, PSHE, mental health and family work to ensure good provision for mental health and wellbeing in their schools.

Finally, Senior leaders have a role in supporting the MHWB of their staff by means of line management, coaching or arranging supervision which is particularly pertinent for staff who may have had disclosures made to them or who are closely supporting children or young people who have experienced early or significant trauma. It is therefore important that senior leaders have access to appropriate training and supervision in this area too.

### **Local Advisory Board**

The school's LAB also has a role in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. LAB Members play a key role in being curious about school provision and appropriately challenging the status quo (A Competency Framework for Governance: 2021).

**The LAB member with responsibility for MHWB in the school community is Mrs C MacDonald** Her role is to ensure that there is suitable evaluation of mental health provisions in the school and that mental health and emotional wellbeing is a priority.

LAB members with responsibility for MHWB should be offered appropriate training, which may include meeting with other LAB members with this responsibility across the Trust.

There should be an agenda item at LAB meetings at least annually focusing on trends, patterns and provisions related to mental health.

### **Involvement of parents and peers in supporting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing**

It is important that schools think systemically about mental health and wellbeing and consider children and young people within the context of their families and peer groups and the role that these relationships can have on creating positive mental health and wellbeing.

### **Working with parents and carers**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school and Sixth Form that provides guidance in how to support their children's MHWB. In order to support parents Comberton Village College will:

- Highlight sources of information, agencies, and how to access support about common mental health issues on our 11-16 school and Sixth Form websites.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child. This is detailed on our websites and also in the parent handbook.
- Make our mental health procedure easily accessible to parents. Available on our websites.
- Offer opportunities for parents and carers to feedback on procedures (this could be done through parent governors for example).
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

When supporting pupils and students with more significant needs or where there is a disclosure or concern around mental health the school will consider when and how parents are informed. Before disclosing to parents, the school will consider the following questions (on a case-by-case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face or virtually?
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? (Consider parents, the student, other agencies, other members of staff).
- What are the aims of the meeting?

In the sixth form, staff will carefully consider if parents should be informed, taking into account the age of the student, the student's wishes and the level of perceived risk to the student.

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. The school will be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

The school will always highlight further sources of information and give parents appropriate information (for instance leaflets) to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared.

Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Where meetings take place, members of staff should keep accurate minutes of what has been discussed and agreed next steps. School staff involved in these meetings should be given suitable provision, for example supervision, to reflect on and evaluate their own professional practice.

### **Peer support**

When a pupil or student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends.

Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. To keep peers safe, the school will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support.

The school be mindful of the impact of mental health issues on peers surrounding the child and young person and could:

- Discuss with the young person or child what they would like their friends to know.
- Discuss with the child or young person how peers can support them safely.

Additionally, with peers, schools could highlight:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about mental health

### **Provision for supporting Pupil's or student's MHWB at Comberton Village College**

Comberton Village College and Sixth Form has a clear graduated response to MHWB with clear delegation of responsibility for each level of support. Where the school makes a referral to an external provider or service and assists with information sharing it will be done in line with GDPR and the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education. ~~Below is a map showing provision for mental health in Key Stages 3 & 4 and wellbeing in the school, including w~~

The school will work with external partners and will identify a single point of contact with these providers to ensure that there is a clear quality assurance framework in place, regular opportunities to feedback on practice, agreement about safeguarding and best practice

## Staff wellbeing

### Purpose and Principles

The wellbeing of professionals working within the Trust is of paramount importance. Staff are the most important resource schools have when it comes to delivering a high-quality education. Without a personal sense of wellbeing, it is difficult to nurture wellbeing in others.

Employers have a legal "duty of care" towards employees (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1992) which requires them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological wellbeing of their staff. Wellbeing at work is therefore essential if we are to reach our best potential and help pupils and students to do the same. There is a definite correlation between positive staff wellbeing, pupil and student achievement and a school's continued improvement (DfE: 2018).

Managing staff wellbeing and promoting a healthy work-life balance will help attract and retain the calibre of staff needed for an outstanding education system.

Supporting the wellbeing of staff will:

- Reduce staff absenteeism and turnover,
- Develop a more motivated workforce with high morale, able to deliver a challenging, education for our pupils/students,
- Improve teamwork, staff development and co-operation,
- Recognise that excessive hours of work can reduce staff effectiveness,
- Provide positive role models for pupils and students.

Work-based stress can have a significant impact on staff wellbeing and in turn impact on pupil and student outcomes. It is therefore important that the school does what it can to monitor work-based stress and create opportunities for stress reduction where possible.

Actions to support positive staff wellbeing:

- Identify the main challenges to staff wellbeing by gathering appropriate evidence on the main drivers of stress within the school. This is done through a wellbeing and workload questionnaire completed by all staff at least annually.
- Where workplace stressors are identified, suitable risk assessment should be undertaken to help eliminate the stress or control the risks from stress. This may be done through a referral for an Occupational Health Assessment where appropriate.
- Clearly signpost sources of support available to all staff. For instance, helplines, websites or other information on improving wellbeing are all signposted in staff toilets, the staff room and around the school (for example in office spaces).
- Clearly signpost routes to accessing more specialised or targeted support such as counselling, coaching and/or supervision available to staff. Line-managers will have training and support in how to refer a member of staff where appropriate.
- Create suitable opportunities for staff to discuss their wellbeing regularly with a line-manager (or suitable member of staff). Staff involved in these discussions should have appropriate training made available to them.
- Create forums in the form of the Wellbeing meet-ups to allow staff to discuss wellbeing issues in the school and suggest possible solutions.
- Create opportunities for appropriate professional development to ensure that staff feel competent in the work that they do.
- Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

Senior Leaders in schools should be aware of how they model positive behaviour to manage workload and work-related stress and how this can feed into the overall school ethos and culture. For example, by creating



opportunities to discuss wellbeing in line-management meetings; awareness of reasonable working hours, and; collaborating with staff on strategies to manage workload reasonably.

Some areas that schools could develop further to support with staff wellbeing might include:

- Providing up-to-date job descriptions, with duties and responsibilities relating to individual teacher's roles clearly identified
- Paying attention to the physical working environment. Ensuring that site issues are resolved where possible and that staff have a space to recuperate.
- Monitoring working hours and encouraging staff to take breaks in-line with employment legislation.
- Offering staff the option to participate in wellbeing activities e.g. sport activities, social activities, mindfulness sessions.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the school.
- Ensuring there is a culture where staff achievements are acknowledged and celebrated.
- Explicitly outlining staff wellbeing provision in recruitment (for example as part of job adverts and discussions during interviews with prospective candidates)

Staff are able to request for money to support enrichment activities via the Staff Enrichment and Wellbeing Fund which was created from refunds from Exam Boards through years where exams were cancelled due to COVID. Funds can be used to subsidise activities which promote staff wellbeing. Activities should link to the 5 ways to wellbeing:

- Connect
- Be active.
- Take notice.
- Keep Learning
- Give

Examples of activities that would be approved:

- Starting a staff gardening club (links to connect, take notice, keep learning, give)
- A staff social trip to the botanical gardens in Cambridge (links to connect, keep learning)
- Couch to 5K group (links to connect, be active)
- Chocolate tasting session (Links to connect, keep learning)

What we don't fund:

- Alcohol
- Activities which are exclusive to departments or individuals
- Increases to staff salaries.
- Events/activities which would bring the school into disrepute.

Requests for funding are considered on a case-by-case basis and staff can request funding via a Form.



*This procedure incorporates elements of Article 1 (Definition of a Child), Article 2 (Non-Discrimination), Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child), Article 4 (Making Rights Real), Article 24 (Health, Water, Food, Environment), Article 28 (Access to Education) from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*



