



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 26/27

The school is committed to reviewing this policy regularly to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice.

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Policy Statement

Arbour Academy is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils and staff.

We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing are integral to children's development, learning, relationships, attendance, behaviour and ability to achieve positive outcomes. The Academy aims to provide a safe, calm, inclusive and trauma-informed environment in which pupils feel valued, understood and supported.

Arbour Academy recognises its important role in identifying emerging mental health needs, providing appropriate early support and helping pupils and families access specialist services where required.

The Academy also recognises that school staff are not mental health clinicians and are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or provide treatment outside the scope of their role, qualifications or training.

Mental health and safeguarding are closely connected. Where a mental health concern is also, or may be, a safeguarding concern, the Academy's safeguarding procedures will always be followed.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing across the whole Academy community;
- create a safe, inclusive and trauma-informed environment;

- develop pupils' resilience, emotional literacy and appropriate coping strategies;
- increase awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing;
- support staff to recognise emerging signs of mental health difficulties;
- identify concerns as early as possible;
- provide appropriate early help, pastoral support and interventions;
- ensure clear pathways for referral to specialist services where necessary;
- ensure that mental health concerns which may indicate a safeguarding risk are appropriately identified and escalated;
- support pupils experiencing mental health difficulties and, where appropriate, their parents/carers and peers;
- promote effective partnership working between pupils, parents/carers, school staff and external professionals; and
- promote positive staff wellbeing.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Education Act 2002;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- DfE guidance *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools*; and
- government guidance relating to promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach.

This policy should be read alongside the Academy's relevant policies and procedures, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Equality information and objectives;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Data Protection Policy; and
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing and to remain alert to changes in pupils' presentation, behaviour or circumstances.

Staff must report concerns about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding and reporting procedures.

Lead members of staff:

Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gwyn Owen

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s): Sophie Booth and Jade Howard

SEND Lead/SENCO: Liz Cohen

Senior Mental Health/Inclusion/Pastoral Lead: Sophie Booth

The DSL retains responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The Senior Mental Health Lead supports the Academy's strategic whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The DSL, Senior Mental Health Lead, SEND Lead/SENCO, pastoral staff and other relevant professionals will work collaboratively where appropriate.

Mental Health and Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some circumstances, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to diagnose a mental health condition. However, staff are well placed to observe pupils and identify changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance, relationships or emotional wellbeing.

Where a member of staff has a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action must be taken in accordance with the Academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must report safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a DDSL using the Academy's established safeguarding procedures.

Identifying Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs

Positive relationships and knowledge of individual pupils are central to identifying emerging difficulties.

Possible indicators of mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns may include:

- a pupil saying that they feel anxious, low, distressed or unable to cope;
- significant changes in behaviour, mood or presentation;
- withdrawal or increased isolation;
- deterioration in attendance, engagement or educational progress;
- changes in friendships or relationships;
- significant changes in eating or sleeping patterns;
- deterioration in personal hygiene or self-care;
- unexplained or repeated physical symptoms;
- signs or disclosure of self-harm;
- talking, writing or joking about self-harm, death or suicide;

- expressing feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness or failure;
- increased risk-taking behaviour;
- substance or alcohol misuse;
- repeated physical injuries or signs of harm;
- concerns raised by parents/carers, peers or professionals; or
- any significant change from a pupil's usual presentation.

The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean that a pupil has a mental health condition. Staff should record and report concerns rather than attempting to diagnose their cause.

Responding to a Disclosure

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or another person to any member of staff.

Staff should:

- remain calm, supportive and non-judgmental;
- listen carefully;
- take the pupil seriously;
- avoid asking unnecessary or leading questions;
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking to someone;
- focus initially on the pupil's immediate emotional and physical safety;
- not attempt to diagnose the pupil;
- not promise confidentiality;
- explain, in an age-appropriate way, that relevant information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe; and
- report and record the concern promptly in accordance with Academy procedures.

All mental health disclosures or concerns that have safeguarding implications must be recorded on CPOMS and brought to the attention of the appropriate member of the safeguarding team.

Records should be factual, timely and sufficiently detailed and, where appropriate, should include:

- the date and time;
- the pupil's own words;
- the nature of the concern or disclosure;
- the member of staff receiving the disclosure;
- immediate action taken;
- decisions made and rationale;
- referrals or information shared; and
- agreed next steps and follow-up.

Self-Harm, Suicidal Thoughts and Immediate Risk

Any indication that a pupil may be at risk of self-harm, suicide or serious harm must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the DSL or a DDSL.

Where there is an immediate risk to life or serious injury, the pupil must not be left unsupported. Appropriate first aid and safeguarding procedures must be implemented and urgent medical assistance and/or emergency services sought where required.

Parents/carers will normally be informed and involved unless doing so could increase the risk of harm

to the pupil or another person, or would otherwise conflict with the Academy's safeguarding responsibilities.

The Academy will seek appropriate specialist advice and support where necessary and will work with relevant external services to manage risk and support the pupil.

Levels of Support

Arbour Academy takes a graduated and proportionate approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Universal support is available to all pupils and includes a safe and supportive environment, positive relationships, curriculum provision, personal development, emotional literacy and opportunities to develop resilience and healthy coping strategies.

Targeted support may be provided where a pupil has an identified or emerging need. This may involve pastoral support, individual or group intervention, SEND support, reasonable adjustments or other appropriate school-based provision.

Specialist support may be required where needs are significant, complex or beyond the scope of school-based support. In these circumstances the Academy will work with parents/carers and relevant external agencies to facilitate appropriate referral, assessment or intervention.

Support will be based upon individual need and regularly reviewed.

Internal Support and Interventions

The Academy has systems in place to identify pupils requiring additional support and to coordinate an appropriate response.

Depending upon assessed need, available provision and the competence and training of staff, support may include:

- pastoral support;
- access to an emotionally available adult or trusted adult;
- individual wellbeing support;
- ELSA or emotional literacy support;
- drawing and talking activities;
- creative and therapeutic activities;
- wellbeing walks and physical activity;
- school-based counselling where available;
- structured social and emotional interventions;
- therapeutic or animal-assisted activities where appropriately risk assessed;
- SEND support and reasonable adjustments; and
- other evidence-informed interventions appropriate to the individual pupil.

School-based support does not necessarily cease because a pupil is accessing an external mental health service. Support will be coordinated according to the pupil's individual needs and advice from relevant professionals.

SEND, Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Academy recognises that mental health needs may interact with special educational needs and disabilities.

A mental health difficulty does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEND or is disabled. However, where appropriate, the Academy will consider whether a pupil requires additional SEND support.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a mental health condition may amount to a disability where it constitutes a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Where a pupil is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the Academy will fulfil its duty to make reasonable adjustments and will take appropriate steps to prevent disability discrimination.

The SEND Lead/SENCO and safeguarding, pastoral and mental health leads will work collaboratively where appropriate.

External Support and Signposting

Where a pupil's needs cannot appropriately be met through school-based provision alone, the Academy will support access to appropriate external services.

This may include health, mental health, early help, social care or other specialist services according to the pupil's individual needs and circumstances.

The Academy will maintain up-to-date information about relevant local and national support services and will make this information accessible to pupils, staff and parents/carers where appropriate.

Pupils will be supported to understand:

- what support is available;
- who the service is intended for;
- how support can be accessed;
- what the referral process involves; and
- what they can expect to happen next.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information concerning a person's physical or mental health constitutes **special category personal data** under UK GDPR.

Information relating to pupils' mental health will therefore be handled sensitively and in accordance with the Academy's Data Protection Policy, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information will only be shared where there is an appropriate lawful basis and with those who need the information to safeguard or support the pupil.

Staff must never promise a pupil absolute confidentiality.

Data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate information sharing where this is necessary to

safeguard a child. The safety and welfare of the pupil will remain paramount. Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

Arbour Academy seeks to provide a safe, calm, inclusive and trauma-informed learning environment in which positive mental health and wellbeing are promoted.

The Academy will:

- foster positive and respectful relationships;
- promote belonging, inclusion and emotional safety;
- teach pupils about mental health and wellbeing through appropriate curriculum provision;
- promote resilience and healthy coping strategies;
- challenge stigma surrounding mental health;
- provide opportunities for pupils to express their views;
- identify emerging needs as early as possible;
- provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments;
- promote positive behaviour through relational and trauma-informed approaches; and
- ensure pupils know where and how to seek help.

Pupil Voice

The Academy recognises the importance of listening to pupils and ensuring their views contribute to decisions about their support.

Pupil voice may be gathered through individual conversations, pupil profiles, surveys, reviews, pastoral work and wider Academy consultation.

Where appropriate, pupils will be involved in planning and reviewing the support provided to them.

Working with Parents and Carers

The Academy recognises that pupils experiencing mental health difficulties are often best supported through effective partnership working between home, school and relevant professionals.

The Academy will:

- ensure parents/carers know who to contact if they are concerned about their child;
- provide or signpost appropriate mental health and wellbeing information;
- involve parents/carers in planning and reviewing support where appropriate;
- encourage open and constructive communication;
- provide opportunities for parents/carers to discuss concerns with appropriate members of staff; and
- signpost families to relevant external support where required.

Parents/carers will normally be informed where the Academy has significant concerns about a pupil's mental health or safety.

There may, however, be circumstances where information should not immediately be shared with a parent/carer, particularly where doing so could place the pupil or another person at increased risk of harm. Such decisions will be made through the Academy's safeguarding procedures and, where necessary, with advice from relevant safeguarding agencies.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

Arbour Academy recognises that supporting pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs can be demanding.

The Academy is committed to promoting a positive working environment and supporting staff wellbeing.

Staff are encouraged to seek appropriate support where needed and to maintain professional boundaries and healthy working practices.

The Academy will promote staff wellbeing through appropriate leadership, communication, supervision/support, professional development and access to relevant wellbeing resources and services.

Where a member of staff's health may affect their work, this will be managed sensitively and in accordance with relevant Trust HR policies and procedures.

Training and Continuing Professional Development

All staff will receive appropriate training and information to enable them to recognise and respond to mental health and wellbeing concerns within the scope of their role.

Training may include:

- recognising indicators of mental health difficulties;
- the relationship between mental health and safeguarding;
- responding appropriately to disclosures;
- self-harm and suicide awareness;
- trauma-informed practice;
- safeguarding and referral pathways;
- professional boundaries;
- SEND and reasonable adjustments; and
- the Academy's procedures for recording and reporting concerns.

Staff with specific responsibilities for mental health, safeguarding, SEND or pastoral support will receive additional training appropriate to their role.

Training needs will be reviewed regularly and addressed through induction, safeguarding updates, continuing professional development and performance development processes.

Monitoring and Review

The Academy will monitor the effectiveness of its approach to mental health and wellbeing through appropriate information including pupil voice, parent/carers feedback, staff feedback, safeguarding information, attendance, behaviour, SEND information and the impact of interventions.

Information will be considered proportionately and in accordance with data protection requirements.

The Senior Mental Health Lead, DSL and relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team will review provision and identify areas for development.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is a significant change to legislation, statutory guidance, local arrangements or Academy practice.