



ATLANTIC HALL

MENTAL HEALTH AND

WELLBEING POLICY

1. Introduction

Why Mental Health and Wellbeing is Important

At Atlantic Hall School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (students, staff and parents), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. Available data reveals that 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have clinically diagnosable mental problems, yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age. These can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases, it is life-limiting.

To help the children, succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, the school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children can manage times of change and stress and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- ✓ All children are valued.
- ✓ Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- ✓ Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- ✓ Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- ✓ Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- ✓ How we promote positive mental health.
- ✓ How we prevent mental health problems.
- ✓ How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- ✓ How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- ✓ Key information about some common mental health problems.
- ✓ Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

3. Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

"a state of well-being in which every individual realises 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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- ✓ feel confident in themselves.
- ✓ be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- ✓ be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- ✓ cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- ✓ manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- ✓ learn and achieve.

4. How the policy was developed and who was consulted

In developing this policy, we have taken account of the Mental Health Policy for Lagos State and the 1991 National Policy for Mental Health.

A National Policy was introduced in 1991 in Nigeria. The policy was developed based on identified problems in mental health in Nigeria. Its general contents were:

- i. Equality and social justice
- ii. Patients to have the same rights as physically ill persons, including entitlement to treatment close to domicile
- iii. Services to be integrated with general health services
 - a. Comprehensive coverage through integration into primary health care
 - b. Training of PHC personnel in medical /psychological skills
 - c. Inter-sectorial collaboration with social development agencies (DFFRI)
 - d. Health attitudes/habits to be fostered among youths
 - e. Anti-stigma efforts among population
 - f. Special facilities to be provided for vulnerable /disadvantaged groups
- iv. NGOs to be encouraged
- v. Cooperation with international organizations
- vi. Periodic review of legislation

- vii. Research to be encouraged and funded

5. Related Policy in Atlantic Hall

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Health & Safety Policy,
- School Boarding policy
- Medical policy
- Trips and Excursions policy
- Staffing levels and Supervision policy
- Sports policy
- Learning and Teaching policy as well as
- Special Education Need and Disabilities (SEND) policy.

6. A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

- i. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- ii. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- iii. Helping children to be resilient learners.
- iv. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- v. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- vi. Effectively working with parents and carers.
- vii. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

7. Staff Roles and Responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).

Our Inclusion Lead for Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Leads on PSHCE teaching about mental health.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- i. Our own Senior Leadership Team
- ii. Our own Inclusion Leadership Team
- iii. Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- iv. School support staff employed to manage the mental health needs of particular children
- v. Our SENDCO (special educational needs and disabilities coordinator) helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- vi. Our School Nurse

8. Supporting Children' Positive Mental Health

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Student-led activities

- Through **PSHE** we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.
- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.

Class Activities

- Praise boxes a mechanism where students can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- Worry boxes - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class

Whole School

- Termly Mental Health talks for students and separate one for staff.
- Wellbeing day/week – The whole school focuses on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Staff mental health leaflet

PSHEE Topics Addressing Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not-so-good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings.
- To cooperate and problem-solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.
- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media)
- Positive and healthy coping strategies.
- About good and not-so-good feelings.
- To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others.
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- About resilience.
- How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something.
- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

9. Identifying, Referring and Supporting Children with Mental Health Needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable students to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of students are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for students based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with students and keep parents and carers updated.

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify students with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- i. Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions.
- ii. Using Leuven scales to identify students who need support.
- iii. Staff report concerns about individual students to the relevant lead persons.
- iv. Using SDQ (Social Difficulty Questionnaires) to identify individuals who might need support.
- v. Worry boxes in each class for students to raise concerns which are checked by the **Class**
- vi. **Teachers and Mental Health Lead** (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in particular classes regularly).
- vii. Student Progress Review meetings termly
- viii. Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- ix. A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School.
- x. Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- xi. Enabling students to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- xii. Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Disclosures by Students and Confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to students who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our students is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to the student that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the student's confidential file, including the date, name of the student and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within the School or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

Students are informed that the Inclusion Lead for Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs is available when a student is dissatisfied with the level of care and support.

10. Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider the next steps, as part of monitoring the children's Individual Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Main Specialist Service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	Accessed through school or self-referral
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the Mental Health Lead

SEND and Mental Health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN).

11. Involving Parents and Carers

in iPromoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular, supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On the first entry to the School, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family (see Appendix 1). It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers:

- We organise a range of activities such as workshops on protective and risk factors, craft clubs, computer skills clubs, and English as an additional language classes.
- We provide information and websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes and have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the School website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHCE curriculum section, on the School website.
- When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- i. Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified).
- ii. Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- iii. Be available for follow-up calls.
- iv. Make a record of the meeting.
- v. Agree on a mental health Individual Care Plan including clear next steps.
- vi. Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- vii. Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or of accompanying and supporting them to do so.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services, we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

12. Involving children

Every year we train a group of children as our health Champions who lead wholeschool campaigns on health and wellbeing.

We seek pupils' views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

13. Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help. Our Mental Health Lead is a qualified 'mental health first aider' and a number of our staff have completed the one-day course on mental health first aid.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work-life balance and wellbeing, such as celebrating Time to Talk Day, staff craft club, and our Social Committee (responsible for organising team building events both physical and non-physical). We have 'duvet week' to ensure all staff leave work early for at least one week, to support that work-life balance. Staff also have access to Camden's counselling service.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Mental Health Lead and involves staff with responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

REVIEW

This Mental Health Policy should be reviewed at the end of every 2 years

Policy reviewed: November 2023

Next Review date: November 2025