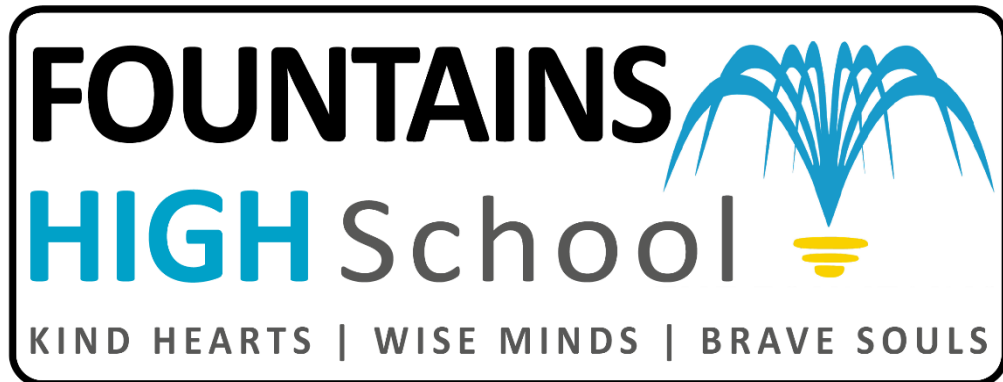




Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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1. Introduction and Aims

Fountains High School is committed to promoting positive mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience across the whole school community.

We recognise that positive mental health and wellbeing are fundamental to learning, communication, relationships, attendance, independence and successful preparation for adulthood. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where students feel valued, understood and able to thrive.

As a Thrive school, we take a relational, trauma-informed and developmentally informed approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that students may experience, communicate and present emotional distress in different ways and may require personalised approaches to support. Our approach is underpinned by our values of kindness, wisdom, bravery and respect and forms part of our wider safeguarding culture.

We recognise that mental health concerns can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. Mental health difficulties may also be an indicator that a child or young person has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff will therefore consider mental health and wellbeing alongside wider safeguarding concerns and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where appropriate.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school community.
- Foster a culture of emotional safety, belonging and inclusion.
- Support students to develop emotional literacy, resilience, self-awareness and self-regulation.
- Promote positive relationships and emotional development through a Thrive-informed approach.
- Ensure staff are able to identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and respond appropriately.
- Encourage a culture of professional curiosity where changes in a student's presentation, behaviour, attendance, emotional regulation, communication or wellbeing are explored and understood.
- Reduce stigma associated with mental health difficulties.
- Ensure that mental health and wellbeing are considered alongside safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and additional needs.

- Work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for students.
- Support staff wellbeing and recognise the importance of positive staff mental health in creating a healthy school community.

2. Mental Health and Wellbeing at Fountains

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At Fountains High School, mental health and wellbeing are promoted through a whole-school approach where positive relationships, emotional development, inclusion and safeguarding are embedded throughout school life.

We believe that students learn best when they feel safe, supported, understood and valued. Positive mental health and wellbeing are therefore embedded throughout the curriculum, pastoral support, communication approaches, wider school culture and relationships with safe adults.

School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions. However, they are well placed to observe students day-to-day, identify changes in presentation and recognise when additional support may be required. Early identification and timely intervention are key elements of our approach.

Our approach is built upon:

- Positive and trusting relationships.
- Emotional safety and belonging.
- High expectations alongside high levels of support.
- Early identification and intervention.
- Student voice and participation.
- Partnership working with families and professionals.
- Inclusion, dignity and respect.
- A strong safeguarding culture.

We recognise that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, abuse, neglect, bereavement and other significant life events can affect a student's mental health, emotional development, behaviour and ability to access learning. Our practice reflects this understanding and seeks to provide consistency, relational safety and appropriate support to help students thrive.

3. Thrive, Relational Practice and Emotional Development

As a Thrive school, emotional development and wellbeing are central to our practice. We recognise that students develop emotionally at different rates and may require different levels of support at different times. Our approach is rooted in understanding the developmental, relational and environmental factors that influence wellbeing, engagement and behaviour.

We are committed to creating a culture of relational safety, where students feel secure, respected and supported by safe adults. Positive relationships are the foundation of our work and play a vital role in promoting emotional wellbeing, resilience and readiness to learn.

Our approach is informed by:

- The Thrive Approach
- Relational Practice
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Emotion Coaching
- PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy)
- Vital Relational Functions (VRFs)
- Regulate, Relate, Reason

These approaches help staff develop positive relationships, understand behaviour within its context and provide developmentally appropriate support that promotes emotional regulation, wellbeing and inclusion.

Where students experience emotional dysregulation, our priority is to support regulation and restore a sense of safety through calm, consistent and supportive relationships. We understand that students are best able to reflect, problem-solve and engage in learning when they feel regulated, connected and emotionally safe.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board has strategic responsibility for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties relating to safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing. Governors provide support and challenge to ensure that effective systems, policies and practices are in place to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and safeguard students.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that mental health and wellbeing remain a priority across the school. The

Headteacher promotes a culture in which wellbeing, inclusion and safeguarding are embedded throughout school life.

4.3 Senior Mental Health Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for leading and coordinating the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing. As the DSL, they ensure that mental health and wellbeing are considered alongside safeguarding and welfare concerns, providing a joined-up approach to supporting students.

Responsibilities include:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school community.
- Supporting the development, implementation and review of this policy.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff regarding mental health and wellbeing concerns.
- Monitoring emerging needs and identifying areas for development across the school.
- Ensuring concerns are appropriately recorded, monitored and responded to.
- Coordinating support for students where appropriate.
- Working with families and external agencies to secure appropriate support.
- Ensuring that mental health concerns which may also constitute safeguarding concerns are managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Supporting staff training and awareness relating to mental health and wellbeing.

4.4 All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and contribute to a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

All staff will:

- Build positive and trusting relationships with students.
- Promote emotional wellbeing through everyday interactions and practice.
- Maintain professional curiosity and remain alert to changes in a student's presentation, behaviour, attendance, emotional regulation, communication or wellbeing.
- Report concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Record concerns appropriately using the school's recording system (MyConcern).

- Work collaboratively with colleagues, families and external professionals to support students where appropriate.
- Undertake relevant training and professional development.

5. Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

At Fountains High School, positive mental health and wellbeing are promoted through a whole-school approach that is embedded throughout daily school life. This includes our Thrive-informed practice, GRIT curriculum, pastoral support, wider curriculum and the positive relationships that underpin our school community.

We promote positive mental health and wellbeing through:

- A Thrive-informed approach to emotional development and wellbeing.
- The GRIT curriculum, which supports students to develop emotional literacy, resilience, self-awareness and self-regulation.
- PSHE, RSHE and wider curriculum opportunities that promote wellbeing, healthy relationships and personal development.
- Access to safe adults who provide support, guidance and encouragement.
- Positive Behaviour Support approaches that promote emotional regulation, independence and inclusion.
- Opportunities for student voice, participation and leadership.
- Enrichment, physical activity and opportunities for social participation.
- Strong partnerships with families and external professionals.
- A culture that values diversity, inclusion, dignity and respect.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that students are able to express their views and communicate their needs in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them. Student voice is promoted through a range of formal and informal opportunities and contributes to ongoing school development and individual support planning.

We are committed to reducing stigma around mental health and wellbeing and encouraging students to seek support when needed. Mental health and wellbeing are discussed in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate way through the curriculum and wider life of the school.

6. Identifying and Responding to Need

Staff are often best placed to recognise early signs that a student may require additional support. Early identification and timely intervention are key elements of our approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

All staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity and remain alert to changes in a student's presentation, behaviour, communication, emotional regulation, attendance, engagement, relationships or general wellbeing. Concerns may arise from a single significant incident or from a pattern of smaller concerns over time.

Potential indicators that a student may require additional support include, but are not limited to:

- Significant changes in behaviour or presentation.
- Changes in mood, emotional regulation or engagement.
- Increased anxiety or distress.
- Withdrawal from activities, relationships or social situations.
- Changes in attendance or punctuality.
- A decline in participation, motivation or engagement in learning.
- Difficulties in relationships with peers or adults.
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or excessive worry.
- Signs of self-harm or risk-taking behaviour.
- Changes in eating, sleeping or self-care routines.

We recognise that students may communicate distress in different ways and that indicators of mental health need may present differently across our student population. Staff will consider concerns within the context of the individual student, taking account of their communication profile, developmental stage, identified needs and wider circumstances.

Where concerns are identified, staff will:

- Listen to and support the student in a calm, sensitive and non-judgemental manner.
- Record concerns using the school's agreed recording systems (MyConcern).
- Share concerns promptly with the Senior Mental Health Lead and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), as appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to identify and implement appropriate support.
- Follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where concerns indicate a potential safeguarding risk.

Mental health concerns can, in some cases, become safeguarding concerns. Where there are concerns that a student may be at risk of harm, or that their mental health may

be linked to abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding issues, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures.

7. Supporting Students

We recognise that students may require different levels of support at different times. Support is provided through a graduated approach that is responsive to individual strengths, needs and circumstances. The level and type of support offered will be determined through collaboration between school staff, students, families and, where appropriate, external professionals.

Support may be provided at a universal, targeted or specialist level and will be tailored to the individual needs of the student. Our approach focuses on early intervention and aims to provide support at the earliest opportunity.

Support available at Fountains High School may include:

- Thrive-informed assessment, intervention and emotional development support.
- Nurture provision, including individual or small group wellbeing support.
- Drawing and Talking therapeutic intervention, where appropriate.
- Forest School nurture and outdoor wellbeing opportunities.
- Emotional regulation and wellbeing support.
- Pastoral support.
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies.
- Reasonable adjustments to support engagement, wellbeing and access to learning.
- Access to safe adults and key relationships.
- Support from the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), where appropriate.
- Individual risk assessments or other personalised planning arrangements, where needed.
- Support from external agencies and professionals where required, such as Child and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS/CAMHS), Children's Learning Disability Services, Educational Psychology Services and other relevant health and social care professionals.

Where a student's needs indicate that more targeted support is required, the school will work collaboratively with families and relevant professionals to identify and implement appropriate strategies and interventions. Support will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate, effective and responsive to the student's changing needs.

We recognise that some students may experience periods of increased vulnerability or require additional support following significant life events, changes in circumstances, bereavement, trauma or other challenges. In these situations, support will be planned on an individual basis and reviewed regularly.

Where specialist mental health support is required, the school will work with families and relevant professionals to facilitate access to appropriate services and ensure that support within school complements external provision wherever possible.

8. Working with Families and External Agencies

We recognise that positive outcomes for students are most effectively achieved when school, families and other professionals work together. We value the knowledge, insight and expertise that parents and carers bring regarding their child's strengths, needs and wellbeing.

Where concerns relating to a student's mental health or wellbeing are identified, we will work collaboratively with parents and carers to understand the student's needs, identify appropriate support and review progress over time. We aim to maintain open, honest and supportive communication, recognising that discussions regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health can sometimes be sensitive and challenging.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about any changes in circumstances, emotional wellbeing or mental health that may impact upon their child's wellbeing, learning or development. This information helps us to provide timely and appropriate support.

Where appropriate, the school will work alongside a range of external agencies and professionals to ensure that students receive coordinated and effective support. This may include:

- Mental Health Support Team (MHST)
- Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS/CAMHS)
- Children's Learning Disability Services
- Educational Psychology Services
- Health professionals, including GPs and specialist clinicians
- Early Help services
- Social care services
- Other relevant support agencies and professionals

The school will contribute to multi-agency meetings, assessments, reviews and planning processes where appropriate, ensuring that support is centred on the needs of the student and coordinated across services.

Information will be shared in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and data protection requirements. Where there are safeguarding concerns, the welfare and safety of the student will always be the primary consideration.

Where appropriate, the school will provide information, guidance and signposting to services that may support students, parents and carers in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

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9. Mental Health, Safeguarding and Risk

We recognise that mental health concerns can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. Mental health difficulties may also be an indicator that a student has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of harm. Staff will therefore consider mental health and wellbeing alongside wider safeguarding concerns and respond in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff are aware that concerns relating to a student's mental health, emotional wellbeing or behaviour may require a safeguarding response. This includes concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal ideation, risk-taking behaviours, trauma, exploitation, abuse, neglect or other factors that may place a student at risk.

Where a student presents with, or discloses concerns relating to their mental health or wellbeing, staff will:

- Respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner.
- Listen carefully and take concerns seriously.
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality.
- Record concerns in accordance with school procedures.
- Share concerns without delay with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where appropriate.

The school recognises that self-harm, suicidal thoughts and other high-risk concerns require a timely safeguarding response. Such concerns will be managed on an individual basis in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, professional advice and the needs of the student.

Where there are concerns that a student may be at risk of harm to themselves or others, appropriate action will be taken without delay. The school will work in partnership with families, external professionals and relevant agencies to ensure that students receive appropriate support and protection.

Where there are concerns that a student may be in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, staff will take immediate action in accordance with the school's

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including seeking emergency assistance where necessary. Where urgent mental health support is required, the school will work with families and relevant services to access appropriate professional advice and support, including emergency or urgent NHS services where appropriate.

The welfare and safety of the student will always be the school's primary consideration. Decisions regarding information sharing, confidentiality and intervention will be made in line with safeguarding responsibilities, professional judgement and the best interests of the student.

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10. Mental Health Education and Staff Training

Mental health and wellbeing are promoted through the school's curriculum and wider provision. Through the GRIT curriculum, PSHE, RSHE and other opportunities, students are supported to develop emotional literacy, resilience, self-awareness, self-regulation and the knowledge and skills needed to maintain positive wellbeing. Learning is adapted to meet the individual needs, developmental stages and communication profiles of our students.

Students are supported to:

- Understand and communicate their emotions.
- Develop healthy coping strategies.
- Build positive relationships.
- Recognise when they may need support.
- Understand how and when to seek help for themselves and others.
- Develop confidence, resilience and independence.

The school is committed to ensuring staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence required to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and respond appropriately to concerns.

All staff receive safeguarding training in accordance with statutory requirements and receive regular updates regarding mental health, wellbeing and safeguarding. Additional training and professional development opportunities are provided where appropriate to support specific roles and emerging needs within the school.

The Senior Mental Health Lead supports the ongoing development of staff knowledge and promotes a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Staff are encouraged to seek advice and guidance whenever they are concerned about a student's emotional wellbeing or mental health.

11. Staff Wellbeing

Fountains High School recognises that positive staff wellbeing contributes to a safe, supportive and effective learning environment for students.

Supporting students with their emotional wellbeing and mental health can be rewarding but may also be challenging. The school is committed to promoting a culture where staff feel valued, supported and able to access appropriate support when needed. | 12

The school will:

- Promote a supportive and respectful working environment.
- Encourage open discussion regarding wellbeing and support needs.
- Provide access to appropriate professional support and guidance where required.
- Foster a culture in which staff feel able to seek support without stigma.
- Promote awareness of wellbeing resources and support available to staff, including access to Westfield Health.

Staff are encouraged to discuss any wellbeing concerns with their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team and to access appropriate support when required.

12. Monitoring, Review and Linked Policies

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School and shared with the Governing Body.

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Restrictive Interventions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- RSHE Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Online Safety Policy