

Three Towers

An Alternative Provision Academy

Expanding Horizons

Learners' Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Adopted: September 2025

Review: September 2026

1 Introduction

Three Towers (TTAPA) is committed to promoting positive mental health & emotional wellbeing, and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of learners, parents/ carers, staff and other stakeholders. Our open culture allows all voices including learners' voices to be heard and using our effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2 Aims

This policy focuses on learners' mental health and wellbeing. It:

- sets out our approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all learners across our school;
- provides guidance to staff on their role in supporting learners' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which learners feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health;
- supports staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues;
- inform learners and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of learners' mental health and wellbeing and provide them with access to resources.

3 Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- The PSHE Association guidance on teaching about mental health & wellbeing <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>
- the Department for Education guidance: [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)

4 Roles & Responsibilities

As an organisation, we endeavour to:

- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff, learners and other stakeholders;
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in learners;
- enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues;
- provide the right support to learners with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support;
- develop resilience amongst learners and raise awareness of resilience building techniques;

- raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from leaders/line managers that staff may have mental health issues, so that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing;
- embed a culture of staff and learner welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms, with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school;
- ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of learners as well as take responsibility for their own mental wellness.

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a learner's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform their Head of House or the school counsellor.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- The Headteacher;
- Mental Health Champion – Ms H Parry;
- TTAPA Counsellor – Mrs H Guthrie;
- Heads of House;
- Designated & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs);
- Head of Personal Development;
- Thrive Practitioners;
- Attendance & Engagement Officers.

If there is a concern that the learner is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures will be followed. If the learner presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

4 Warning Signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a learner's mental health is deteriorating and so need to be aware of warning signs which indicate a learner is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

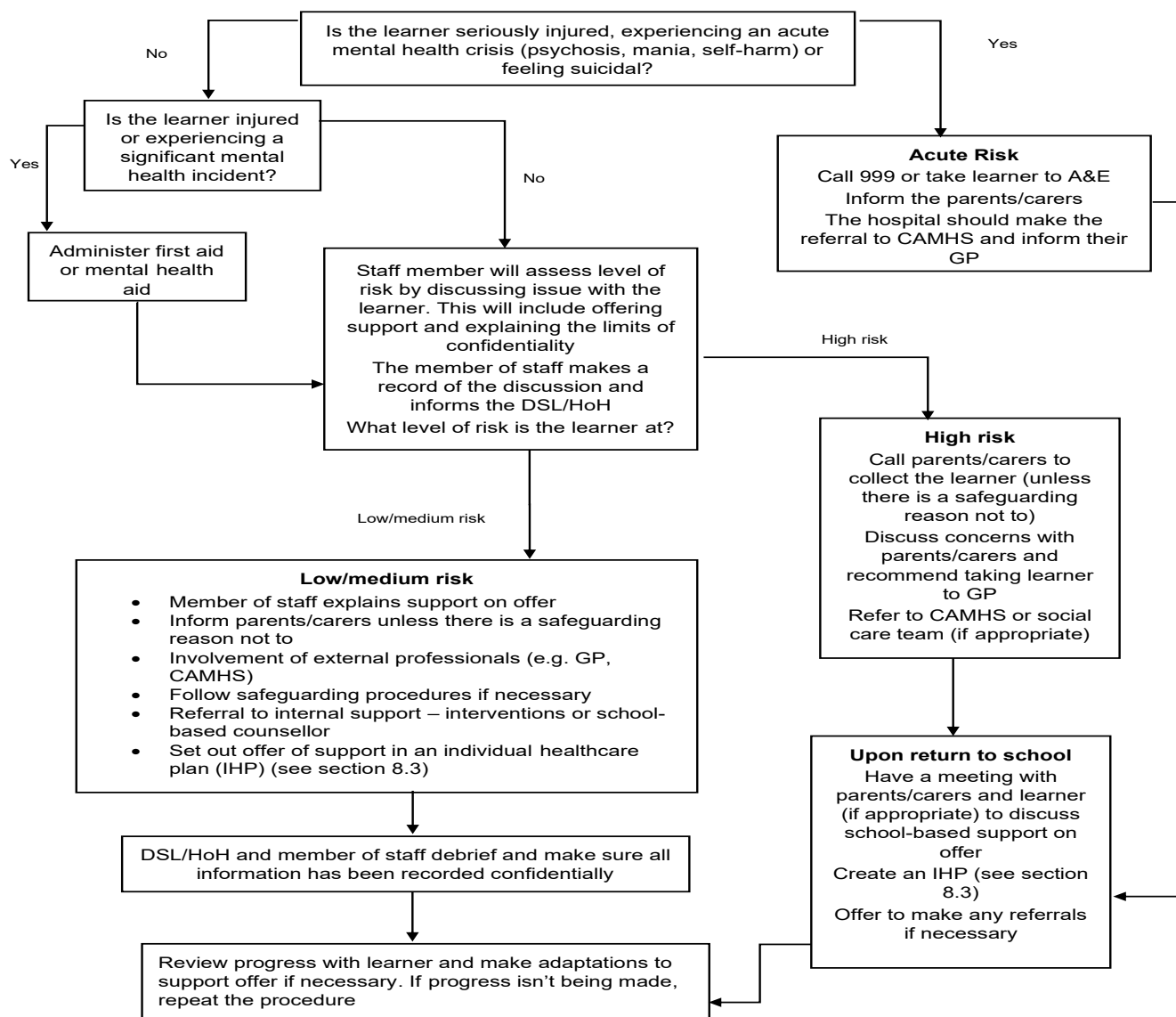
These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert the learner's Head of House or a member of the CLT.

Possible warning signs may include:

- changes in:
 - mood and/or energy levels;
 - eating and/or sleeping habits;
 - attitude in lessons and/or academic achievement (usually lowering);
 - personal hygiene;
 - appearance including in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather;
- increased isolation from family and/or friends – becoming socially withdrawn;
- increased in lateness and/or absenteeism;

- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope;
- abusing drugs and/or alcohol;
- rapid weight loss or gain;
- secretive behaviours;
- skipping PE or getting changed secretly;
- (repeated) physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- physical signs of harm that are repeated and/or appear to be self-inflicted;
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.

5 Procedures to follow in case of acute mental health crisis



6 Managing Disclosures

If a learner makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental, reassuring and supportive.

Staff must focus on the learner's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff must follow our safeguarding policy and procedures and pass on all concerns to the Heads of House or a member of CLT. All disclosures from or about learners should be regarded as a safeguarding concern and be recorded on CPOMs. When recording the disclosure, staff include:

- their name;
- the full names of the learner(s) involved;
- date, time and location of the disclosure;
- context in which the disclosure was made;
- any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff.

7 Confidentiality

As concerns about a learner or disclosure should be treated as safeguarding concerns, staff must and will not promise a learner that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be clear that they may need to share the concern/disclosure with the relevant designated safeguarding lead (DSL)/Head of House in line with safeguarding protocols.

A disclosure should be shared as it is important to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with the DSL/Head of House this ensures one single member of staff is not solely responsible for the learner. It also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for staff to share ideas on how to support the learner.

If the DSL/Head of House feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a learner to someone outside of the school, then this should be discussed with the learner first, telling them:

- who they will share the information with;
- what information they are going to share, and when;
- why they need to share that information.

They will also attempt to receive consent from the learner to share their information, but the safety of the learner always comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed, unless there is a child protection concern in which case our child protection procedures should be followed.

Some learners may want to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school contacts the parents/carers, unless staff believe there is an immediate risk of harm. If the learner wants staff to support them whilst they talk to their parents, staff will facilitate this.

8 Supporting Learners

8.1 All Learners

As part of our commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all, our school offers support to all learners by:

- raising awareness of mental health during form time, PSHE and mental health awareness weeks;
- making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing;
- having open discussions about mental health during lessons;
- signposting all learners to sources of online support on our school website and around school;
- providing learners with opportunities to feedback on any aspects of their education that they feel is negatively impacting their mental health;
- monitoring all learners' mental health;
- offering pastoral support, e.g. through heads of house who have all completed Adolescent Mental Health First Aid training;
- having a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

If a learner is identified as having a mental health need, we will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above. This may include creating an individual support plan which is regularly reviewed.

Our school-based offer reflects feedback from all stakeholders which is gathered informally as well as through regular learner and parent/carer surveys and annual staff wellbeing questionnaires. This feedback is shared with staff, including the senior leadership team and governors, as well as wider across the trust. We offer a diverse range of in school support including the following:

8.1.1 Early identification - our induction pathway forms a 360 circle of understanding around the learners' background. This is cascaded to staff via pen portraits and risk assessments and also includes strategies and named staff that specific learners respond well to. Early help meetings take place to support learners identified as having early signs of problems.

8.1.2 Curriculum - we deliver a taught Thrive programme which aids the development and support of emotional literacy and self-regulation skills, identified through a 360-needs assessment on entry. Social Skills is a less structured time in the day where learners have the opportunity to participate in activities with peers and staff. Enrichment trips ensure our learners have the opportunity to visit places they may not usually such as areas of natural beauty, art galleries and residential experiences. Our annual careers fayre promotes aspiration for all learners.

8.1.3 Therapeutic Interventions - we have several trained trauma informed practitioners who deliver interventions for learners that are identified as having past trauma. We also have staff trained to deliver therapeutic art, Lego therapy and Drawing and Talking interventions. Learners are referred via pastoral staff.

8.1.4 Quiet, safe spaces - recognising that sometimes people need a chance to have some quiet time to reflect and/or regulate their emotions, we provide safe spaces for this to happen. Learners have access to the zone /chill room areas and sensory quiet rooms. At primary learners also 'check in' on their wellbeing during communal breakfast. Staff have access to a quiet space if needed.

8.1.5 Counselling – is available from our full-time counsellor for both staff and learners. Learners that access this service are identified on entry or referred via their Head of House, or a member of the core leadership team at times of crisis or through staff concern. In addition, there are a variety of counselling and therapy options available to staff through our employee assistant programme.

8.1.6 Rewards - our culture of praise and support is demonstrated day through informal conversations and discrete personal praise and acknowledgement. More formally, we have a strong and valued rewards system in place. Learners accrue points throughout the day in lessons and during lunch and break. Points can be spent on items in an online shop which is stocked based on learner feedback. Weekly subject certificates for "Stars of the Week" are displayed on corridors. Weekly phone calls home are made via form tutors and praise postcards are sent home to send positive messages. Celebration weeks take place to promote and recognise learner achievements and reinforce positive engagement. Parents and carers are invited in to reflect on the progress of our learners. Our school newsletters further support this.

8.1.7 Staff Awareness

Emotional wellbeing sessions also take place during teaching and learning events and staff meetings. This allows staff to develop their general awareness of emotional wellbeing as well as allowing them develop techniques to manage their own wellbeing.

8.2 Targeted Support

All learners are offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above and may also include amended timetables/hours; amended provision; access to therapeutic interventions; referral to our counsellor.

However, we recognise some children/young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with external agencies including school nurses and CAMHS in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of learners who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;

- discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers including agreeing an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Wigan CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;
- working closely with the local authority, Wigan CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help (EH) Assessment Framework, children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- the identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

8.3 Individual Healthcare Plans

When a learner has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is may produce an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) in collaboration with the learner, parents/carers, and relevant professionals. Such plans may include:

- details of the learner's mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments);
- details of any medication the learner is taking and any side effects;
- the learner's needs resulting from the condition;
- specific support for the learners' SEMH including any special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions;
- level of support needed;
- how that support will be provided;
- what to do and who to contact in an emergency;
- the role the school and specific staff.

8.4 Making External Referrals

If a learner's needs cannot be met by the internal offer we provide, our we will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support, such as:

- their GP or a paediatrician;
- CAMHS;

- mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#));
- local counselling services.

8.5 Local Support

In Wigan, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children/young people's mental health and well-being. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

This is a link to our local CAMHS services: <https://www.nwbb.nhs.uk/camhs-wigan>

9 Working with and Supporting Parents/Carers

We work with parents/carers to support their child's mental health by:

- keeping them informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home;
- asking them to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support;
- highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy;
- informing them of mental health concerns that we have about their child;
- liaising with them to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child;
- providing guidance on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums);
- engaging with them to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child.

We are mindful that for a parent/carer, hearing about and/or discussing their child's mental health issues can be upsetting and they may respond in various ways which we should be prepared for. We should also allow time for them to reflect on what has been discussed and come to terms with the situation.

Therefore, when planning meetings with parents/carers to discuss their child's mental health, we will consider the following questions:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – learners, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

Signposting parent/carers to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents/carers have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the learner's record and if appropriate an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers and any relevant professionals.

10 Supporting Peers

When a learner is experiencing poor mental health, it can be a difficult time for their friends and peers who may want to support but do not know how. Learners may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We offer support to all learners impacted by mental health both directly and indirectly. We review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided in one to one or group sessions and will be guided by conversations by the learner who is suffering and their parents/carers with whom we will discuss:

- what it is helpful for friends/peers to know and what they should not be told;
- how friends/peers can best support;
- things friends/peers should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset;
- warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse);

Additionally, we will want to highlight with friends/peers;

- where and how to access support for themselves;
- safe sources of further information about their friend's condition;
- healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

11 Supporting Staff

We recognise that supporting a learner experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- treat mental health concerns seriously;
- offer staff supervision sessions;
- support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves;
- create a pleasant and supportive work environment;
- Offer access to our employee assistance programme.

12 Signposting

As part of our ongoing commitment to destigmatize mental health, we will:

- host relevant information on our website for members of our school community who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue;
- ensure that staff, learners and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services;
- share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events, in the school (noticeboards, common rooms, etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website).

Our staff, particularly those identified in Section 3, are available to provide further information to learners and parents/carers if necessary.

13 Whole School Approach

13.1 Teaching about Wellbeing & Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our learners need to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and our Thrive sessions.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association (<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>) to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively as well as the Department for Education guidance:

Learners are taught to:

- develop healthy coping strategies;
- challenge misconceptions around mental health;
- understand their emotional state;
- keep themselves healthy.

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote learners' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of learners' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing learners who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting learners to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 10 for Supporting Peers**

13.2 Providing a Positive Atmosphere around Mental Health

We create and maintain an open culture around mental health by:

- discussing mental health with learners in order to break down stigma;
- encouraging and supporting learners to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating.

14 Training & CPD

All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training so they:

- have a good understanding of what learners' mental health needs are;
- know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health;
- know a clear process to follow if they identify a learner in need of help;
- know how to keep all learners safe.

Any staff undertaking therapeutic interventions have had relevant training, including Trauma Informed Practitioner; Thrive Practitioner; Drawing & Talking Therapy; Lego Therapy;

All Heads of House have completed Mental Health First Aid for Youths training.

The Mental Health Champion has completed Mental Health First Aid for Adults training as well as working at Masters Level to complete a specialist qualification in Mental Health.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year when it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more learners.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with our Mental Health Champion and/or school counsellor who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

14 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Local Governing Committee for awareness.

15 Links to other Policies & Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- *Anti-Bullying Policy;*
- *Attendance Policy;*
- *Behaviour & Relationships Policy;*
- *Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy;*
- *Complaints Policy;*
- *Online Safety Policy;*
- *Privacy notices;*
- *SEND Policy;*
- *Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions*

UNICEF - UNCRC

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child sets out human rights of every person under 18 and applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background (Article 2). Articles directly relating to this policy are:

3 (Best interests of the child)	24 (Health & health services)
6 (Life, survival & development)	28 (Right to education)
8 (Protection & preservation of identity)	29 (Goals of education)
12 (Respect the views of a child)	31 (Leisure, play and culture)
16 (Right to privacy)	39 (Recovery from trauma & reintegration)
19 (Protection from violence, abuse & neglect)	