

Education Guardianship UK Ltd Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1. Policy Statement

At Education Guardianship, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families, members of staff and host families. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2. Scope

This policy is a guide to all members of the Education Guardianship community – outlining Education Guardianships approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant guardianship policies.

3. Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff, host families and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff & host families to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff & host families to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers/schools for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff & host families and gain recognition that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff, host families and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare.

4. Key staff members & Host families

This policy aims to ensure all staff & host families take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Staff & Host families
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

If a member of staff or host family is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Hayley Babot DSL. If there is a concern that the student is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024 should be followed.

If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5. Individual Care Plans

When a Student 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 recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the student, parents, school and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the Student's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the Guardian, school, host family and specific staff

6. Teaching About Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe can be found at

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/>.

Helpful resources for supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges can be found

https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/peer_support_for_student_mental_health.pdf

Also see section 14 for Supporting Peers.

7. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, host families, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

8. Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support - Each school has a list of the full range of support available to students. For each include:

- What it is
- Who it is suitable for
- How it is accessed
- How this information is communicated to students

This is likely to include information about pastoral staff including behaviour and learning support and school counsellors. ***This will differ depending on the school the student attends.***

Local Support - In the UK, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. 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. The local CAMHS teams can be found at

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-health-services/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs>

9. Warning Signs

Staff & host families may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff/host family observing any of these warning signs should alert Hayley Babot DSL on 07812 052282.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

10. Targeted support

We recognise some children and 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 school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating. We ensure timely and effective identification of students 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;
- Working closely with the CAMHS team local to the students' school and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree 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 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.
- Be mindful of language and cultural differences with international students when putting together a support plan.

11. Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff or host family, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff/host family to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with Hayley Babot - DSL. If a Peer Mentoring Programme is in place, any disclosures made will also map with this process but will include involving the students school DSL.

12. Confidentiality

If a member of staff or host family feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of Education Guardianship UK Ltd, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff and host families' emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff or host family isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff or host family absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents and schools must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents or school themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before Education Guardianship makes contact with the parents/carers and school. If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13. How best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitates communication.

It is important for students to build trusted relationships with staff and host Families. The best way to facilitate this is to:

- actively listen.
- empathising with the student's point of view.
- developing trusting relationships.
- understanding non-verbal communication.
- building rapport.
- explaining, summarising and providing information.
- giving feedback in a clear way.

14. Education Guardianship's Approach

14.1 Working with parents/carers & schools

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

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

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation. Be mindful of language and cultural differences. Signposting parents 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 have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting/zoom or phone call might be beneficial at this stage. Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to the Student's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

14.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family and particular school staff members plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with schools, parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents and particular school staff members are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);

15. Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their school and parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends 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 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

16. Training

As a minimum, all staff & host families will receive regular training about Safeguarding to include Mental health, recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe. Training opportunities for staff & host families who require more in depth knowledge will be considered.

17. Mental Health Support List

Anxiety UK
For any form of anxiety, mild to severe. Fast access to reduced cost therapy and access to several specialist helplines.
www.anxietyuk.org.uk Helpline: 08444 775 774 (Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30)
Beat
Eating disorders support, recovery information, support services.
www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk Helpline: 0808 801 0677. Youthline: 0808 801 0711
Mind
Information, advice and support for young people with mental health & Sleep support.
www.mind.org.uk Tel: 0300 123 3393 Text: 86463
Samaritans
For emotional support to people in despair and potential suicide
www.samaritans.org.uk Free 24-hour helpline: 116 123

Shout

24/7 text service for anyone in crisis, not coping, and needing immediate help. Support for anxiety, depression, abuse, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, relationships, bullying.

Text SHOUT to 85258

Young Minds

Young person looking for help and support Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger, free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Supporting YP and Parents with mental health issues.

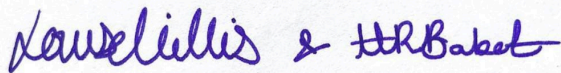
www.youngminds.org.uk If you need urgent help text YM to 85258 Parent Help Line: 0808 802 5544

Review

We are committed to reviewing our plan and good practice annually.

This Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy was last reviewed on: 14/05/2022

Signed:



Louise Willis & Hayley Babot

Date: 14/05/2024