



Pastoral Care and Welfare Policy

Part 2: Managing Mental Health Concerns

Member of Staff Responsible	Deputy Head - Pastoral
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Distribution:	All

Introduction

The Importance of Mental Health and Wellbeing

At our Rokeby, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community, pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing are to our lives in the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is crucial to their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

Our Senior Mental Health Lead is Mrs Fleur Tattersall - Senior Teacher Pastoral.

A number of staff members are trained as Mental Health First Aiders including but not limited to, Deputy Head Pastoral and Senior Teacher Pastoral.

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

- all the boys are valued
- all boys have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- all boys feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying and prejudice is not tolerated (Refer to Anti-bullying policy)

Sometimes, a boy seems to develop a loss of confidence or appears to become unhappy, anxious or withdrawn. He may begin to behave differently or exhibit a form of behaviour that precludes him from taking a full part in school life or inhibits his learning and/or social interactions. The school may consider that a boy may be suffering from an emotional or mental health difficulty. Such difficulties can range from anxiety, emotional fragility, withdrawal, depression, problems with normal bodily functions

(eating, using the lavatory), excessive shyness, a loss of confidence and fearfulness to more serious disorders (anxiety disorders, eating disorders and personality disorders, for instance). This policy aims to outline what the school can do to help and where experts may be required, or a formal diagnosis sought.

The school's duty of care is to ensure each boy's needs are met to the best of our ability. The school will seek to engage parental support for its actions where possible and would always expect parents to take the lead in supporting a recommended course of action for their son. There are occasions when the school will act without parental consent, such as when there are grounds for a safeguarding concern relating to home (see the Safeguarding Policy) or when a boy is continually absent from school.

Who can identify a mental health difficulty?

Only medical professionals can make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition. However, boys or their carers can inform the school of a suspected mental health difficulty. A carer does not necessarily need expertise in diagnosing a particular condition but can describe symptoms of concern.

Teachers within schools are well placed to observe a boy day-to-day and to identify behaviour that suggests the boy may be suffering from a mental health concern or be at risk of developing one. Teachers are not professional psychologists, so they are not under a duty to identify mental health difficulties.

What services can the school offer a boy experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties?

I. Pastoral support

Every teacher owes a duty of care to each boy. This duty is '*in loco parentis*' (that is, in the place of the parent). This means the school must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure they care for their boys, as any reasonable parent would. This duty is reflected in a structured pastoral system within the school that upholds key values related to wellbeing.

The boy's Form Tutor is the initial point of contact for the boy. This means that if a boy is experiencing mental health difficulties *of any kind*, then he can speak to his Form Tutor and, depending on the seriousness of the mental health difficulty, the tutor will offer them support and guidance, or refer them to the Year Head, who will work with the Form Tutor to put a support plan in place and seek to engage the parents in this.

This may operate in the other direction, with teachers making the Form Tutor aware (or the form tutor becoming aware directly), and then this is followed up with the boy.

A note is made on the school's management information system My Concern. The system is for the confidential use of staff for recording concerns.

If a concern develops further, the Year Head will refer to the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Lower School/Middle School, who will pursue further courses of action (see (2) and (3) below).

See Pastoral Care and Welfare Policy Part I for more information.

2. ELSA programme

In order to introduce some additional emotional support for some boys to enhance the already established pastoral care system, Rokeby has an established ELSA programme.

ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They are existing staff who have had special training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in school. They provide one-to-one support to address areas such as: friendship difficulties, bereavement, anger management and self-esteem, amongst others.

All ELSAs undertake regular mandatory supervision to enable them to continue to practice.

ELSAs help some children and young people learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for pupils to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them.

Most ELSA programmes will last for a number of weeks, helping the pupil to learn some specific new skills or coping strategies.

We also offer extended support where it is needed e.g. bereavement.

3. Early Help Assessment

Children and families experience a range of needs at different times in their lives. However, while all children and young people require access to high-quality universal services, some of them also have additional needs that may relate to their development, education, health, social welfare, or other areas. These needs will, in many cases, be cross-cutting and might be associated with (note this list is not exhaustive):

- disruptive or anti-social behaviour
- overt parental conflict or lack of parental support/boundaries
- involvement in, or risk of, offending
- poor attendance or exclusion from school
- special educational needs
- disabilities
- poor nutrition or inadequate clothing
- ill health
- substance misuse
- anxiety or depression caused by experiencing domestic violence
- housing issues
- young carers who exhibit additional needs directly resulting from their caring responsibilities, e.g. truancy/lateness, ill health, and housing issues.

Where the school becomes aware of a boy experiencing these concerns, the matter will be followed up by the Deputy Head - Pastoral or Head of Lower School (as appropriate) and the Early Help Assessment will be completed with the parents' agreement. An initial internal assessment may be made using the appropriate reference criteria before the parents are contacted to ascertain whether it is a worthwhile course of action. The Headmaster will be informed and will support the process.

Threshold for action: The school will not implement the process unless a boy exhibits ongoing problems associated with the list above and steps 1-3 above have been followed first.

* For details see the [LSCB Multi-Agency Threshold Document](#).

4. Counselling

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) define school-based counselling as 'a professional activity delivered by qualified practitioners in schools. Counsellors offer troubled and/or distressed children and young people an opportunity to talk about their difficulties, within a relationship of agreed confidentiality.'

Schools are not legally obliged to offer school-based counselling. Therefore, there is no automatic right of a boy to access counselling for mental health problems via a school.

Counselling services can still be accessed through voluntary sector community-based services, private practices, GPs and Children and Young People's Mental Health Services ('CYPMHS'* - see below).

At Rokeby, the school will ask parents to consider engaging the support of a counsellor if appropriate. The school recommends looking for a counsellor on the BACP directory <https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists>, Counselling directory <https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/adv-search.html> or The Family Treatment Service Wimbledon <https://www.thefamilytreatmentservice.com/>

Counselling is confidential unless there are safeguarding concerns. Child protection concerns and the welfare of children and young people can sometimes take precedence over confidentiality. The counsellor should explain confidentiality and its limitations to the boy or young person at the start of a counselling relationship. If appropriate, counsellors should, wherever possible, seek the boy or young person's agreement before making a referral to other agencies and individuals.

If a counsellor has welfare concerns, they may speak to the Deputy Head - Pastoral. The decision to share information should be one that is made with care.

* *CYPMHS is sometimes referred to as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), but the two are slightly different. CAMHS is the name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties. CYPMHS includes all the mental health services that might be available to help a child or young person as well as CAMHS.*

Other agencies and options for support

Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS)

If the school believes that a boy would benefit from a more clinical approach and treatment for mental health difficulties then they can refer the boy to **CYPMHS** and would seek to engage the parents in giving consent for this referral. More normally, the school would advise the parents to seek the guidance of their GP on suitable next steps and the GP might refer the boy to CYPMHS. It is strongly encouraged that parents share this process with the school so that the school can help to provide necessary information and support.

Specialist CYPMHS services are available to children and young people who have severe, complex and enduring emotional/behavioural/mental health difficulties. Specialist CYPMHS services are, for example, not appropriate for children/young people who are experiencing a reaction to a significant life event (e.g. a normal bereavement or a normal response to parental separation).

CYPMHS are specialist children and young people's mental health services and can offer a variety of trained mental health professionals such as:

- Social Workers
- Occupational Therapists
- Psychologists
- Psychotherapists
- Counsellors
- Family Therapists
- Primary Mental Health Worker
- Outreach Workers

Can mental health difficulties be considered a disability?

Some children suffering from mental health problems can be considered disabled under the [Equality Act 2010](#). All schools are obligated not to discriminate against children on the grounds of disability.

Under the Act, disability includes a mental impairment. The mental impairment must have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Long-term means that the symptoms have lasted, or are expected to last, for 12 months but this need not be consecutive. Transient symptoms may not fall within the Act.

The following are examples of mental health symptoms that can be regarded as a mental impairment under the Act:

- Anxiety disorders
- Low mood
- Panic attacks
- Phobias
- Eating disorders
- Bipolar affective disorders
- Obsessive compulsive disorders
- Personality disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Some self-harming behaviour
- Depression
- Schizophrenia
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- ADHD
- Dyslexia and dyspraxia
- Learning disabilities

Examples of what would not count as a mental impairment under the Act include:

- Some shyness and timidity
- Inability to speak in front of an audience as a result of nervousness
- Inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours

If a boy falls within the definition of disability above, then the school has particular obligations. The school is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to put boys with a disability on a more equal footing with boys without disabilities. If an adjustment is reasonable, then it should be made, and there can be no justification for why it should not be made. An adjustment may be considered unreasonable if it is very expensive (such as school-based counselling).

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is also anticipatory. This means that the school will give thought in advance to what a boy with disabilities might require and what adjustments might be needed to prevent boys with disabilities from being disadvantaged.

Rokeby operates a challenging all-round curriculum, which is not suited to all boys because of their particular needs or their personalities. If realistic, reasonable adjustments cannot be made, then it may be in the boy's best interests for the family to find an alternative school with the help and support of Rokeby.

Can mental health difficulties be considered as a Special Educational Need?

A boy has special educational needs (SEN) if they have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most other children of about the same age. These special needs include social, emotional, or mental health difficulties such as relating to peers/adults or behaving properly in an early years setting.

Rokeby School has a Learning Support Coordinator ('LSCo') who is responsible for co-ordinating help for boys with special educational needs. Boys and parents can discuss their concerns with the LSCo and work with them. The LSCo takes day-to-day responsibility for the provision made for boys with SEN, working closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies. It should also develop a strategy for the boy (see Learning Support Policy).

If a boy has particularly complex requirements for education, health and social care support and cannot benefit from resources, assessments or interventions ordinarily available at the school, they may need an Education, Health and Care Plan ('EHCP').

The EHCP is a legally binding document that can set out the nature of the boy's needs, additional provisions they will need and agreed outcomes about how it will be met. This may include naming a new specialist school to meet their needs*. The health section of the document can identify in depth the mental health problems the boy is experiencing and how they can be supported to alleviate them as much as possible. Parents and the school can identify key individuals for the local authority to consult when drafting the document, such as mental health workers and CYPMHS specialists.

**Rokeby is not a special school and, therefore, may not be the most appropriate setting for a boy with certain SEND needs.*