Boston Endeavour Academy **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**
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1. Introduction

At Boston Endeavour Academy we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents, and carers. Our policy is informed by the DfE's guidance *"Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges" (2021)* and aligns with the statutory *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)*. As a specialist school, we recognise that our pupils may face additional vulnerabilities due to special educational needs, disabilities, or social circumstances.

2. Aims of the Policy

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the school community.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health needs.
- Provide clear guidance on roles and responsibilities in supporting mental health.
- Support early identification and intervention.
- Build resilience and provide targeted support when necessary.
- Ensure a safe and supportive environment that fosters emotional literacy.

3. Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community.

In a specialist school setting, this includes acknowledging and supporting pupils who may have complex communication needs, autism spectrum conditions, ADHD, trauma histories, and other neurodevelopmental or emotional difficulties.

4. Whole School Approach

We adopt a whole-school approach as recommended by the DfE, which integrates promotion, prevention, and early intervention into the daily fabric of school life.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Provides strategic leadership and ensures mental health is embedded into school improvement planning.
- Allocates resources, including access to training, supervision, and mental health provision.
- Leads the promotion of a positive school ethos that values the wellbeing of staff and pupils.
- Ensures effective partnership working with local health and social care services.

Mental Health Lead

- Oversees the implementation of the school's mental health strategy.
- Coordinates provision and interventions for pupils with emotional or mental health needs.
- Develops staff training in mental health awareness and literacy.

- Monitors the impact of mental health initiatives and liaises with external services.

The DfE (2021) recommends all schools appoint a senior mental health lead. This role is key to improving outcomes for vulnerable learners.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants

- Build trusting, supportive relationships with pupils.
- Use trauma-informed and inclusive practices to support pupils' emotional regulation and engagement.
- Identify early signs of mental distress and refer concerns to the mental health lead or safeguarding team.
- Create classroom environments that promote psychological safety and encourage social-emotional development.

Safeguarding Team

- Ensure concerns that may indicate risk of significant harm (including mental health crises) are addressed according to statutory safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain close links with CAMHS, Early Help, and other agencies.
- Safeguard staff as well as pupils through appropriate supervision and response to secondary trauma.

Home School Liaison Officer

- Maintains open and sensitive communication with families to understand the home context.
- Supports consistent approaches to wellbeing between school and home.
- Assists families in accessing community mental health and wellbeing resources.
- Ensures the voice of the family is central to mental health planning.

6. Early Identification and Support

We use a graduated response (assess-plan-do-review) and early help pathways to support pupils with emerging mental health needs. Signs of concern may include changes in behaviour, attendance, mood, or communication.

Screening tools (see below) may be used alongside teacher observations and pupil voice. Pupil support plans include mental health targets and are shared with relevant staff and families.

Score Indicator	0	1	2
Smiling	Glum presentation	Occasionally smiles	Smiles readily
Communicating with peers	Sits alone and communicates to no one	Will communicate when prompted	Communicates readily with peers
Appearance	Scruffy	Generally well-presented	Cares about appearance
Engagement with adults	Barely engages with adults	Will engage with adults when prompted	Engages readily with adults
Engagement with tasks	Fleeting or no engagement with set tasks	Sometimes distractible or wary	Enthusiastically engages with tasks
Attendance	A persistent, absentee, frequently late.	Attendance rate of 90%-94%, sometimes late.	Attendance 95% or better, rarely late.

A pupil who scores a 9 or higher is considered to have good emotional wellbeing, while a score of 4 or lower may indicate the need for class lead and/or pupil to have a structured conversation with one of our Mental Health Leads and a possible intervention plan.

We make use of more extensive self-report forms for pupils who are able to access these to help them to monitor and become attuned to their own wellbeing.

We are alert to risk factors which may increase the risk of mental health difficulties in pupils and have implemented protective support for our pupils so far as we are able (source DFE: Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018).

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	• Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem	• Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord

In the school	• Bullying including online (cyber) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer on peer abuse • Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

We have strong information sharing through recording on our CPOMS system, regular conversations between teaching, teaching assistant and relevant senior leaders in addition to regular staff briefings and teachers meeting. This continuous form of communicate helps to ensure that concerns are communicated rapidly on a need-to-know basis.

7. Targeted and Specialist Interventions

Where universal support is not enough, we offer:

- Counselling or mentoring (in-house or through commissioned services).
- Social and emotional skills groups (e.g., Zones of Regulation, LEGO therapy).
- Access to Educational Psychologists and CAMHS.
- Behaviour support that recognises communication of need and avoids exclusionary practices.

DfE (2021) emphasises the importance of clear referral pathways to targeted and specialist mental health support.

8. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing is a key priority. We:

- Provide access to mental health training and reflective supervision.
- Offer Employee Assistance Programmes (Health Assured/Wisdom).
- Promote a culture of peer support, respect, and open communication.

- Monitor workload and offer flexible working where feasible.

9. Supporting Pupils and Staff through episodes of Poor Mental Health

We recognise the stigma that is often associated with mental ill health and seek to reduce this through modelling open dialogue at a leadership level.

We value the work of our professional network and in relation to the mental health of pupils we work closely with:
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST)
- Learning Disability Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (LD CAMHS)
- Social Workers
- Community Pediatricians

We maintain close contact with pupils experiencing periods of time off school through illness, including through a range of remote learning approaches, home visits and strategies to support getting them back into school when suitable.

10. Partnership with Families and Community

We engage families in all aspects of mental health planning and involve them in decision-making. Parents are supported through:
- Regular communication and shared plans.
- Parent coffee mornings, wellbeing workshops, and support groups.
- Signposting to external family support services.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed annually by the SLT and Mental Health Lead. Data on pupil wellbeing, attendance, exclusions, and mental health referrals are monitored and analysed. Feedback is collected from staff, pupils, and parents.

11. Linked Policies
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Regulation Policy
- Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 1 – Helpful Resources (DFE, 2020)

1. **Examples of organisations providing mental health and wellbeing support for schools and colleges**

Achievement for All (AfA) delivers a whole school improvement framework that raises the aspirations, access and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, English as an Additional Language (EAL), looked-after children and children on free school meals. The programme has 4 elements: leadership, teaching and learning, parental engagement, and wider outcomes.

AcSEED encourages all UK schools to achieve and maintain an acceptable threshold of support and to align on best practices that provide a common language and understanding between schools, parents, young people, and associated organisations and charities. The AcSEED initiative was founded by young people with direct personal experience of mental illness at a young age and is entirely dedicated to supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people in schools.
Anna Freud has developed a 5 Steps Framework to help schools and colleges develop their approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Nurture UK promotes the development of 'nurture groups' that are small groups of children who need short, focussed support to help address issues connected to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It ensures the continuing quality of delivery through accredited training programmes, research on effective practice, relevant publications and information exchange.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) hosts The Schools Wellbeing Partnership. This is a network of nearly 50 member organisations who work to improve the wellbeing of all children in education. The Partnership provides useful free resources for schools, including information on implementing a whole school approach. The NCB also hosts a Wellbeing Schools Forum: an online forum for policy updates, peer support and for schools and teachers to share best practice around mental health and wellbeing for their pupils. NCB operate a Wellbeing Award for Schools to support schools to deliver a whole school approach.

Academic Resilience from YoungMinds is a free resource to help schools support pupils' academic resilience and was devised by Lisa Williams and Professor Angie Hart.

Samaritans can support schools by giving talks, providing a teaching resource called DEAL, and hosting a suicide response service to support schools following a suicide.

The YoungMinds website also provides a useful library of resources for schools.

Therapeutic story writing from YoungMinds is an approach to helping support students' emotional wellbeing whilst at the same time improving writing skills.

2. Resources to support children and young people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and chronic illness

Children and young people with learning disabilities: understanding their mental health is an information pack providing an introduction to learning disabilities among children and young people, produced by Mental Health Foundation.

FRIENDS for life: learning disabilities is part of FRIENDS for Life, a group programme that teaches children and young people techniques to cope with anxiety and promote wellbeing, social and emotional skills and resilience. The FRIENDS for Life Learning Disabilities development project was adapted to be accessible for children and young people with learning disabilities.

Feeling down: looking after my mental health is an easy read guide for people with

learning disabilities from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. The guide provides information and advice on how to look after oneself and get the best out of life.

I Can produces factsheets about speech, language and communication difficulties, and has a helpline for parents and practitioners.

National Autistic Society has a website that provides information about autism.

The SEND Gateway provides information for professionals, containing resources on responding appropriately to children and young people with SEND with emotional wellbeing needs.

3. Resources for specific issues

Childhood bereavement network offers resources to help schools deal with a bereavement within the school.

OCD Youth website is especially for young people, their parents and teachers with information, resources, and online forums for young people with OCD.

On edge: self-harm awareness resource pack is a film and lesson plan resource pack for teachers and other professionals working with young people. Developed by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

The Government tool Respectful school communities is a tool to support school staff to combat bullying, harassment and abuse of any kind.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance provides free online training for schools and teachers and has advice for parents and carers about bullying.

BEAT provides advice and support on eating problems and disorder, with general downloads and resources and advice for school and college teachers and staff.

Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide) provides confidential advice and support for young people who feel suicidal and has published a guide for teachers and staff.

Operation Encompass Teachers' helpline is staffed by educational psychologists to support staff working with children and young people at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.

4.   Helplines and resources for young people

NSPCC Working with schools is a service that uses specially trained volunteers to talk to primary school children about abuse. The aim is to give them the skills to protect themselves and know where to go for help. There is also a free helpline for children and young people. The helpline number is 0800 1111.

Get Connected is a free, confidential helpline service for young people under 25, who

need help, but don't know where to turn. The helpline number is 0808 808 4994.

Papyrus is a charity that aims to prevent young suicides. It has a helpline for young people at risk of suicide or for people worried about a young person at risk of suicide called HOPELineUK. The helpline number is 0800 068 41 41.

Relate provides local counselling services for all ages including young people. It also has an online emotional support and advice resource called IRelate which provides information and access to an online counsellor.

Shout 85258 is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

Student Space provides support, advice and guidance to students and helps students to find support services that are available at their university.

Student Health App provides easy access to more than 900 pages of reliable health information all in one place. The app aims to help reduce worries and to provide support to students when they need it most.

The Mix provides an online support section for young people to get advice and support. Young people can speak through an online chat or can call their helpline.

Youth Access offers a directory of local youth information, advice and counselling services for young people aged 14 to 25.

Youth Health Talk provides advice and support on mental health issues from young people for young people.

5. Parenting programmes and support for parents and carers

Some of the best tested and most reliable parenting programmes are Incredible Years and Triple P. In order to work best, parenting programmes need to be delivered as they were originally intended and be targeted at those with the right level of need.

- YoungMinds Parents' Helpline is a free, confidential helpline for any adult who is

concerned about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25. The helpline number is 0808 802 5544.

- Square Peg provides support for parents or carers whose children struggle to go to school