



Oasis Academy Limeside

Mentally Healthy School Policy

2022-2025

1. Introduction

In leading a mentally healthy school the Oasis vision is important. Our vision is for community - a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God-given potential. Our ethos is a statement of who we are and it is an expression of our character. Rooted in the story and beliefs of Oasis, we describe our ethos through a particular set of values that inform and provide the lens on everything we do.

- A passion to include
- A desire to treat people equally respecting differences
- A commitment to healthy, open relationships
- A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul

It is these ethos values that we want to be known for and live by. It is these ethos values that also shape our policies. They are the organisational values we aspire to. We are committed to a model of inclusion, equality, healthy relationships, hope, and perseverance throughout all the aspects of the life and culture of every Oasis Hub and community.

The Oasis 9 Habits

To help us to embody these values we have the Oasis 9 Habits. It is our bespoke and unique approach to character development. We know that by living the way of the habits, the Oasis Ethos behaviours we aspire to will become second nature to us. Therefore, we actively promote and practice the Oasis 9 Habits which are an invitation to a way of life characterised by being:

- Compassionate
- Patient
- Humble
- Joyful
- Honest
- Hopeful
- Considerate
- Forgiving
- Self-controlled

In light of the Oasis vision, Ethos and 9 Habits, at Oasis Academy Limeside, we aim to create a school culture that promotes flourishing and positive mental health for every member of staff and pupil - to create environments where people can discover the wholeness of life.

This is important because of the Oasis Ethos, but positive mental health is also recognised by the World Health Organisation: “Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

Policy Statement

Therefore, at Oasis Academy Limeside, we pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures focused through our Ethos and 9 Habits we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health - seeking to help pupils make a positive contribution.

2. Aims

Through the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits, this document describes the school’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil’s mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils through the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- To develop a whole school approach to wellbeing, 8 core principles are outlined:
 - School ethos, culture and environment (shaped by the Oasis vision, ethos and 9 habits)
 - Leadership and Management
 - Staff development, health and wellbeing
 - Curriculum, teaching and learning
 - Pupil voice
 - Identify need and monitoring impact
 - Working with parents/carers
 - Coordinated support

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Emily Charles - Senior Mental Health Lead, SENCo, LAC Teacher
- Nikki Beswick - Designated Safeguarding Lead and SEND Assistant
- Marjorie Reeves and Rebecca Craig - Pastoral Team

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil

should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer of staff or the Principal. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Emily Charles Senior Mental Health Lead.

3. Teaching about Mental Health

The Oasis Ethos and the 9 Habits mean that the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

In light of the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits, we will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

4. Training and Staff Wellbeing

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about 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 where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

5. Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil or member of staff and families 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 communicate their concerns with Emily Charles, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead. Possible warning signs 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

6. Whole School, Community and Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents or carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, the staffroom and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

7. Wellbeing Room

Promoting children and young people's wellbeing is a key part of keeping them safe, helping them develop and ensuring they have positive outcomes into adulthood (Public Health England, 2015).

Mental health plays a key role in a child's overall wellbeing and can be affected by various factors, including:

- environment
- stress
- family circumstances
- abuse and neglect.

Negative experiences can adversely affect a child's mental health, just as positive experiences can help improve it.

How we help children

All pupils can find help with friendship issues and other worries by choosing to visit our wellbeing room 'The Wizard Workshop'. This is a special room inside the school where children can go to express and think about their worries, through talking, creative work and play. Adults with appropriate training will support this process, helping children to find new ways of coping with difficulties so they don't get in the way of friendships or learning.

We work with children one-to-one and in small groups, offering regular time-tabled support for those who will benefit most.

There are times when children feel particularly sad, confused, fearful or angry, due to, for example, family challenges such as separation or illness, or even the death of a much-loved pet. Some children may become withdrawn; others may become demanding or challenging

in their behaviour: that is when having a dedicated wellbeing room in school is especially helpful.

8. Working with Parents/Carers and Families

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents or carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents or carers we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?
- How does the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits help facilitate these conversations?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing.

Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically aimed at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums. We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Being Inclusive - Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Facilitate and view these conversations through the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits
- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas with parents/carers about how they can support positive mental health in their children
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

9. Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

- Recognition of how the Oasis 9 Habits can help in these conversations

10. Managing disclosures

A pupil (family member/carer) may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advice and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. (CPOMS)

This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Emily Charles who will provide and store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

11. Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Emily Charles. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Nikki Beswick must be informed immediately.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in September 2025.