STUDENT MENTAL WEALTH, HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Version:	1.2
Reviewer:	Jackie Van-West, Steven Kelly
Approval body:	ESLT
Date this version approved:	18th December 2025
Due for review:	Autumn 2028

Student Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is a family of specialist providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works together for mutual benefit. OHC&AT is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. The safety and welfare of our pupils and students is of the utmost importance, and part of this commitment is taking steps to proactively safeguard the mental and physical wellbeing of every member of the OHC&AT community.

This policy forms part of OHC&AT's strategic approach to supporting the mental wealth, health and wellbeing of pupils/students, apprentices, staff and governors. There is a separate policy supporting staff mental wealth, health and wellbeing; however, both policies aim to ensure that every member of the OHC&AT community is able to learn and work in an environment that promotes and supports good mental and physical health.

Throughout this document, 'student' is used to refer to both pupils and students in OHC&AT provisions.

This policy has been developed in consultation with OHC&AT staff and is written with reference to Government guidance and law including Keeping children safe in education, Working together to safeguard children, Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, Mental health and behaviour in schools and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools, as well as Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

We recognise that supporting mental wealth, health and wellbeing forms part of our overall commitment to safeguarding, and as such this policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy as well as the other related policies and procedures listed at the end of this document.

MENTAL WEALTH, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The World Health Organisation March 2018 constitution states: *"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."* Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

OHC&AT aims to promote the development and maintenance of mental wealth, health and wellbeing within all of its provisions and associated services. Our approach has been developed in line with Department for Education guidance which summarises the role of educational providers as:

- *Prevention*: creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping students to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively;
- *Identification*: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;
- *Early support*: helping students to access evidence based early support and interventions; and
- *Access to specialist support*: working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

SAFEGUARDING

Effective safeguarding is preventative, as well as responsive, and thus OHC&AT recognises that supporting good mental and physical health is a key preventative measure within our safeguarding practice. It is well recognised that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, bereavement, mental illness or substance abuse within the family environment all impact negatively on a young person's ability to thrive. Being able to draw upon a bank of mental wealth and resilience provides an additional safeguard for children and young people facing issues such as self-harm, radicalisation, suicide, bullying, unsafe relationships, substance misuse or exclusion.

Additionally, children and young people with SEND and the families and carers who support them are at higher risk of experiencing personal and social stressors including, but not limited to, poor health outcomes, discrimination and/or hate crime, unstable housing and/or employment and the economic disadvantage associated with these. Building resilience and positive self-esteem within our students, and supporting all members of the OHC&AT community to achieve and maintain positive wellbeing, are essential components of safeguarding our pupils and students and supporting them to achieve their full potential.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

OHC&AT is committed to maximising opportunities for students to engage with health and wellbeing education. These include: curricular strands such as relationships and sex education, health education, PSHE, e-safety, PE; whole school activities e.g. assemblies, participation in local and national initiatives such as Mental Health Awareness Week and anti-bullying programmes; specific health awareness work around e.g. substance misuse, sexual health. OHC&AT provisions also utilise tailored therapeutic input to support the learning and development needs of our students.

Additionally, students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and their peers through student voice initiatives such as Student Council and the Student Safeguarding/Wellbeing Ambassador programme, as well as working with staff to

develop student-facing policies and initiatives e.g. worries and concerns procedures, anti-bullying charters. All provisions are encouraged to collectively develop a culture of openness and to ensure that students are aware of options for seeking support, including named adults within the school or College that they can speak to e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and trained Mental Health First Aiders.

Each OHC&AT provision has a school or College-specific Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer which clearly identifies the proactive and reactive safeguarding work undertaken within that provision, including how students are supported to grow and maintain positive mental health and how this offer is communicated to students, families and other stakeholders. Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offers are available from each Academy or College's website and are regularly updated by Principals, DSLs and Senior Leadership Teams in conjunction with staff and local governors.

Each OHC&AT provision also has a Worries and Concerns procedure, co-developed by students and staff, which gives details of how students can raise any concerns and how these will be listened to and acted upon by staff.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that staff understand how to support good mental health and wellbeing, as well as maintain the necessary boundaries, OHC&AT has developed a range of training and development opportunities. Regular safeguarding and wellbeing updates are delivered at staff development days, alongside targeted CPD where specific areas of need are identified e.g. gender identity support, child criminal or sexual exploitation. As a specialist Trust, OHC&AT also delivers SEND-specific training to staff in order to grow their understanding of how to support students with complex additional needs. Mental Health First Aid is delivered in-house by the Director of Safeguarding & Wellbeing, as well as being available through local public health teams and local authorities, and every provision has at least one member of staff who is trained in Mental Health First Aid. Designated Safeguarding Leads receive regular supervision and training from the Director of Safeguarding & Wellbeing and/or the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Lead, including a focus on mental health and wellbeing. OHC&AT also operates a Designated Safeguarding Leads' forum and a Mental Health Leads' forum, both of which meet regularly in order to share knowledge, offer peer support and strengthen co-working around student mental health and wellbeing. The Attendance Forum meets half termly to share good practice regarding the implementation of strategies to support student attendance; good attendance is necessary for academic success and subsequently students' overall wellbeing.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is incumbent upon all staff members to recognise the boundary between support and professional health care. **Only suitably trained healthcare professionals are qualified to diagnose and treat health conditions, whether mental or physical.** As a community of educators, it is our responsibility to safeguard our students' health and wellbeing through the appropriate channels e.g. in-house support and onward

referral. In doing so, it is crucial to ensure that appropriate boundaries are set and adhered to at all times.

OHC&AT Trustees will:

- Conduct high level monitoring of student wellbeing strategies and trends via the Quality, Standards & Safeguarding Committee

The OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team (ESLT) will:

- Regularly review this policy and any attendant procedures
- Ensure that a suitable training programme is available to staff, drawing on the breadth of expertise across the OHC&AT family to ensure that CPD is informed by best practice in both general and specific terms

The OHC&AT Director of Safeguarding & Wellbeing will:

- Provide regular supervision, training, advice and guidance to Designated Safeguarding Leads, including a focus on student mental health and wellbeing;
- Regularly convene the DSLs' Forum and Mental Health Leads' support network to promote cross-organisational working and share best practice;
- Deliver Mental Health First Aid training to OHC&AT staff;
- Ensure that their own training is regularly updated;
- Regularly report to OHC&AT ESLT on safeguarding matters including student mental health and wellbeing.

Principals and Senior Leadership Teams will:

- Promote a culture of mutual respect, trust between students and staff and the fostering of a positive learning environment;
- Regularly elicit student voice, through channels such as student surveys/School Council etc., in order to gauge how well mental health and wellbeing are supported within their provision and identify areas for further development;
- Ensure that staff are able to access relevant training and that it is regularly updated as appropriate e.g. Mental Health First Aid;
- Ensure that staff supporting students through challenging situations such as self-harm are themselves well supported via appropriate channels e.g. immediate and follow-up debriefs, access to OHC&AT Occupational Health support and the Employee Assistance Programme etc. – please refer to the OHC&AT Staff Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy for further details;
- Regularly report on student wellbeing to the OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body;
- With the DSL and school/College staff, produce and maintain a setting-specific Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer which clearly details how student wellbeing is supported within the school or College as part of overall safeguarding, including referral routes, partnerships with any external agencies such as clinical psychology services, staff training and responsibilities etc.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will:

- Adopt or oversee the role of Designated Mental Health Lead within their provision and undertake or oversee any relevant training in this regard;
- Ensure that mental and physical wellbeing considerations are embedded within safeguarding and child protection practice, including environmental and

social factors that form part of the provision's contextual safeguarding approach;
- Ensure that all staff understand their safeguarding duties in relation to mental and physical wellbeing;
- Liaise with the portfolio governor for Health & Safety, Child Protection & Safeguarding in order to regularly review systems for supporting good mental and physical health and wellbeing within their provision.

Mental Health Leads will:
- Work with senior leaders and DSLs to act as the strategic lead for mental health and wellbeing within their provision.

Mental Health First Aiders will:
- Undertake and regularly refresh their Mental Health First Aid training in order to provide non-diagnostic and non-judgemental support for mental health and wellbeing within their provision;
- Provide relevant advice and support to students and staff as required, including signposting to appropriate sources of further support e.g. GP, CAMHS or other healthcare professional.

All staff will:
- Treat all people with dignity and respect;
- Understand their safeguarding duties in relation to students' mental and physical health and wellbeing, and raise any concerns promptly with the DSL or other members of the safeguarding team;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures;
- Engage in relevant professional development in order to effectively support students' mental health and wellbeing.

All students will:
- Be encouraged to treat themselves and others with dignity and respect;
- Engage in mental wealth, health and wellbeing curriculum-related topics and activities;
- Be encouraged to raise any wellbeing concerns with their trusted adults, including members of the staff team;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti-bullying policies (schools/OHC)
Anti-Radicalisation Policy
Attendance policies (schools/OHC)
Complaints Policy and Procedure
Dignity at Work Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Online Safety policies (schools/OHC)
Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
First Aid Policy
Mental Capacity & Consent Policy

Missing child/missing student procedures (schools/OHC)
Positive behaviour policies (schools/OHC)
Relationships & sex education policies (schools/OHC)
Risk Assessment Policy
Safeguarding Supervision Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Staff Mental Wealth, Health & Wellbeing Policy
Substance Misuse Policy
Supporting Students with Medical Conditions in Education Policy
Whistleblowing Policy