

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2024

This Strategy is written and reviewed in line with the Trust's Positive Mental Health Policy

Supported by Devon's Early Help for Mental Health Programme and the School Development Support Agency 2018



Rationale

National view

“Evidence tells us that good mental health is essential for children to learn and achieve” *Heads Together ‘Whole Academy Approach’*

As a nation we are increasingly aware of the numbers of children, young people and adults who experience periods of mental ill health, and the fact that this can limit their opportunities to reach their potential and contribute to society.

National NHS and Government policies have been formed to help address this situation through improvements to education.

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence is clear in its advice to academies, that developing a ‘Whole Academy Approach’ to promoting mental health has shown clear benefits in contributing to the wellbeing of pupils. This approach goes beyond teaching and learning and pervades all aspects of the life of the Trust. (Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing)

Definition of Mental Health and wellbeing;

“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”.

World Health Organisation

The Aims and Intentions of our Mental Health Strategy

We aim to;

- Remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE, Diocese, as applicable, and Public Health England.
- Ensure a whole Trust approach to development and delivery.
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including, pupils and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organizations and the local extended community.
- To hold the Mental Health Strategy as a standard agenda item on Senior Leadership Team, Local Committee and Trustee Meetings.

We will;

- Ensure that this Mental Health Strategy and its policy complement all other current Trust strategies and policies.
- Ensure there is clear learning on our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.
- Produce a summary of implemented delivery, outcome and next step developments annually.
- Ensure our Mental Health Policy connected to this strategy is available on our website.

Here at the Link Academy Trust we embrace our role, alongside our families, the community and with our wider partners, in contributing to the development of emotional wellbeing of our pupils and their learning about being healthy, from a physical and mental health perspective.

The Government publication “Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing: A whole school or college approach” suggests using an Eight Principles Approach.

We have chosen to use this Eight Principle approach to develop our Trust Mental Health Policy and evidence it in action.

However, in line with the EH4MH added value, our Eight Principles include our links with our community and national contributions to our children’s developing mental health and wellbeing.

We have chosen an additional section that aims to highlight our chosen forms of **communication** and information sharing.

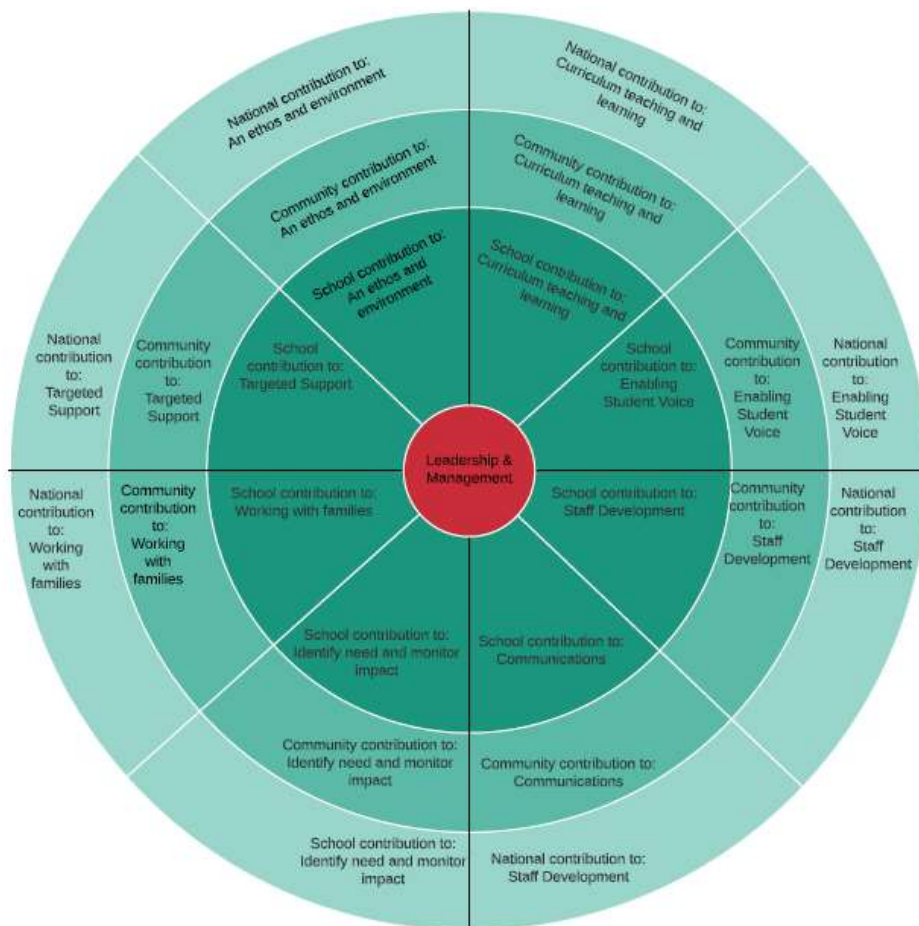
This policy is developed in response to our pledge in the Mental Health Strategy. It is guided by Public Health England’s key documents outlined at the end of this document

Principle 1: Leadership and Management

At the core of these Eight Principles is Leadership and Management. Their commitment and drive are key in embedding this policy at the heart of our Trust.

Our Inclusion Hub Manager, Becky Humphreys, is working alongside the Senior Leadership Team across the Trust. They are leading the development of our Whole Trust Mental Health Strategy.

Below is the EH4MH's 8 Principle approach including the added value of considering community and national contributions to each principle. There is also the additional **Communication** Principle.



Principle 2: **Ethos and Environment**

At the Link Academy Trust, children and young people come first, and our priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning, within a culture of celebrating individual effort and progress. This is within an environment that celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all. We want every child to be successful, and to reach for success from the first day they join us, leaving the Trust with a love of learning that lasts throughout life.

We recognise that in order to embed this ethos, we need to promote an environment that focuses on the whole Trust's emotional wellbeing. We have considered this through both the physical environment of the academies and the emotional culture that is promoted throughout each setting. We hold well-being weeks and regular assemblies to promote being mentally healthy. Our PSHE curriculum supports children in their learning and understanding around the subject and children can access the Link Academy Improvement and Inclusion Hub and specialists when they are struggling with aspects of their SEMH.

Principle 3: **Curriculum Teaching and Learning**

We know that academy-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional health and Wellbeing*). With this in mind, we have sought to enhance knowledge and skills around mental health across the curriculum as well as through targeted subjects such as PSHE.

Community

Whereever possible we incorporate the resources of community services to enhance our curriculum's delivery of mental health promotion.

Principle 4: **Pupil voice**

Involving pupils in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the academy and wider community and to have some control over their lives (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing*). We are committed to providing structures that allow pupils to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy Trust.

Principle 5:
Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact

In line with our ethos of celebrating diversity and the successes of the individual, we are keen to identify need in order to provide the appropriate supportive environment for pupils to thrive. We aim to identify children and young people with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent them developing.

Principle 6:
Working with families

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils in the academies.

We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

We provide information to parents and help sign post them to appropriate support and advice through the information on our websites, which is regularly updated, and face to face.

There are several online resources and information from national charities and organisations regarding mental health and well-being. Details are provided on the Improvement and Inclusion Hub page of our academy websites.

Principle 7:
Staff Development & Well Being

Well-being in academies starts with the staff; they are the front line of this work...' (ncb Framework for promoting well-being and responding to mental health in academies).

At the Trust we place the wellbeing and development of staff as a high priority, believing all Trust staff play a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the pupils.

Principle 7 is split into two sections; the first is how staff are provided with the knowledge and understanding of pupil's wellbeing and the second looks at how the Trust supports the development of staff's wellbeing.

Principle 8:
Targeted Support

The Trust recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the individual academy, with advice from external professionals, and that some pupils may need more intensive support at times. The Trust has a range of potential interventions to support individual's needs, as well as links with external agencies.

Principle 9: Communication

At the Trust we identify that clear and robust systems of communication both within the academy and reaching out into the academy community, are key components to providing a mentally healthy Trust.

The Link Academy Trust’s Mental Health Strategy and Policy was guided by these key documents:

“Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision: a green paper” (2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

“Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing: A whole school or college approach.” (2015)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/614cc965d3bf7f718518029c/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_and_wellbeing.pdf

“Future in Mind” (2015)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/martin-mcshane-14/>

In Addition the Policy has been informed by;

“National Children’s Bureau” A Whole Academy Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. Academy Leaders Resource

https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources_0.pdf

Mentally Healthy Schools; A Whole-School Approach

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/?altTemplate=LearnMore>

IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, Craig Thorley 2016

<https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/further-proof-of-the-crisis-in-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>

This Policy is reviewed by the HR Workforce Group on a 2-yearly cycle.

Approved by the CEO: July 2024