



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Emotional Wellbeing Policy

November 2022

Policy Title:	Emotional Wellbeing
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Category:	Academy
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Contents Page

Table of Contents

Contents Page	3
Introduction	4
Framework for Wellbeing: PERMA	5
Early Identification and Intervention	5
Key Systems within the Academy	6
Staff Wellbeing.....	8

Introduction

The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as the state whereby ‘every individual realises [their] own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to [their] community’.

At Sandwell Academy, we believe that it is everybody’s responsibility to support positive mental health and wellbeing by contributing to a culture of emotional safety. It is our intention, therefore, for wellbeing to underpin all aspects of Academy life, and this endeavour is founded on empirical findings that mental health and wellbeing are related to:

- School behaviour and conduct
- School attendance
- Academic performance
- Safety within the school community

With this in mind, our approach to enhancing emotional wellbeing is fully integrated within our practices. Our commitment is to work both *pre-emptively*, to promote emotional wellness in all that we do, and *responsively*, to identify instances of poor emotional wellbeing and work to support individuals to improve this.

Figure 1 depicts the systems within the Academy which work in tandem to promote a culture of emotional wellbeing.



Figure 1. Key systems promoting emotional wellness within the Academy.

It is the intention of staff within the Academy to develop students’ emotional resilience to support their wellbeing; our intention is not to *protect* students from life’s daily stressors, but instead to provide them with the skills to *overcome* them.

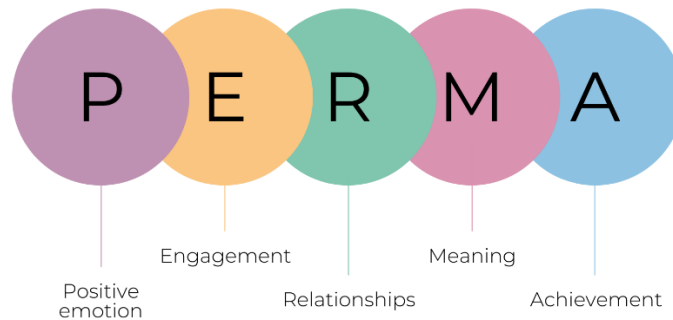
The purpose of this policy is to set out:

- How key systems within the Academy work in tandem to promote emotional wellbeing
- How we promote positive emotional wellbeing
- How we identify instances of poor wellbeing

- How we train staff to be vigilant of indicators of poor wellbeing
- How we work in conjunction with professionals and external services where required

Framework for Wellbeing: PERMA

At Sandwell Academy, we believe that our efforts to promote emotional wellbeing should be founded on empirical research and current theory. Seligman’s PERMA model of wellbeing provides a useful framework within which we might consider how best to target support within the Academy. The model consists of the following five constructs:



It is our intention, therefore, to ensure that these five factors underpin strategic decision-making and common practices across the Academy.

Positive Emotion – Students/staff should have positive emotional experiences within the Academy

Engagement – Students/staff should have time to do things that they enjoy and can get lost in

Relationships – Students/staff should develop positive relationships others within the Academy

Meaning – Students/staff should partake in activities which they find meaningful

Achievement – Students/staff should experience success, which should be celebrated

In working towards these standards, we aim to promote emotional resilience, ensuring that all those working in the Academy:

- Feel safe, loved and cared for
- Feel empowered
- Feel engaged
- Feel connected
- Feel able to cope

Early Identification and Intervention

It is the responsibility of all staff within the Academy to be vigilant of indicators of poor emotional wellbeing, which can include:

- poor concentration
- finding it hard to make decisions
- feeling less interested in day-to-day activities
- low mood
- feeling overwhelmed by things
- tearfulness
- tiredness and lack of energy

- talking less and avoiding social activities
- talking more or talking very fast, jumping between topics and ideas
- finding it difficult to control your emotions
- irritability and short temper
- aggression

Ongoing training within the Academy supports staff to notice these early indicators and raise these concerns with the necessary stakeholders within the school, including the Head of Year, Pastoral Manager, the Safeguarding Team and the Inclusion Team.

It is also important to ensure that conversations about mental health and wellbeing are commonplace in order to dismantle the stigma around poor mental health. In doing so, we work to provide children and young people with the vocabulary to discuss their wellbeing, proffering them the confidence and skills to self-report concerns.

Students can report concerns they have about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of others to their Personal Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Manager or through a dedicated email address for the Mental Health Advocates (advocates@sandwellacademy.com). Students can also report concerns in the Safeguarding post-boxes which are situated within a number of toilet across the Academy.

The emotional wellbeing of students is also assessed using a number of measurement tools. The aims of using these tools are as follows:

- To capture a snapshot of wellbeing across the Academy
- To identify students who self-report poor emotional wellbeing
- To identify students in need of intervention
- To ensure that students are familiar with the language of wellbeing

The use of a specific measurement tool is dependent on the purpose of data gathering. In term one, all students will complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in order to capture the strength of emotional wellbeing across the Academy and target support. Where specific concerns are identified, further measures may be used, including the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-R) or the Boxall Profile.

The decision for a young person to receive additional support for their wellbeing will always be made in conjunction with key support roles within the school, including the Personal Tutor, Head of Year, DSL and the Director of Inclusion. Where appropriate, supportive measures will be shared with parents or carers.

Key Systems within the Academy

As outlined, the promotion of positive wellbeing relies on a widespread culture of emotional wellness; for this reason, all strategic decisions within the Academy are made with a consideration of the implications for emotional wellbeing.

Behaviour and Culture

At Sandwell Academy, we acknowledge that poor behaviour is often underpinned by poor emotional wellbeing, and as such, we work to ensure that we promote positive behaviour through the following methods:

- Developing an ethos of positively reinforcing pro-social behaviours and celebrating successes
- Embedding a culture of emotional safety within classrooms, within which students feel comfortable engaging in learning and mistakes are considered a core step to progress
- Clearly defined support roles and access to support, including Heads of Year, Personal Tutors and Pastoral Managers
- A commitment to embedding Emotion Coaching within the Academy in order to explicitly teach emotional regulation and problem-solving in every interaction

- A commitment to using restorative approaches following a challenging incident, focusing on repairing relationships and harm and fostering empathy
- In some circumstances, use of the Willetts Centre to provide a high-level of wellbeing intervention in order to improve student outcomes

Safeguarding and Attendance

At Sandwell Academy, we acknowledge that poor emotional wellbeing can lead to *or* be an indicator of a wider safeguarding issue, and as such, staff receive regular training in order to ensure that they are vigilant and follow the necessary safeguarding procedures. In doing so, we ensure that:

- Staff are aware of the indicators of poor emotional wellbeing and are comfortable applying this knowledge
- Emotional wellbeing and safeguarding is a regular agenda item in Department meetings, allowing for concerns to be raised and, in turn, managed
- Staff work to identify poor emotional wellbeing at an early stage
- Students who show patterns of absence or who are at risk of persistent absenteeism receive Emotion-Based School Avoidance support to determine the ‘push and pull factors’ and devise a plan to improve wellbeing, and subsequently, their attendance

Specialist Support and External Agency

At Sandwell Academy, we acknowledge that poor mental health can in itself be a Special Educational Need, and that students who have an existing disability are at a higher risk of experiencing poor wellbeing. As such, we ensure that:

- Instances of poor emotional wellbeing are referred to the SENDCo so that the Graduated Approach can begin
- The SENDCo liaises with relevant external agencies, as appropriate, to secure the necessary support for students
- External agency support is transparent to both students and staff
- The SENDCo is involved in transition to ensure that students with poor wellbeing are identified early and have a supportive member of staff when they begin
- Place2Be and an on-site school counsellor are available for both student and staff use
- Robust mentoring schemes of learning are devised to target key contributors to poor wellbeing
- The school nurse supports students who are struggling with their wellbeing and are at risk of harm

Curriculum Opportunities

At Sandwell Academy, we acknowledge that self-care and emotional wellbeing strategies should be taught explicitly in order for those within the Academy to pro-actively support their own wellbeing. As such, we identify opportunities within the curriculum to promote emotional wellness and prepare students for potential stressors, including:

- Covering emotional wellbeing within the PSHE curriculum
- Extending Personal Tutor time so that all students have a key supportive adult
- Clear programmes of mentoring for students to access, as appropriate
- A supportive feedback policy which clearly identifies student strengths and supports with improvements
- Workshops on exam stress and wellbeing to support students during periods of heightened worry or anxiety
- The use of school induction days to establish relationships with key support staff and identify students who may require additional support with emotional wellbeing

Staff Wellbeing

At Sandwell Academy, we acknowledge that staff and student wellbeing are heavily inter-connected. We are committed, therefore, to ensuring that we apply the same scrutiny and vigilance to staff wellbeing as we do to student wellbeing.

We believe that our effort to improve student wellbeing is a necessary step in promoting staff wellbeing for the following reasons:

- Poor behaviour as a result of poor wellbeing is a threat to the culture of safety within a classroom
- Managing poor behaviour can be an emotional strain for staff, and takes a considerable amount of time
- Staff who experience success with students will have a greater feeling of success in their own efforts and will see their work as being meaningful
- A relational culture within a school ensures that staff, too, feel well-connected with others, thus having a greater support network
- A clear system of restoration ensures that staff repair relationships with students and are confident that that poor behaviour will not be repeated

Nevertheless, we acknowledge that at times, staff may also face challenges with their emotional wellbeing, and therefore we have the following supportive roles in place:

- Line managers and SMT links
- Mental Health Advocates
- The school nurse
- School counsellor

In addition to this, the Academy is committed to exploring additional supportive mechanisms for staff, as available, including support from Inclusion Support and Educational Psychologists