



EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

Geneva English School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, happiness and emotional wellbeing of all its pupils. We therefore aim to provide an environment that promotes confidence, a feeling of self-worth, and the knowledge that concerns will be listened to and acted upon. We want every pupil at GES to feel safe, to know that they are part of a warm and caring community, and to enjoy their days at school.

In recent years, awareness of the importance of children's emotional wellbeing and mental health has increased. We know that issues such as anxiety, low mood, depression, conduct and eating disorders can impact significantly on their happiness and future life chances. For children who experience these issues, it is important that appropriate help and advice is available.

Schools can play a crucial role, working alongside parents and with health and community services, in helping to support healthy, active minds and in preventing and identifying emotional issues in children and young people. Geneva English School recognises the importance of ensuring pupils' happiness and well-being, developing character and resilience, and supporting pupils with problems.

AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote positive mental health across the GES community;
- Increase understanding and awareness in our community of emotional wellbeing and mental health issues and to recognise their early warning signs;
- Provide support to staff working with children who are experiencing issues that affect their happiness and well-being;
- Provide support to pupils and parents who need help.

It should be read in conjunction with other pastoral school policies and in particular with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education) Policies.

The policy will be kept under regular review as we develop this important aspect of our provision.

EDUCATION

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to help keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) curriculum. We aim to enable pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe, sensitive and age-appropriate manner that helps rather than harms.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst all members of staff have a responsibility to promote the emotional wellbeing and mental health of pupils, those with a specific remit include:

- Class teachers in Early Years and Primary
- Tutors in Secondary
- Sandra Cameron, School Counsellor
- Polly Pupulin, School Nurse
- Senior Leadership Team
- Deputy Headteachers
- Headteacher

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FOR STAFF

As a minimum, all members of staff receive regular training about pupil wellbeing as part of their regular child protection training in order to help them keep pupils safe. Further professional development and training opportunities for staff will be considered as part of our annual professional review process. From time to time, the School will provide training for staff to promote learning or understanding about specific whole-school issues related to mental health.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS (SEMH)

Since 2014, SEMH has been a recognised area of Special Educational Need in the UK and is acknowledged as being a barrier for learning for some young people. The Department for Education noted that students who have a diagnosed area of additional need are six times more likely to also need support with their emotional well-being. GES understands the need for all staff to be more vigilant with students with additional needs, as they can be more vulnerable to needing mental health support. Additionally, some young people who are not as able to express themselves (due to additional needs or skills in verbal communication), may need support and guidance in how to do so.

ENGAGING PUPILS AND PROMOTING POSITIVE PEER INFLUENCES

We recognise the vital role that our pupils can play in improving the wellbeing of the school community and will ensure that the 'pupil voice' is heard via the Primary and Secondary School Councils. We will continue to promote positive peer influences through a number of channels, which include assemblies, circle time and class/tutor group discussions and PSHE lessons. Underpinning everything that we do at GES is the promotion of our core values and of a warm, supportive environment in which kindness and thoughtfulness should always be at the forefront.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

The School recognises that parents and carers play the most important role in supporting their children's emotional and mental wellbeing. In order to support parents, we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about emotional and mental health issues on our school website and parent portal;
- ensure that any parental concerns about their own child, or a friend of their child, are listened to and taken seriously;
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through occasional forums or information evenings;
- keep parents informed about the emotional well-being or mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

PROFESSIONAL HELP AND COUNSELING AT SCHOOL

Sandra Cameron is our professional School Counsellor. Sandra is available to:

- see individual pupils with regards to problems that become apparent within the school setting;
- work with groups or classes when needed, for example following a crisis or traumatic event;
- provide advice to parents and support them in finding appropriate help;
- provide advice and training for members of staff.

Further details of the way in which our School Counseling Service works can be found in the policy document, [School Counseling at GES](#), which is published on the parent portal and on the School's website. We will continue to review our policy and practice in this area and to keep parents updated.

FURTHER INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

For further information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children, please see the links and resources listed below:

General guidance:

- Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk>
- Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- Minded: <https://www.minded.org.uk>
- In our hands: <http://www.inourhands.com>

Self-harm:

- SelfHarmUK: <https://selfharm.co.uk>
- National Self Harm Network Forum: <http://www.nshn.co.uk>

Depression

- Depression Alliance (now merged with Mind):
<https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/depression-alliance/>

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

- Anxiety UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk>

Obsessions and compulsions

- OCD-UK: <http://www.ocduk.org>

Suicidal feelings

- Prevention of young suicide UK: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org>
- Campaign Against Living Miserably: <https://www.thecalmzone.net>

Eating problems

- Beat Eating Disorders: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>

Counselling in Schools

- *Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future* (UK Department for Education):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>