



RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

2026/27

Together we make a positive difference

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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This policy is promoted and implemented throughout the Academy. It is reviewed annually and sooner where there are significant legislative, statutory guidance, service or operational changes.

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1. Policy statement

For the purpose of this policy:

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. (World Health Organisation)

Mental Health affects all aspects of a child's development including their cognitive abilities and their emotional wellbeing. Childhood and adolescence are when mental health is developed and patterns are set for the future. For most children, the opportunities for learning and personal development during adolescence are exciting and challenging and an intrinsic part of their school experience. However, they can also give rise to anxiety, low mood and stress which can lead to a diagnosis of ill mental health. Children can suffer from a range of ill mental health issues also owing to circumstances outside of school.

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 procedures we will promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Our Approach to Mental Health

Rushey Mead Academy is committed to supporting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing across our school community. We recognise that mental health is an important part of pupils' overall health, safeguarding, attendance, learning, relationships and personal development.

Rushey Mead Academy is committed to making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of young people. We recognise that positive mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to students' ability to learn, thrive and achieve their full potential.

We believe that promoting positive mental health is a shared responsibility. We work collaboratively with students, parents and carers, teachers, colleagues across the Academy, external agencies and the wider school community. Most importantly, we listen to and work alongside our young people, recognising them as active participants in their own wellbeing.

We are proactive and determined in our approach to mental health and wellbeing. Whatever challenges our students, their families, our staff, the Academy or the wider community may face, we seek to respond with compassion, consistency and a strong sense of collective responsibility. We support one another, respond appropriately to emerging needs and work together to ensure that no young person feels they have to face difficulties alone.

Our commitment is to be active participants in the lives of our young people. We do not simply respond when difficulties arise; we actively promote positive mental health, resilience, emotional literacy, and help-seeking behaviours across Academy life. This commitment is reflected throughout the curriculum, pastoral provision, and wider enrichment programmes, as well as through events, initiatives and activities that promote mental health and wellbeing.

We empower students to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, language, and confidence they need to recognise concerns, talk about mental health, and seek appropriate support for themselves or others when needed. We aim to create a culture in which asking for help is recognised as a strength and where students feel listened to, valued and supported.

All RMA staff, students, parents, and carers are made aware of the sources of support available within the Academy and through services and organisations in the wider community. Information about relevant sources of support is regularly communicated and made accessible through appropriate channels, including newsletters, the Academy website and displays throughout the school.

Through this whole-school approach, Rushey Mead Academy seeks to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which every young person can develop positive mental health, build resilience and access the right support at the right time.

Our commitment

We will help students understand emotions and experiences, develop healthy coping strategies, form positive relationships, build resilience, recognise when they need help, and know where to go for support.

2. Scope and related policies

This policy applies to all students and to all adults working in or for the Academy, including teachers, support staff, leaders, governors, volunteers, supply staff and contractors where relevant.

It should be read alongside the Academy's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equality Policy
- PSHE / RSHE curriculum and policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Staff Wellbeing / Health and Safety arrangements
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements

Where there is any conflict between this policy and statutory safeguarding guidance or the Academy's safeguarding procedures, safeguarding procedures and statutory requirements take precedence.

3. Policy aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing across the whole Academy.
- Develop resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- Promote inclusion and equality.
- Reduce stigma and challenge misconceptions about mental health difficulties
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Use a graduated approach so that support is proportionate to need and risk.
- Ensure students experiencing mental health difficulties can access education and appropriate pastoral, SEND and health support.
- Provide clear processes for disclosures, safeguarding concerns and acute mental health crises.
- Work effectively with parents/carers and relevant external agencies.
- Meet statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

4. Legal and statutory framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation, statutory guidance and national guidance applicable to schools in England during 2026/27:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Education Act 2002, including safeguarding and welfare duties.
- Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, where relevant.
- Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended), where relevant to external professional processes.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), in force from 1 September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Information sharing to safeguard children and young people: statutory guidance applicable from September 2026.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – revised statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026.
- DfE guidance: Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

5. Definitions

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, it exists on a continuum and can fluctuate over time.

Mental health difficulties may include:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Self-harm
- Eating disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Trauma-related difficulties
- Behaviour linked to emotional distress
- School-based anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Emotional dysregulation

School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions. Diagnosis remains the responsibility of qualified healthcare professionals.

6. Whole-school approach

RMA follows the Department for Education's whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The eight principles are embedded through leadership, culture, curriculum, student voice, identification, targeted support and partnership with families.

- Ethos and environment: promoting respect, diversity, belonging and positive relationships.
- Leadership and management: making mental health and wellbeing a strategic priority.

- Staff development: ensuring staff have appropriate knowledge, support and access to training.
- Curriculum, teaching and learning: developing resilience, emotional literacy and help-seeking skills.
- Student voice: involving students in shaping wellbeing provision.
- Identifying need and monitoring impact: using appropriate information and review processes.
- Targeted support and referral: providing proportionate support and connecting students with specialist services where needed.
- Working with parents and carers: sharing information appropriately and building constructive partnerships.

6.1 Leadership and Management

Senior leaders will:

- Promote mental health as a strategic priority.
- Ensure adequate resources are available.
- Monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- Foster a positive culture.

6.2 School Culture and Environment

The school will:

- Promote inclusion and belonging.
- Celebrate diversity.
- Challenge discrimination.
- Maintain effective anti-bullying measures.
- Encourage positive relationships.
- Provide safe spaces and pastoral support.

6.3 Student Voice

Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Share views about wellbeing.
- Influence school provision.
- Participate in decision-making.
- Support peer-led wellbeing initiatives.

6.4 Working with Families

The school will:

- Engage parents and carers.
- Signpost support services.
- Communicate concerns promptly.
- Encourage partnership working.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Academy Council

- Ensure appropriate oversight of this policy and the Academy's approach to pupil wellbeing.
- Receive assurance about implementation, impact, safeguarding and staff development.
- Ensure relevant statutory duties and equality considerations are reflected in provision.

7.2 Principal / Senior Leadership Team

- Provide strategic leadership for mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Ensure resources, training and referral arrangements are appropriate.
- Promote a culture in which wellbeing and safeguarding are shared responsibilities.

7.3 Senior Mental Health Lead

- Provide strategic oversight of the whole-school approach.
- Coordinate and evaluate the Academy's mental health and wellbeing offer.
- Advise staff and leaders on early intervention and graduated support.
- Support staff development and maintain awareness of local services.
- Work with the DSL and other pastoral/SEND leaders where wellbeing concerns overlap with safeguarding or additional needs.
- Maintain appropriate oversight of interventions without taking on a clinical diagnostic role.

7.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs

- Lead safeguarding responses where mental health concerns indicate or may indicate risk of harm.
- Ensure concerns, disclosures and incidents are recorded and managed in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Coordinate information sharing and referrals where required.
- Liaise with external agencies and ensure the child's safety remains central.

7.5 SENDCo, pastoral and year-team staff

- Contribute to identification, assessment and support.
- Consider whether emotional or mental health difficulties may interact with SEND, attendance, behaviour or access to learning.
- Coordinate reasonable adjustments and support plans where appropriate.

7.6 All staff

- Promote positive wellbeing through everyday interactions and classroom practice.
- Recognise concerns.
- Report concerns promptly through the Academy's safeguarding process.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Attend relevant training.

8. Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing

The Academy promotes wellbeing through everyday school life rather than relying solely on interventions for students who are already experiencing difficulty.

- Positive relationships between students and trusted adults.
- A strong sense of belonging through tutor, year, house and wider Academy structures.
- Celebration of academic and non-academic achievement.
- Opportunities for leadership, participation, enrichment and student voice.
- Pastoral support through the Team Around the Year and other established RMA systems.
- Clear behaviour, anti-bullying and safeguarding expectations.
- Opportunities for students to learn about healthy routines, sleep, exercise, relationships, online influences and help-seeking.
- Accessible information about where students and families can seek further help.

9. Teaching about Mental Health

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are taught through the Academy's PSHE/RSHE curriculum, tutor provision, assemblies and wider personal development programme. Curriculum content will reflect the statutory Health Education and RSHE requirements applicable from 1 September 2026.

- Understanding emotions and mental health.
- Resilience, coping strategies and managing setbacks.
- Recognising when support may be needed.
- Healthy relationships, boundaries and communication.
- Stress, sleep and healthy routines.
- Online and social media influences on wellbeing.
- Self-harm and suicide awareness, taught sensitively and in accordance with safeguarding and curriculum guidance.
- How and where to seek help for self or others.

Mental health and wellbeing are embedded throughout the Academy's PSHE curriculum, providing students with the knowledge, skills, language and confidence to understand and manage their emotional health and wellbeing. Through age-appropriate and carefully sequenced learning, students explore topics including emotional literacy, self-esteem, resilience, managing stress and anxiety, relationships, healthy lifestyles, coping strategies, online wellbeing and recognising when and how to seek help. The curriculum encourages students to develop an understanding of their own mental health, to recognise changes in themselves and others, and to challenge stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental health. Students are supported to identify trusted adults and appropriate sources of support, both within the school and in the wider community, and are encouraged to understand that seeking help is a positive and important part of maintaining good mental health. PSHE therefore plays a key role in our preventative and early-intervention approach, helping to equip all students with the knowledge and practical skills they need to make positive choices and maintain their wellbeing throughout their lives.

Explicit teaching of mental health and wellbeing is delivered to students in Years 7–11 through the PSHE curriculum. In addition, opportunities to explore and develop understanding of positive mental health and wellbeing are embedded across the wider curriculum. In English, students encounter themes such as identity, relationships, emotions, resilience and personal experiences through the texts they study, while Science provides opportunities to develop their understanding of the brain, sleep, physical health and the biological aspects of mental wellbeing. PE promotes the important links between physical activity, healthy lifestyles and positive mental health, while

Drama supports students in developing confidence, self-expression, empathy and an understanding of different perspectives. RE provides opportunities to explore questions relating to identity, values, meaning, beliefs, loss and life experiences. Mental health and wellbeing are further reinforced through assemblies, tutor time and Stop the Clock sessions, providing regular opportunities for students to reflect on their wellbeing, develop emotional literacy, build resilience and understand where and how to access support. Through this broad and consistent approach, messages about positive mental health are reinforced throughout the student experience at Rushey Mead Academy.

Teaching will avoid unnecessarily graphic or harmful detail and will provide clear signposting to trusted sources of support. Staff will follow the Academy's curriculum, safeguarding and disclosure procedures if a lesson prompts a personal disclosure.

10. Signposting

Rushey Mead Academy is committed to ensuring that staff, students, parents and carers are aware of the sources of support and intervention available within the Academy, as well as relevant external services and organisations within the local community, nationally and online.

Information about sources of support is regularly communicated to parents and carers through emails, newsletters and the Academy website. Specialist support is also shared at key points throughout the year through parent newsletters and Padlets, and with staff through Staff Headlines. Within each tutor room, students are provided with clear information about trained members of staff whom they can approach if they require support. Further signposting is displayed throughout the Academy, including in toilets, Year Team offices and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) office, and on the plasma screens, ensuring that information is accessible in a range of settings. Signposting to appropriate support is also embedded within PSHE lessons, tutor time and specialist assemblies. Through this consistent and visible approach, we aim to increase students' confidence and willingness to seek help and ensure that they understand what support is available, who it is intended for, how and where it can be accessed, why accessing support may be beneficial, and what they can expect to happen next. We recognise that clear, timely and accessible signposting is an important part of early intervention and helps to ensure that students and their families can access appropriate support at the right time. Links and contacts will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where services change.

The Academy will maintain a current list of internal contacts and external services in Appendix A and Appendix B. Staff should check the live local service information when making referrals.

11. Signs and Indicators

Staff at Rushey Mead Academy recognise that mental health difficulties can present in different ways and that there is no single set of signs that will indicate that a young person is experiencing poor mental health. Changes in a student's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, physical presentation, relationships or engagement with school may indicate that additional support is needed. Staff should remain alert to changes such as withdrawal from friends or usual activities, persistent low mood or irritability, increased anxiety or worry, changes in confidence or self-esteem, difficulties concentrating, changes in attendance or punctuality, reduced engagement or attainment, disrupted sleep or tiredness, unexplained physical complaints, changes in behaviour or increased emotional responses. Staff may also notice a student becoming unusually quiet, distressed, isolated or reluctant to participate, or experiencing difficulties in their relationships with peers or adults.

These signs and indicators should always be considered within the context of the individual student and should not be used to diagnose a mental health condition. A change in presentation may be linked to a range of factors, including difficulties at home or school, relationships, bereavement, transitions, physical health or other experiences. Staff should therefore use their professional judgement, remain curious and compassionate, and respond to concerns in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding and pastoral procedures. Where a member of staff notices a significant or sustained change, or has concerns about a student's wellbeing, they should share these concerns with the appropriate member of the pastoral or safeguarding team so that the student can be offered appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

Early recognition is an important part of our whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Staff are encouraged to listen to students, take concerns seriously, avoid making assumptions and provide appropriate opportunities for students to talk about what they are experiencing. Where appropriate, students should be supported to identify trusted adults and access further support within the Academy or through external services.

Summary of Signs and Indicators

<u>Area</u>	<u>Possible signs and indicators</u>
Emotional	Persistent sadness or low mood; increased anxiety or worry; appearing overwhelmed; increased irritability or frustration; reduced confidence or self-esteem; appearing unusually tearful or distressed; difficulty managing emotions; expressing feelings of hopelessness or being unable to cope.
Behavioural	Withdrawal from usual activities; changes in behaviour or personality; becoming unusually quiet or reluctant to communicate; increased agitation or restlessness; changes in eating or sleeping patterns; difficulties managing behaviour; increased risk-taking; loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
Physical	Persistent tiredness or low energy; changes in sleep; frequent unexplained physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches; noticeable changes in appearance or self-care; appearing tense, restless or physically uncomfortable; increased visits to medical or pastoral staff with physical symptoms.
Social and Relationships	Withdrawing from friends or social activities; becoming isolated; changes in friendship groups; increased conflict with peers or adults; difficulties maintaining relationships; appearing particularly sensitive to criticism or rejection; reluctance to participate in group activities.
School and Learning	Changes in attendance or punctuality; reduced concentration; difficulty completing work; decline in engagement or attainment; reluctance to participate in lessons; increased requests to leave lessons; difficulty managing transitions or changes; loss of motivation; changes in presentation or usual classroom behaviour.
Communication and Help-Seeking	Talking about feeling unable to cope or overwhelmed; expressing persistent worries or concerns; seeking reassurance more frequently; making negative comments about themselves or their circumstances; communicating concerns about a friend; approaching a trusted adult for support; or, conversely, appearing reluctant or unable to talk about difficulties.

Important safeguarding point

These indicators should not be viewed in isolation or used to diagnose a mental health difficulty. Staff should consider what is usual for the individual student, whether there has been a significant or sustained change, and the wider context of the student's circumstances. Any concerns should be shared through the Academy's appropriate pastoral and safeguarding procedures

12. Identification and Support

Rushey Mead Academy recognises the importance of early identification and intervention in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. Concerns may be identified in a range of ways, including:

- Observations by staff
- Changes in a student's presentation, attendance, behaviour or engagement
- Conversations with students
- Concerns raised by parents or carers
- Student self-referral
- Information shared by peers
- Communication from external professionals.

All staff have a role to play in recognising potential concerns and sharing these appropriately. Students are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult when they are concerned about their own wellbeing or that of another student, and parents and carers are encouraged to communicate any concerns they may have with the Academy.

Where staff notice concerns, they will report such concerns to the DSL, Year Team, or via the Safeguarding referral form found on all their desktop.

When a concern is identified, staff will listen to the student, take their concerns seriously and respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner. Concerns will be shared with the appropriate member of the pastoral or safeguarding team in accordance with Academy procedures. The level of support offered will be informed by the individual needs and circumstances of the student and may range from universal pastoral support and early intervention to more targeted support or referral to specialist external services. We recognise that every student is different and that support should be proportionate, personalised and responsive to their needs.

Support available within the Academy may include support from tutors, Year Teams, pastoral staff, safeguarding staff and appropriately trained members of staff, and our school therapist, alongside interventions and wellbeing programmes delivered through the Academy. Where a student requires support beyond that available within school, we will work with the student, parents or carers and relevant professionals to identify appropriate external services and facilitate access where appropriate. This may include signposting or referral to local and national mental health and wellbeing services and other specialist organisations.

Where appropriate, an individual support or safety plan may be developed collaboratively with the student and their parents or carers. This will identify the student's needs, protective factors, agreed strategies, trusted adults, sources of support and actions to be taken if their wellbeing deteriorates. Plans and interventions will be reviewed regularly to ensure that support remains appropriate and effective, and relevant information will be recorded securely in accordance with Academy policies and procedures.

Mental health and wellbeing concerns will always be considered alongside the Academy's safeguarding responsibilities. Where there is a concern that a student may be at risk of harm, the Academy's safeguarding procedures will take precedence and concerns will be escalated to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

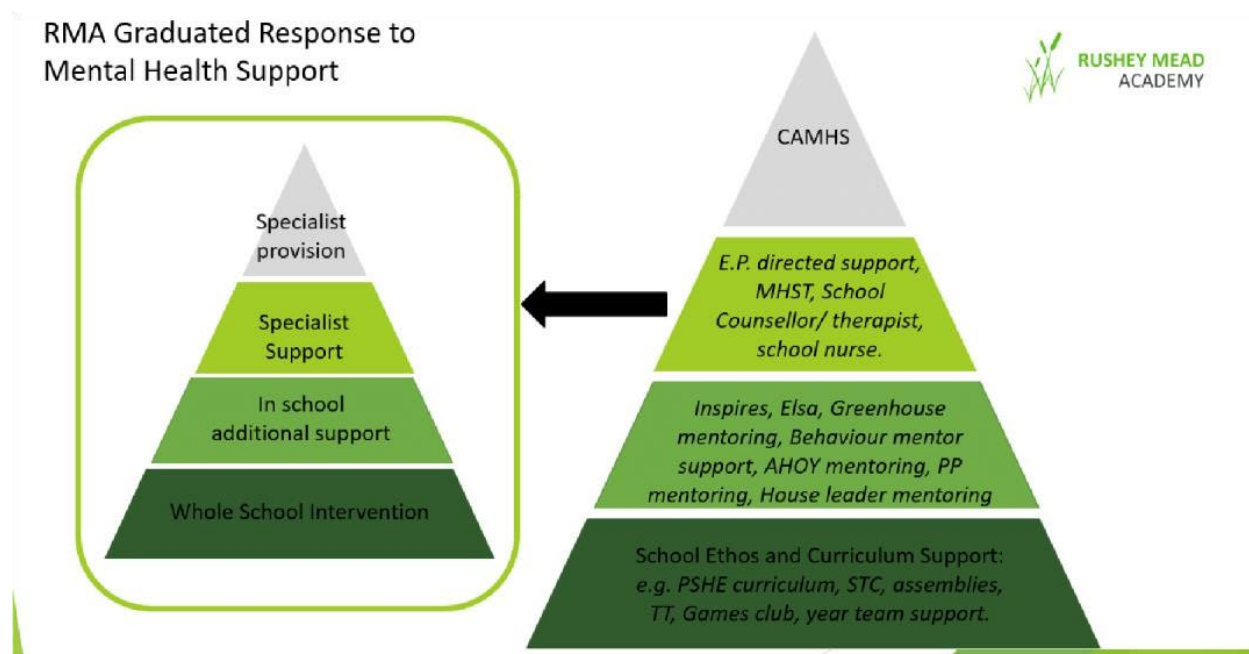
Our approach is centred on early intervention, collaboration and continuity of support. We aim to ensure that students are listened to, involved in decisions about their support wherever appropriate, and able to access the right help at the right time. We will work closely with parents and carers and, where appropriate, external professionals to provide a coordinated approach that supports the student's mental health, wellbeing, safety and ability to engage positively with school life.

Where a student is experiencing a mental health crisis and requires immediate support, staff should use the Academy's on-call system without delay so that an appropriate member of staff can respond and provide immediate support.



13. Graduated Support and Intervention

We have a graduated, needs-led approach. Support may move up or down the continuum as a student's circumstances change. The triangle below is retained from the Academy's existing policy and represents the current RMA graduated response.



[In the above diagram, for E.P. read Educational Psychologist and for Elsa read Emotional Literacy Support Assistant]

The provision shown in the diagram is subject to availability, staff expertise, current local pathways and the individual needs of the student. It does not replace clinical assessment or specialist treatment where these are required.

13.1 Universal / whole-school support

- PSHE, tutor time, assemblies and personal development provision.
- Enrichment Provision and signposts to clubs
- Positive behaviour systems
- Staff vigilance & reporting system
- High-quality pastoral care and Team Around the Year.
- School ethos, routines, relationships and curriculum support.
- Signposting to trusted internal and external support.

13.2 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, students will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above.

The support offered at Rushey Mead Academy includes, but is not limited to:

- 1:1 mentoring
- Adapted timetables
- Time out passes
- School Counsellor sessions
- School Nurse sessions
- Meet/ Greet
- Home visits
- Support to attend appointments where deemed necessary
- Collaboration with Crisis Team to ensure adequate support
- Youth Mental Health First Aiders

13.3 Individual support, risk and safety planning

Where a student has an identified need or significant concern, the Academy may use an individual support, risk or safety plan. The plan will be proportionate to the concern and reviewed as circumstances change. Risk Assessment Plans are written in collaboration with the student (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The student's Risk Assessment plan will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The student's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- Support and adjustments within school.
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in the school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- Agreed actions if concerns escalate.
- Relevant external professionals and family involvement.
- What to do in an emergency

- Review arrangements and a clear date for checking whether the plan remains appropriate.

A school plan is not a substitute for a clinical risk assessment or treatment plan. Where there is significant or immediate risk, the Academy will seek urgent professional advice and/or emergency assistance.

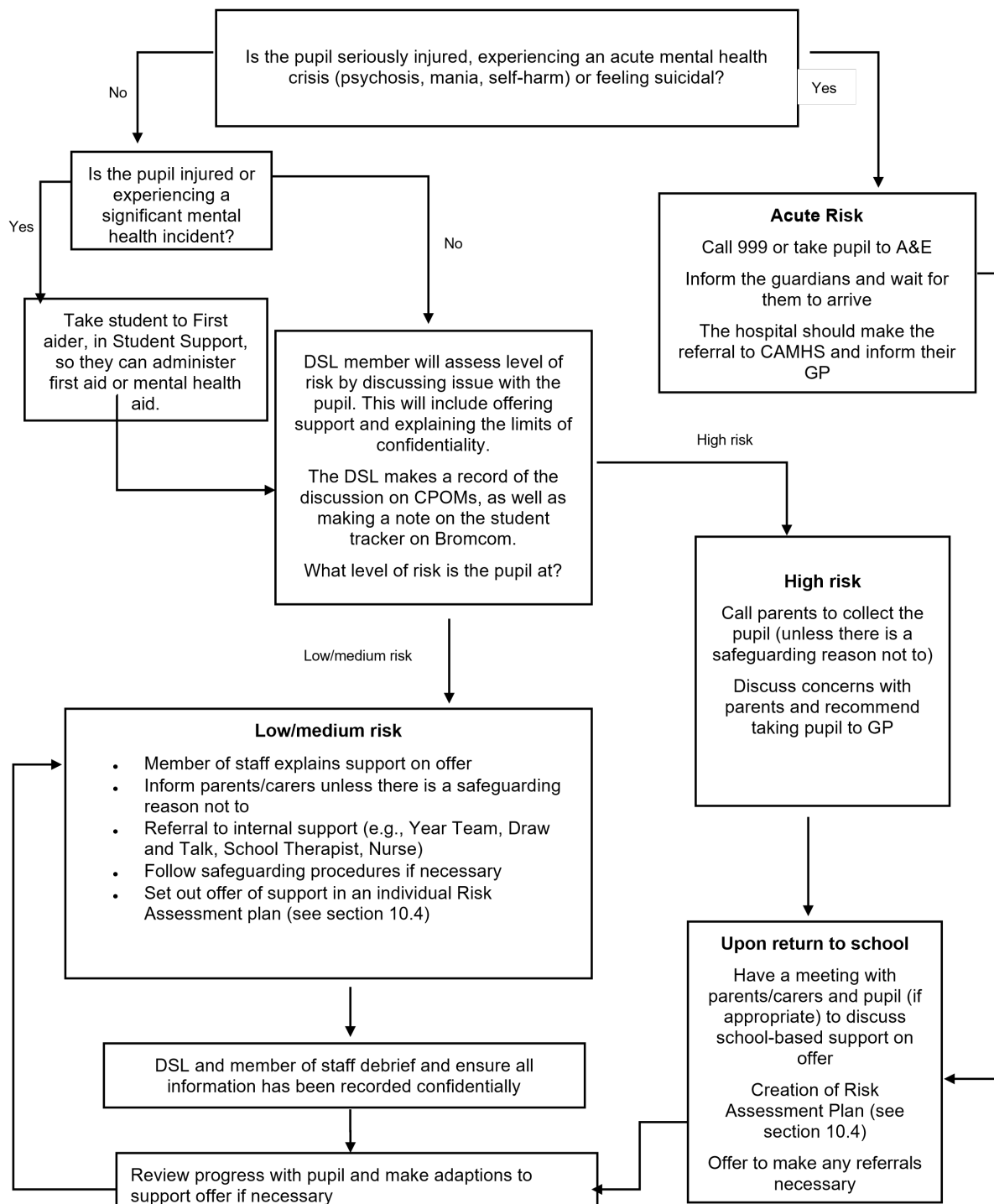
13.4 Specialist support and external referrals

If student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

- GP
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST), where available and appropriate.
- CAMHS or other NHS children and young people's mental health services.
- Educational Psychology.
- Early Help and children's social care where indicated.
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services

Where external support is required, the Academy will work with the student, parents/carers and professionals as appropriate. Referral arrangements may change; staff should use the current local pathway rather than relying on historic contact details.

13.5 Process in case of Acute Mental Health Crisis



Current local urgent pathway – Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

If a student requires urgent mental health support but the situation is not an immediate life-threatening emergency, current local guidance directs people to NHS 111 and the mental health option (24/7). If there is an immediate threat to life or serious and immediate danger, call 999 / use emergency services. The Academy should also follow its safeguarding escalation route and seek advice from the DSL.

The LPT CAMHS Crisis and Home Treatment Team currently provides urgent support for children and young people experiencing significant mental health difficulties. Current published arrangements should be checked at the point of referral rather than relying on a printed policy alone.

Where a student has self-harmed, attempted suicide, taken an overdose, is medically unwell, has a serious injury, has a plan or intent to end their life, cannot remain safely supervised, or presents another immediate danger, staff should treat the situation as an emergency and escalate immediately.

14. Responding to disclosures

When a student discloses a concern about their own mental health or that of another student, the member of staff should remain calm, non-judgmental, and reassuring.



Staff should focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the school's safeguarding policy and complete a Safeguarding referral form by clicking the icon. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the student's confidential child protection file.

Records should be factual, proportionate and contemporaneous. Staff should distinguish between the student's own words, observable facts and professional interpretation.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- Date the form being completed
- The full name of the student(s) involved
- Year and tutor group of student(s)
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Details of any witnesses/Linked students
- Any actions taken so far

15. Supporting and Collaborating with Parents and Carers

Rushey Mead Academy recognises the important role that parents and carers play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people. We are committed to working collaboratively with families to promote positive mental health, identify concerns at an early stage and ensure that students and their families receive appropriate support. We encourage parents and carers to share information about any mental health or wellbeing needs their child may be experiencing so that we can better understand their circumstances and provide appropriate support. Equally, where the Academy has concerns about a student's mental health or wellbeing, we will communicate these concerns with parents or carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity, in line with safeguarding and information-sharing procedures.

Where concerns are identified, we will work in partnership with parents and carers to understand the needs of the student and, where appropriate, the wider family circumstances that may be affecting their wellbeing. We will discuss practical strategies that can be used both at school and at home to promote positive mental health and will provide guidance on accessing appropriate local, national and online sources of support. This may include signposting to relevant mental health services, community organisations, parent forums and other sources of advice and information. Information about mental health and wellbeing, including the Academy's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and relevant sources of support, is also made available to parents and carers through the Academy website, newsletters and other appropriate communication channels.

We recognise that parents and carers may benefit from knowing what their child is learning about mental health and wellbeing. We therefore share information about relevant topics covered through the PSHE curriculum and, where appropriate, provide suggestions and resources to help parents and carers continue conversations and reinforce learning at home. This helps to create consistent messages around mental health, wellbeing and help-seeking between home and school.

When it is necessary to discuss significant concerns about a student's mental health or wellbeing, we will endeavour, wherever appropriate, to meet with parents or carers face to face. We recognise that these conversations can be difficult and emotional, and will approach them with sensitivity, compassion and respect. Parents and carers will be given appropriate time to reflect on the information shared, ask questions and consider the next steps, with clear lines of communication maintained following the meeting. A record of the concerns discussed, agreed actions and any support or review arrangements will be recorded appropriately and maintained as part of the student's confidential school record. Where appropriate, and in accordance with safeguarding procedures, an individual safety or support plan may be developed collaboratively with the student and their parents or carers to ensure that everyone understands the agreed strategies, sources of support and actions required.

Our aim is to ensure that parents and carers feel listened to, informed and supported, and that they are valued partners in promoting the mental health, wellbeing and wider success of their child.

The Academy will not automatically share information with a parent/carer where doing so could increase risk to the child or prejudice a safeguarding response. Decisions about information sharing will be made in line with safeguarding procedures and applicable information-sharing guidance.

16. Supporting peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who often try to support them. Friends generally want to offer support but do not know how without compromising their own well-being.

In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Students who are supporting their peers with mental health difficulties will know they can seek support from the Year Team.

Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents/carers with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

17. External agencies and information sharing

RMA recognises that effective mental health support often requires partnership with health, social care, education and voluntary-sector services.

- Share information lawfully, proportionately and with a clear purpose.
- Share relevant information where necessary to safeguard or promote a child's welfare.
- Use consent where appropriate, but do not allow uncertainty about consent to delay necessary safeguarding action.
- Record significant information-sharing decisions and the rationale for them.
- Use current local referral pathways and professional advice.
- Work collaboratively with external professionals involved with the student.

Information sharing will follow KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the applicable information-sharing statutory guidance and the Academy's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

19. Staff wellbeing and training

19.1 Staff training

Rushey Mead Academy recognises that staff are central to the promotion of positive mental health and the early identification of mental health and wellbeing concerns. We are committed to ensuring that staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise potential signs of poor mental health, respond appropriately and understand how and when to access further support. Mental health and wellbeing forms part of relevant staff training and professional development, with training needs identified through the Academy's ongoing review of student needs, staff feedback and changes in guidance or local provision.

All staff will receive appropriate information and training to ensure they understand their role in promoting positive mental health, recognising emerging concerns, responding sensitively and making appropriate referrals. This includes awareness of the Academy's mental health and wellbeing procedures, safeguarding responsibilities, confidentiality and information-sharing requirements, and the support available within the Academy and through external services.

Staff with specific pastoral, safeguarding or mental health responsibilities will receive additional training appropriate to their role. This may include training in early identification, supportive conversations, mental health first aid, responding to students experiencing significant distress, risk assessment, safety planning and accessing specialist services. Staff will also be made aware of the Academy's on-call procedures and the actions to take where a student requires immediate support.

19.2 Staff wellbeing

We recognise that staff wellbeing is an important part of creating a positive culture of mental health across the Academy. Staff will therefore be encouraged to access appropriate support for their own wellbeing and will be

made aware of sources of support available to them. Through ongoing training, communication and professional development, we aim to ensure that staff feel supported and confident in contributing to a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. As an Academy we:

- Promote a culture where staff wellbeing can be discussed without stigma.
- Provide access to the Academy's employee support arrangements, including VIVUP where applicable.
- Provide a staff wellbeing Padlet which has a 'Top Tips' and a 'Strategies' section for ideas to help staff manage emotional energy and support their wellbeing. The Padlet is updated throughout the term with new tips, strategies, and resources.
- Encourage staff to seek support when work involving distressed or at-risk students is affecting their own wellbeing.
- Use supervision, briefings and appropriate team support following significant incidents.

20. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Senior Mental Health Lead will coordinate the review of this policy with relevant senior leaders, safeguarding staff and the Academy Council. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Principal of the school.

Evaluation may include:

- Student voice and wellbeing surveys.
- Parent/carer feedback.
- Staff feedback and training records.
- Attendance and persistent absence information.
- Behaviour and safeguarding trends.
- Use and outcomes of targeted interventions.
- Referral and partnership information.
- Evidence of curriculum and whole-school provision.
- Equality and accessibility considerations.

The Academy will avoid treating raw referral numbers as a measure of success or failure in isolation. Evaluation will consider context, accessibility, timeliness, student voice and whether support is reaching students who need it.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local services, Academy provision or following a significant incident or learning review.

Appendix A – Key contacts

Role / service	Name / service	Contact
Principal	Vikcy Barwell	vbarwell@rushey-tmet.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Andrew Curran	ACurran1@rushey-tmet.uk
Deputy DSL	Multiple	safe@rushey-tmet.uk
Senior Mental Health Lead	Helen Mugglestone	hmugglestone@rushey-tmet.uk
School Therapist	Gill Taylor	GTaylor@rushey-tmet.uk
SENDCo	Shireen Takolia	STakolia@rushey-tmet.uk
Family Support / Pastoral	Maria Jones / Hina Parmer	MJones@rushey-tmet.uk / HParmar@rushey-tmet.uk
Mental Health Support Team	Local service	llr.mhst@nhs.net
CAMHS Crisis and Home Treatment Team	Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland	0116 295 0485 (current published number)
NHS urgent mental health support	NHS 111	111 – choose the mental health option
Emergency	999 / A&E	Immediate threat to life or serious emergency

Appendix B – Support and signposting

The following services are included as signposts. The Academy will check current availability and local eligibility before publication and referral.

Service	Purpose / current note
NHS 111 – mental health option	24/7 urgent mental health support in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
CAMHS Crisis and Home Treatment Team	Urgent specialist support for children and young people experiencing significant mental health difficulties.
Childline	Confidential support and advice for children and young people – 0800 1111.
YoungMinds	Mental health information and support for young people, parents and professionals.
PAPYRUS HOPELINE247	Suicide prevention support for young people and those concerned about a young person.
Samaritans	Emotional support 24 hours a day – 116 123.
Shout	24/7 crisis text support – text SHOUT to 85258.

Tellmi

Digital mental health support for young people; check current local availability.

Appendix C – Staff quick reference

If a student tells you something concerning

Listen. Stay calm. Do not promise secrecy. Explain that you may need to share information to keep them safe. Report through the safeguarding process promptly. Record factual information.

If you are concerned but there is no immediate crisis

- Speak to the appropriate pastoral lead / DSL as required.
- Record the concern through the Academy's agreed system.
- Consider attendance, behaviour, SEND, safeguarding and wider context.
- Use the graduated support model and seek advice from the Senior Mental Health Lead or relevant pastoral colleague.

If there may be immediate danger

- Do not leave the student unsupported or alone where this would increase risk.
- Alert the DSL / senior member of staff immediately.
- Follow the Academy's acute crisis flowchart.
- Use NHS 111 mental health option for urgent mental health support where appropriate.
- Call 999 / access emergency care where there is an immediate threat to life or serious emergency.
- Record the concern, actions and decisions in line with safeguarding procedures.

Remember

You do not need to diagnose a mental health condition. Your role is to notice, listen, respond, safeguard, record and help the student access the right support.

Current statutory and national guidance – 2026/27

Guidance	Relevance
Keeping children safe in education 2026	Department for Education – statutory safeguarding guidance.
Working together to safeguard children 2026	Department for Education – statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance.
Information sharing to safeguard children and young people	Department for Education – statutory information-sharing guidance applicable from September 2026.
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education	Department for Education – revised statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026.
Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges	Department for Education / OHID – whole-school approach and MHST information.

The Academy should check the current GOV.UK and local NHS / safeguarding webpages before relying on contact details or service arrangements, as local pathways can change during the life of the policy.

Approval

Principal

Victoria Barwell

Signature



Date

07/10/26

Academy Council / Chair
