



Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy at Rygaards International School 2023-2024

At Rygaards International School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every student, member of staff and stakeholder. We promote positive wellbeing through the school's values, beliefs, policies and actions which are embedded within the school, the wider community and curriculum. This strategy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

Vision:

At Rygaards International School we promote, develop, equip and prepare healthy learners for life. We are committed, through our policies, to make it our mission to promote resilience, positive wellbeing and mental health for all our students and staff. We understand wellbeing to be a state of being confident, fulfilled and healthy. We aim to drive this message forward, and to ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing is the responsibility of the whole school community. We strive to create a safe and secure environment, which provides excellent mental health support, appropriate intervention and shows understanding. We aspire to put wellbeing at the heart of our school in our quest for successful learning.

The strategy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents

Lead members of staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff with a specific, relevant role include:

- Shirley Jacobsen (Head of Primary) and Brad Baudach (Head of Secondary) who are the respective first points of contact for any Safeguarding issues.
- Kirsten Gottschalck, School Health Nurse
- Karen Böttger, SENCO and student wellbeing coordinator



Teaching about Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included in the school's Social and Emotional Learning Programme. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort and current risk factors.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, what support is available within our school and local community and who it is aimed at. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as student notice boards and toilets and we will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Digital platforms are also used as a mechanism to share key information (Intra).

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Shirley, Brad, Kirsten or Karen.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g., long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Responding to Risks

At Rygaards School, we tailor our intervention to the vulnerabilities of students and associated risks on a yearly basis. An audit is carried out yearly with support implemented as appropriate.

Intervention and support are offered in a variety of means which includes, 1-1 meetings, large presentations, referrals, assemblies, class time and lessons. See Appendix for current risks identified and interventions/mitigations in place.