

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's first aid policy, safeguarding policy, SEND policy and Whistleblowing policy.

The World Health Organization in 2014 defined good Mental Health as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community". Whilst mental ill health has been described as 'A disturbance of function in one area of relationships, mood, behaviour or development of sufficient severity to require professional intervention' (Dept of Health 1995).

At the Young Dancers Academy we understand the pressures of the world of dance on young students. Dancers by their very nature are perfectionists. They spend hours in the dance studio going over steps until they are correct. To look a particular way can also put pressure on young dancers and staff must be aware of the signs and how to act if they have a concern.

Identification of Mental Health Difficulties

It can be very difficult to recognize a student with mental health difficulties. However, staff should be alerted to changes in a student's behaviour, presentation and engagement and should raise any concerns on the school's MyConcern and then to the DSL. Any immediate concerns such as a student of risk of harm to themselves or others must be raised immediately to the DSL or in their absence to the school's directors.

Intervention

It is in the best interests of the student to offer support for mental health problems when they arise as the longer a student struggles the more complex the problem becomes. Supporting a distressed student can take up a lot of time and be challenging so please follow the guidance below:

- Think cautiously about how you can/are unable to help
- Do you have the time and expertise to help them
- Is there a conflict with other role you may have?

- Clarify your role/limits to the student
- Be ready to take a definite line about the degree of your involvement

If you are concerned about a student:

- Be proactive, don't evade the problem
- Collect more information from faculty/staff members to determine if your concern is shared do this by first placing concerns on the school's MyConcern
- Tell the student that you may not be able to maintain confidentiality, explaining you will converse with them if information needed to be shared and who with.
- If there are safeguarding concerns then staff should refer to the school's safeguarding policy for guidance.

Concerns to look out for:

- Changes in activity or mood
- Conduct Disorder (aggression, destroying/losing property, theft, running away etc.)
- Lowering of academic or dance standard
- Deliberate Self Harm
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (obsessions, compulsions, personality characteristics verging on panic)
- Anxiety Disorders (including panic attacks)
- Expressing feelings of failure
- Substance Abuse
- Depression
- Suicidal Thoughts (not a disorder but thoughts based and equally as serious)

MyConcern reporting

- State the main conversation areas
- Say what you are going to do next (ie I will now raise this concern with the school's DSL)
- Type in all forward steps
- Report what level of concern it is

If any member of staff feel that the student is in immediate danger of harm then they should contact either the DSL or School Directors immediately!

Staff wellbeing and mental health support

In June 2021 the Department for Education published 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources for Teachers and Teaching Staff'. Their statement said:

'This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help teachers and teaching staff in schools, colleges and FE providers with sources of mental health and wellbeing support to assist them to get the help and support they may need in response to any feelings they are experiencing as a result of COVID-19'.

At YDA we have three members of staff who are trained in mental health first aid and all staff are offered CPD in this area. Weekly safeguarding meetings are held; however, any concerns should be placed by all staff on the school's MyConcern and a meeting will be held in the time frame suitable to the disclosure.

The Department of Education state:

'Teachers and teaching staff should also prioritise looking after your own wellbeing and mental health. Every Mind Matters campaign self-care tool offers free online action plan, approved by the NHS, that offers simple steps you can take to care for your own mental health. The tool can help to deal with stress and anxiety, boost mood, improve sleep quality and take control of your wellbeing'

Like all teachers across the UK our staff have worked relentlessly to make sure our students wellbeing both mentally and physically has been looked after during the Covid pandemic. The directors and trustees place equal importance to looking after our staff as we do our students and as such any staff member who is needing extra support must speak to a member of the SMT so they can find the best way to support them.

Guidance on how to support students can be found on the DfE gov site published 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources for Teachers and Teaching Staff – June 2021'

Support details for students

- 1) ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people.
0800 1111
- 2) Samaritans are an organisation you can ring at any time of the day or night.
116 123
- 3) BEAT's Youthline offers support to children and young people with an eating disorder.
0808 801 0711

Policy written by	Kerry Williams – Executive Director
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