



Oporto British School

To Strive for Success and to Serve *Est. 1894*

Mental health and Wellness Policy

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At Oporto British School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community: pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing are in our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement in significant ways.

The aim for creating the Wellness Policy at the OBS was to ensure a holistic approach in achieving a sustainable, long term healthy plan which aims to develop and support the emotional, mental and physical welfare of all our stakeholders.

The wellness programme was instigated to ensure all learners in the school environment are encouraged to maximise their potential **academically, emotionally** and **physically**. The OBS wellness policy was formulated in direct response to recent studies which have identified a steady decline of children's emotional wellbeing in developed nations.

We all understand that all children go through emotional ups and downs through their school career/life and some children will experience major life events. On the whole, approximately 1 in 10 children aged between 5 to 16 have diagnosable mental health needs and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases, children's mental situation can be life-limiting.

"In order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". The Department for Education (DfE) UK

Our role at the Oporto British School is to ensure that our children are able to manage times of change which may be both physical and mental changes which if managed properly can develop resilience. The children are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it most.

OBS feels that we have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health and be aware of the factors that affect their mental health. Another important consideration is how the school can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where the children can safely go if they need help and support.

Our aim at the Oporto British School is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health issues and be a family orientated school where:

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe

- Pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems, without feeling any stigma or judgement
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated ([see anti-bullying policy](#))

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse and support pupils
- Key information about some common mental health problems
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

"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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all our pupils to:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and sustain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

In developing this policy we have taken account of

- Children and Young People's Mental Health: State of the Nation 2016
- Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Public Health England 2015
- Preparing to Teach About Mental Health, PSHE Association 2015
- Mental Health in Portugal, 2016

4. Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, First Aid, PSHE and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability policy). It also links to our SEN Information Reporting system.

Links with the behaviour policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

5. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

OBS takes a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses 4 aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health as an issue.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

The main traits/aspects the Oporto British School Wellness programme fosters are:

- **Emotional** – Stable; Aware; Conscious; Present; Attentive; Happy.
- **Spiritual** – Awareness of inner dimensions; Psychic; Gut feelings; Emotional intelligence; Gratitude; Respect for others.
- **Physical** - Healthy; Strong; Disciplined; Nutritionally conscious.
- **Mentality** – Sensitive; Compassionate; Confident; Globally-minded; Cultured; Caring, and Collaborative.
- **Intellectual** - Insatiable lifelong learners; Open-minded; Ambitious; Pursuit of academic excellence.

The wellness programme therefore offers physical and meditational activities which encompass all of Primary and Secondary year groups.

6. Staff- their roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We at Oporto British School, believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support includes:

- Heads of Key Stage
- Heads of learning development
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- Counsellor (psychologist)

7. Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' Individual Care Plan. **See appendix 3**

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the school counsellor following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs, except in the case of a safeguarding issue (see Safeguarding Policy).

Specialist Service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service see appendix 3	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
School Counsellor	Accessed through the recommendation by the teacher concerned then to the School Psychologist
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the recommendation by the teacher concerned then to the School Psychologist

SEND and mental health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning, than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN)

8. Involving parents and carers

Promoting mental health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

On first entry to the school, our parents' meeting is being built up to include a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family (see appendix 1). It is very

helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child.

- We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHE curriculum, on the Staff shared drives which are accessible to all staff.

When a concern has been raised the OBS will

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them

In most cases parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as for child protection issues. Children over the age of 16 are entitled to consent to their own treatment.

- Offer information to take away and inform of places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls
- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree an individual mental health care plan together with next steps
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child in both Primary and Secondary is at risk of danger and pupils may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give pupils the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or go along with them.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concerns are pupils, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

9. Identifying, referring and supporting pupils with mental health needs

Our approach is to:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

All staff at the Oporto British School are encouraged to look out for these signs or risk factors that may be identified which might include the following:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

- Secretive behaviour
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Drugs or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

OBS is aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the school's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by pupils and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the psychologist and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. **See child safeguarding policy**

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed the summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Pupils are informed that the school counsellor is always available.

We at the OBS have a duty of care to support pupils and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support pupils.

10. Involving pupils

Oporto British School has an active working committee that is made up of staff and pupils who come together to meet fortnightly on any issues that need addressing. The school's objective is collaboration and to seek the pupil's views about the school's approach, to the curriculum and how the school promotes whole school mental health activities.

Oporto British School always seeks feedback from pupils who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

March 2018

Review: March 2021

Appendix 1

Supporting Pupils Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – buddying system (where seniors have allocated time to spend looking after the needs of junior pupils).

Transition programmes

- Transition Programme to Secondary Schools which includes all form 6 pupils having a staff mentor to support a smooth transition to Secondary School
- Transition programme from Key Stage 3 to 4
- Transition programme from Key Stage 4 and beyond to 5 and 5 to university and into the world of work.

Class activities

- Praise boxes
- Worry boxes
- Mindfulness sessions for pupils
- Mental health teaching programmes e.g. based on cognitive behavioural therapy

Whole school

- Wellbeing /Anti-bullying week
- Our form tutors are key to supporting the wellbeing of students, particularly in form 6. The pupils stay with the same form group all the way up the school, which provides a consistent support for them.
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support, both within the school and outside the school

Small group activities

- Nurture groups – Students support staff and teachers with a consultation group to discuss/bridge any issues that need addressing. These meetings are conducted fortnightly.

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Primary pupils learn

Key Stage 1

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings
- Simple strategies for managing feelings
- How their behaviour affects other people
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings

- To cooperate and problem solve
- To motivate themselves and persevere
- How to calm down
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends)
- Who to go to if they are worried
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help

Key Stage 2

- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media)
- Positive and healthy coping strategies
- About good and not so good feelings
- To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them
- About resilience
- How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something
- How to empathise and be supportive of others
- About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), how to respond and ask for help
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help

Secondary pupils learn

Key Stage 3

- To manage transition to secondary school
- To recognise their personal strengths and how this affects their self-confidence and self-esteem
- To recognise that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated by others, affects confidence and self-esteem
- To accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism
- To understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- What mental health is and types of mental health problems
- Strategies for promoting and managing mental health positively
- Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies
- To be resilient and manage failure positively
- How to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- About the emotional aspects of relationships

- To recognise bullying and abuse in all its forms (including prejudice-based bullying both in person and online/via text, exploitation and trafficking) and to have the skills and strategies to manage being targeted or witnessing others being targeted
- To reduce and prevent the stigma of mental health

Key Stage 4

- To manage transition to KS4
- Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies
- Strategies for promoting positive mental health and preventing mental health problems
- The cause and symptoms of stress and managing stress, anxiety and depression
- Strategies for managing strong emotions and feelings
- Evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgments of others
- The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on individuals and families
- Where to get help and support

Appendix 2

Supporting and Training Staff

Oporto British school want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 3).

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and, where possible, access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing, such as **yoga, mindfulness**, and **physical activities** which are funded by the school. Oporto British School also makes certain that the staff have annual scheduled activities that promote socialization with each other and wellness. For example, the school hosts annual welcomes through new staff events, staff dinners, after school drinks etc. This helps staff feel that they are part of a family which is part of the ethos of the school.

The school will be focusing on the sending of a number of key staff on Mental Health First Aid Courses in 2018-19 as we become increasingly aware and concerned about this area of pastoral care.

Appendix 3
Protective and Risk factors identified

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<p>health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
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Appendix 2 Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

For information see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for

- Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Misuse
- Self Harm

Appendix 3 Where to get information and support

The Child Protection Officer will inform the Comissão de Protecção da Criança e Jovens (**Commission for the Protection of children and young people**) Porto Ocidental, Conjunto Habitacional das Fontainhas - Rua dos Mangericos, Edifício K - nº 45, 4000-008 Porto, Telephone number (9.30am – 5.00 pm) 226198080 Fax number 226 198 081

Portugal mental health legislation charter;

<http://www.qddc.pt/legislacao-lingua-estrangeira/english/lei-da-saude-mental.html>