

## **MENTAL HEALTH POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

At LanguageUK, we are committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of our students and staff. Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard. At our school, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our school, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

### **POLICY SCOPE**

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, homestay providers and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies.

### **AIM OF THE POLICY**

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and students.

At LanguageUK we will always:

- Help our students to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Encourage our students to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.

We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student who needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

## KEY STAFF MEMBERS

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process.

These are:

**Designated Specialist/Advanced Safeguarding Officers:** Ece Inan (DSL), Kasia Malkowska (DoS) and Chris Hopson (ADoS)

**MHFA (Mental Health First Aiders:** Ece Inan (DSL) and Stuart Duvall (Activity Coordinator)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and well-being of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to: Verity Sessions

If a child presents a medical emergency, then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

## SUPPORT AT LANGUAGEUK AND IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

We have a range of support available in school for any students struggling, as listed below:

### Kent Together

A **24-hour helpline** has been set up to support vulnerable people in Kent who need urgent help, supplies or medication: **phone line 03000 41 92 92** or [www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether](http://www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether)

### Need help in a mental health crisis or emergency during COVID-19?

- Call the **24-hour helpline** on **0300 222 0123** if you need urgent mental health support, advice, and guidance
- Call **0800 107 0160** to release the pressure if you are feeling stressed
- Text "Kent" to **85258** for **24-hour** mental health crisis support via text from trained volunteers
- **Under 18s:** call the **24-hour** Single Point of Access on **0300 123 4496** (select option one, then option three)

## SHOUT

Shout is the UK's first **24/7 text service, free** on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It is a place to go if you are struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

Shout is a national charity powered by a team of volunteers, who are at the heart of the service. They take people from crisis to calm every single day.

This service is for all age groups.

Support is now available simply by texting the word "**Kent**" or the word "**Medway**" to **85258**.

- ☒ 24/7 text service
- ☒ Support to take you from a hot moment to feeling calmer
- ☒ A safe space where you are listened to by a trained Crisis Volunteer
- ☒ Our service is based on a tried and tested model of crisis support

- SHOUT Clinical Supervisors work alongside our Volunteers and monitor conversations 24/7
- An anonymous, free conversation that will not show on your phone bill
- Professional support creating a simple plan of action to manage your crisis

You can read more about the service on

<https://www.giveusashout.org/>

We also provide an open-door policy within the school if any student would like to come and chat with our key members of staff.

## **SIGNPOSTING**

We will ensure that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the support that is available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

## **IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS**

All our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students who need it when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Specialist Safeguarding Lead as appropriate. Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g., a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g., disruption. Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:
- Attendance and absenteeism.
- Punctuality and lateness.
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems.

## MANAGING DISCLOSURES

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental manner. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it is necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

If a member of staff thinks it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the student. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it is necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

## STAFF

Should any staff member feel the need to discuss personal mental health issues with a trained **MHFA team member (Ece Inan-Stuart Duvall)**, then we will make sure there is the time and space available for them where the appropriate support and advice will be given. Whatever is shared will be held in confidentiality. The exception to this is if there is thought to be a risk to the staff member or someone else. If it is necessary to contact a third party (e.g., GP or mental health team,) this will be discussed first with the staff member if possible/appropriate.

## TRAINING

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files.

Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up-to-date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.

**Written October 2018, Reviewed November 2019, Reviewed October 2020**

**Reviewed November 2021, Reviewed November 2022**

**REVISED November 2023- By Ece Inan**



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