NEWTON INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

SMASH

STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING POLICY

POLICY REVIEWED
July 2026

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED
July 2027

STUDENT SUPPORT, MENTAL HEALTH

& WELLBEING POLICY

Updated June 2026
Updated by
Review July 2027

Introduction

The School is deeply committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students, a responsibility shared by every member of staff. This includes providing student support services that address well-being, including social-emotional and pastoral care. Supporting students' social and emotional well-being at school plays a vital foundation for both academic success and long-term positive outcomes in their personal and social lives. Social and emotional well-being is shaped by a variety of factors that must be carefully considered, including students' emotional regulation, resilience, relationships, and overall mental health.

Aims of a Student Support Policy

This policy outlines the school's commitment to supporting the diverse needs of all students through a coordinated and comprehensive approach to student support.
The aims are to:

- Promote Well-being
- Create Safe, Inclusive Environments
- Provide Early Identification and Support
- Support Positive Mental Health
- Enhance Student Engagement and Learning
- Foster Collaborative Family Partnerships
- Ensure Access to Support Services
- Empower Student Voice and Agency
- Promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Monitor and Evaluate Support Provision

The Importance of Promoting and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing not only enhances students' quality of life but also contributes to improved educational outcomes. It supports pupils to fully engage with school life, develop essential life skills, and achieve their potential, laying the foundation for success in adulthood.

Positive mental health and wellbeing enable students to:

- Maintain regular attendance
- Build social and emotional skills
- Engage meaningfully in learning
- Achieve academic success
- Improve long-term outcomes, including future employment

What Are Mental Health Supports?

Mental health supports in the school include a range of services that help students with their emotional, social, and mental well-being. These include access to pastoral support, school counsellor, nurses, and helping connect students with external support agencies.

The Impact of Student Mental Health Support

Having access to high-quality, culturally responsive mental health support in schools is essential for students' long-term well-being and success. As schools are often the first place where mental health needs are noticed, it's vital that we play an active role in addressing these disparities and ensuring every student has access to the help they need.
Practices that support student wellbeing

1. Promoting a Sense of Belonging

Creating a strong sense of belonging is essential for student well-being and academic success. Learning environments that adopt strengths-based, inclusive practices help ensure that all students feel valued, respected, and supported by both staff and peers. When students experience this sense of connection, they are more likely to engage with the school community, feel confident in their abilities, and develop intrinsic motivation to learn, explore their interests, and thrive.

2. Creating a Safe and Predictable Environment

Providing clear structure, consistent routines, and access to safe, calming spaces helps foster a sense of security, which is foundational for learning and emotional regulation.

3. Promoting Family–School Partnerships

Positive family–school partnerships support student well-being, self-esteem, school belonging, and academic success. Strong connections between home and school help provide consistent support and identify needs early.

4. Developing Secure, Respectful, and Reciprocal Relationships

Strong, respectful relationships help students feel safe, supported, and engaged. These connections are linked to better learning, prosocial behaviour, and lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

5. Teaching Social–Emotional Skills

Teachers play a key role in helping students develop social and emotional skills that support well-being, resilience, and positive relationships.

6. Digital Wellbeing

The school recognises the impact of technology, social media, gaming, artificial intelligence, cyberbullying, and online interactions on student wellbeing.

Students will be supported to:

- Develop healthy screen habits.
- Recognise online risks.
- Manage social media pressures.
- Seek support for online concerns.
- Report cyberbullying and harmful online content.

Concerns relating to online behaviour should be managed in accordance with the Online Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school plays a crucial role in supporting student wellbeing by fostering a resilient and mentally healthy environment. We take a proactive, whole-school approach to pastoral care, including:

- A dedicated team that promotes a sense of belonging
- A clear pastoral structure, including form tutors, Nurse, School Counsellor and a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Open, stigma-free communication about mental health
- Strong communication with parents/guardians
- Staff training on mental health awareness with external agencies
- Recognition of both academic and non-academic achievements
- Theme Weeks to raise awareness on mental health and wellbeing
- Opportunities for student voice through the School Council and leadership roles
- A robust anti-bullying and E-safety policy to ensure student safety
- School Counsellor making themselves visible throughout the whole school

- School Counsellor Newsletter to share information related to wellbeing
- Worry Poster developed for staff and students to reach out privately to a trusted member of the Safeguard Team. They scan the QR code and it brings them to an online form that they submit and the person they wish to speak to will then receive a notification through email and reach out to the student.
- Assemblies to raise awareness about mental health, exam stress and wellbeing
- Wellbeing display boards throughout the school to raise awareness and promote good mental wellbeing within the school.
- A safeguarding commitment from all staff

Identifying Mental Health Concerns

Signs of deteriorating mental health may include:

- Noticeable behaviour changes (withdrawn or disruptive)
- Drop in academic performance
- Poor attendance
- Avoiding others or staff
- Direct disclosures

Self-Harm

Any disclosure or indication of self-harm must be treated as a safeguarding concern.
Staff must:

- Remain calm and listen carefully.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Record concerns on the school's safeguarding system.
- Ensure the student is not left unsupervised if there is immediate risk.
- Work with parents and external professionals as appropriate.

Reactive Support

Despite preventive efforts, some students may develop mental health conditions. Support may be triggered by observations, parent updates, or external referrals. Key responses include:

- Staff must inform pastoral staff (or DSL in safeguarding cases); they should not manage concerns alone
- Regular meetings between the student, parents, and support staff help monitor and adjust care
- Ongoing pastoral support is provided through listening, identifying triggers, and liaising with teachers
- Students may also be referred to the School Counsellor for further support

Signposting Support
We are committed to making sure that staff, students, and parents are informed about support services available outside of school within the local community. Key sources of support will be clearly displayed in communal areas such as reception.

Roles and Responsibilities in Supporting Student Mental Health

Teaching Staff / Form Tutors/ Heads of Year & Team Leaders

- Monitor students closely for changes in behaviour, attendance, or appearance
- Provide a listening ear if approached by a student, but follow the Safeguarding Policy and never promise confidentiality
- Respond calmly and non-judgmentally; avoid dismissing a student's concerns
- Share any concerns promptly with the pastoral team or DSL
- Incorporate character education into form time routines
- Collaborate with the school counsellor and pastoral team on students with emerging mental health concerns
- Recognise the connection between behavioural challenges and mental health
- Maintain active communication with parents to ensure holistic support

School Nurse
Collaborate with the DSL if they have any safeguarding concerns

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Work closely with the school counsellor in relation to safeguarding concerns
- Coordinate with external agencies and parents as needed
- Lead school-wide initiatives such as theme weeks focused on wellbeing and mental health

The School Counsellor
Counselling is a mental health intervention that students can voluntarily enter into if they want to explore, understand and overcome issues in their lives which may be causing them difficulty, distress and/or confusion.

Responding to Mental Health Issues

All staff at the school have a role to play in pastoral care: pupils should feel that there is a range of staff they could talk to at any time if they have issues or concerns.
Support in school that pupils can access:

• Safeguarding Team, Tutors, Class Teachers, Heads of Year, the School Nurse, School Counsellor,

and the Pastoral Leads have formal responsibility for the pupils in their care and can provide advice and support

- Counselling is available to pupils of all ages. Further details on the school's counselling arrangements are available upon request.
- Mental health concerns may become safeguarding concerns where a child is at risk of significant harm, self-harm, suicidal ideation, neglect, exploitation, abuse, or presents a risk to themselves or others.
- In such cases, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and immediately report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Managing Disclosures and Confidentiality

A student may choose to share concerns about their own wellbeing or that of a friend with any member of staff. Therefore, it is essential that all staff understand how to respond appropriately to such disclosures. It's also important to be transparent with students about confidentiality. Refer to the safeguarding policy.

Warning Signs
Staff should remain vigilant for signs that a student may be experiencing mental health or emotional well-being difficulties. These indicators must always be taken seriously. Any concerns should be reported promptly to the relevant Head of Year, Head of Key Stage or DSL.

Possible warning signs may include:

- Unexplained or frequent physical injuries that may appear intentional
- Increased social withdrawal or isolation from family and friends
- Sudden changes in mood, behaviour, or activity levels
- A decline in academic performance
- Comments or jokes about self-harm or suicide
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or failure
- Avoiding PE, wearing concealing clothing or changing clothes in private
- Unexplained lateness or frequent absences
- Frequent physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches) without a clear medical cause

Responding to Concerns:

- Any staff member with concerns about a student's mental health or well-being should contact the relevant Head of Year or Head of Key Stage as the first point of referral.
- If there is an immediate risk of harm to the student or others, staff must follow the school's child protection procedures without delay, including logging the safeguard concern with the DSL and/or a referral to the School Counsellor.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents and carers play a key role in supporting their child's mental health and wellbeing. We aim to keep families informed and involved. Refer to safeguarding policy.

External Support Agencies

Our school has established strong connections with a range of external support agencies that offer services related to student wellbeing. We have collaborated with several of these organisations to deliver staff training and facilitate student workshops, ensuring our community benefits from expert guidance and additional resources. These partnerships enhance the support we can offer and help promote a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

These agencies are:

1. Flourishing Minds Clinic
2. Mind Institute
3. Aman Center
4. CAMHS – Sidra
5. CAMHS – Hamad
6. Behavioural Healthcare Center
7. Family Counselling center (Wifaq)
8. Naufer Center

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

The effectiveness of this policy and the school's support strategies will be continuously evaluated through monitoring of pastoral cases and referrals to the School Counsellor, and in collaboration with pupils via the School Council.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND/Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Staff Code of Conduct

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- UK Equality Act 2010
- CIS Code of Ethics
- MOEHE Student Care and Protection Policy
- Qatar National Mental Health Strategy