The Learning Group (NWSLC & MAT) Mental Wellbeing Strategy

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Purpose and introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the direction for shaping and developing our strategy to improve the mental wellbeing of staff and students and pupils throughout the Learning Group.

Introduction

We recognise that mental wellbeing is a fundamental component of good health. Mental illness is hugely costly to the individual and to society, and lack of mental wellbeing underpins many physical diseases, unhealthy lifestyles and social inequalities in health. Good mental health is about resilience, adapting to challenges and getting the most out of life and having a sense of positive self –worth, something which is important for all of our community. This is particularly pertinent in several areas within our 'footprint' where aspiration and self-esteem is culturally low.

The Learning Group is committed to taking a whole organisation approach to improving the mental wellbeing of all of our students and staff. The organisation's strategic plan stresses the commitment of the organisation to embed an aspirational learning culture which promotes and celebrates diversity and inclusion. The Mental Wellbeing Strategy supports the Strategic plan's commitment to enhance student attainment and progress and the objectives which seek to improve outcomes and attendance. It supports our commitment to staff to be a responsive and caring employer.

Vision

'All pupils, students and staff will recognise the Group's commitment to facilitating and improving mental wellbeing and will be able to fulfil their potential by being able to access appropriate support services and being given the opportunity to build resilience through a range of social, cultural and sporting activities".

By working towards this vision the Group will be recognised as a beacon of best practice, contributing to the setting of standards and delivering excellence for others to follow.

**The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a framework to achieve the following:**

- That all staff and students understand our commitment to improving mental wellbeing.
- To embed a concern for mental wellbeing throughout the organisation
- To celebrate our achievements in relation to mental health and wellbeing
- Support a culture in which mental health problems are recognised, not stigmatised
- To collect and report on appropriate data relating to staff and student wellbeing, and identify actions required to further promote mental wellbeing
- To promote and recognise the importance of positive mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyle choices
- Develop effective partnerships with specialist local, regional and national organisations to further develop the range of available services, facilities and activities, increase their take-up and reduce mental health inequalities
- To meet Ofsted expectations in respect of outcomes for students.

Rationale and Methodology

- This strategy seeks to improve the mental wellbeing of students and staff which in turn will improve outcomes. The strategy has been developed through field research, staff and student focus groups and consultation with external agencies

A whole organisation approach to developing mental wellbeing

A whole organisation approach is important to ensure that the strategy delivers a long lasting and effective approach to improving mental wellbeing. Leadership and Management are key to role modelling and promoting the importance of the strategy. The success of the strategy relies upon the alignment of key aspects detailed below.
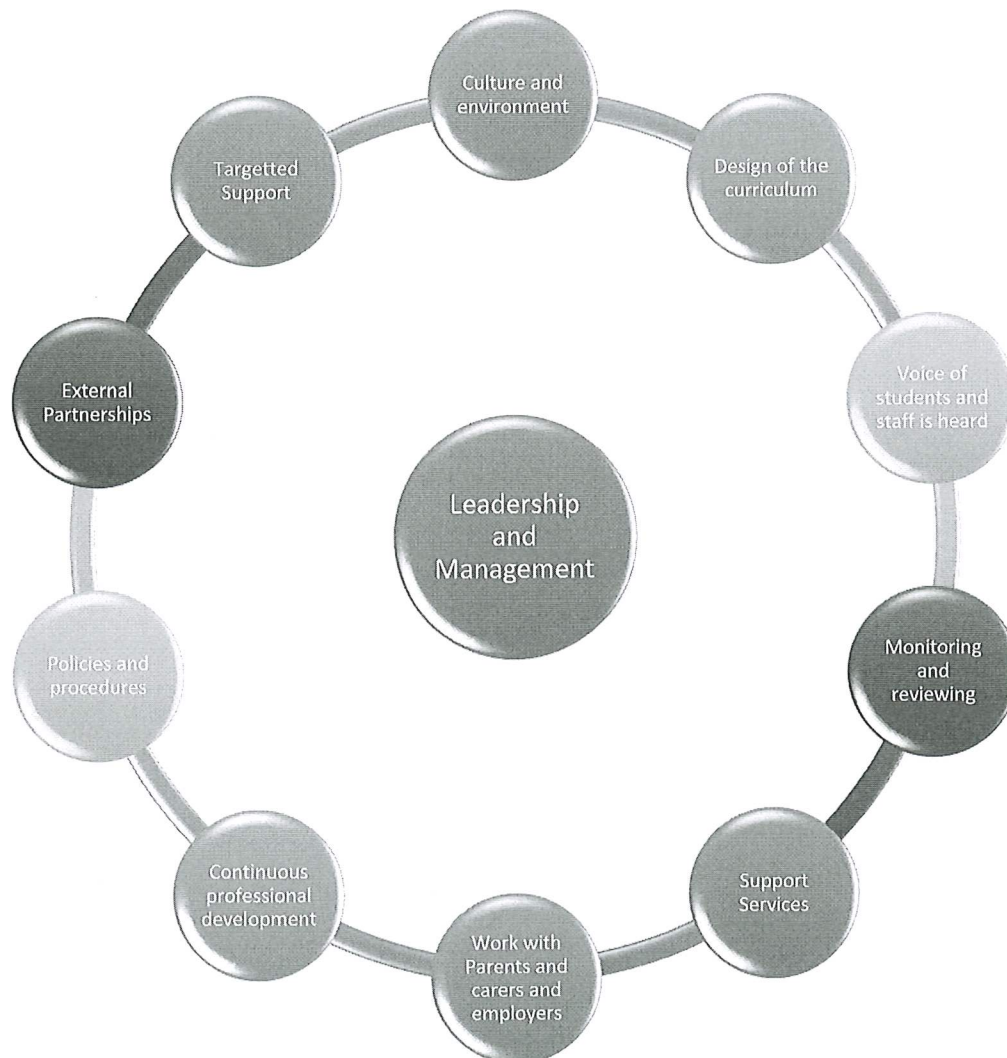
Fundamental Principles

- A committed leadership team, managers and governors who establish a culture within the organisation where staff and students are valued, develop a sense of belonging and where problems can be spoken about in a non- stigmatising way.

- An ethos which sets high expectations with consistently applied support. This includes policies on behaviour and bullying that set out the responsibilities of everyone in the organisation and the range of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. These will be available and understood by all, and consistently applied.

- A support team who ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including students whose persistent mental health difficulties mean they need special educational provision. Specifically, the Learning Support team will ensure colleagues understand how the College identifies and meets students' needs, provide advice and support to colleagues as needed and liaise with external SEND professionals as necessary.

- Work with parents, carers and employers as well as with the students themselves, ensuring their opinions and wishes are taken into account and that they are kept fully informed so they can participate in decisions taken about them.

- Continuous professional development for staff that makes it clear that promoting good mental health is the responsibility of all members of staff within the Learning Group staff community, informs them about the early signs of mental health problems, what is or is not a cause for concern, and what to do if they think they have spotted a developing problem.

- Clear systems and processes to help staff who identify students and colleagues with possible mental health problems; providing routes to escalate issues with clear referral and accountability systems.

- The Group will work closely with other professionals to create a range of support services that can be put in place depending on the identified needs (both within and beyond the Group).

- Working with others to provide interventions for students with mental health problems that use a graduated approach to inform a clear cycle of support: an assessment to establish a clear analysis of the pupil's needs; a plan to set out how the pupil will be supported; action to provide that support; and regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and lead to changes where necessary.

- A healthy organisational approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of all students, with priorities identified and a clear process of 'planning, doing and reviewing' to achieve the desired outcomes.

Key Objectives

The organisation has established overall key priorities which will allow for each specific group of stakeholders within the group to establish specific action plans and measure their contribution and impact towards the achievement of these objectives:

1. *Ensure that all staff and students have a general level of awareness with regards to mental wellbeing and our approach*

2. *Create an environment where we can identify all students and staff who are experiencing mental health difficulties or are at risk of experiencing them*

3. *Establish an appropriate range of services and provision available to all which enables the development of self-esteem and resilience and to provide appropriate support where there may be a concern*

4. *Ensure that where a significant mental health issue is identified effective strategies are put in place.*

We will seek to achieve these objectives through a range of actions detailed in Strategy Delivery.

Measuring the Impact of the Strategy

The impact of the Mental Wellbeing Strategy will be monitored and measured in terms of process and outcomes.

Process measures demonstrate whether or not we are advancing our practice in this area. When evaluating outcomes we will take in to account:

1) Is awareness having an impact?
2) Participation and involvement – how many staff/ students are taking up opportunities provided?
3) Are student achievement gaps reducing?
4) Are staff and students more satisfied?
5) Are the number of withdrawals due to mental health concerns reducing?
6) Are staff/ students reporting a greater sense of wellbeing?

The strategy will be formally reviewed by the Safeguarding Task Force at their termly meetings and by the Executive through an agreed reporting procedure and to Governors via the termly Safeguarding report.

Outcomes

When evaluating outcomes, the organisation will consider the achievement of, or progress towards, outcomes that demonstrate:

1) That all staff and students recognise the Group's commitment to improving the mental health of all young people who study at the college
2) The integration of mental health and wellbeing throughout the organisation
3) The narrowing of achievement gaps for those identified with a mental health concern
4) Ability to monitor in-year progress of students with identified mental health issues
5) Evidence amongst students and staff of improved wellbeing through higher attendance rates, greater staff and student satisfaction rates, and reduced number of withdrawals due to mental health concerns
6) That Ofsted expectations have been met in respect of outcomes for students.

Outcome measures are measures of the impact of the Mental Wellbeing strategy

Hard measures will include response times to referrals, student satisfaction rates, numbers of students involved in different courses, improvement in student retention, reduction in student achievement gaps, increases in wellbeing over time, annual difference travelled survey, referrals and take up of internal services, referrals to external agencies.

Softer measures will include anecdotal case studies and feedback from peer mentors, students and staff.

The impact of this Strategy will be addressed as part of that process and action taken to address any areas of shortfall.

Strategy Delivery

Across the Learning Group our commitment to students is that we will:

- Access relevant information from previous schooling if relevant
- Utilise data to identify any changes in students behaviour or patterns of attendance can be noticed and acted upon
- Develop an effective and well understood referral process
- Work particularly with vulnerable young people and parents and other professionals. These include, but are not limited to, looked after children, children with Special Educational Needs, children on the autism spectrum, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, teen parents and those who have been previous victims of abuse.
- Establish a Peer Mentoring Scheme where students support other students
- Enable talking therapies such as counselling to be accessed through a service which is available to all students
- Develop a range of activities and enrichment options which support the development of resilience and self-esteem these include sport, team building, awareness events and therapeutic activities such as cookery and art.
- Promote healthy lifestyle options through awareness raising in areas such as smoking cessation and sexual health
- Encourage students to take part in physical activities
- Provide additional educational one to one support for students to help them cope better within the classroom/workplace where necessary.
- Identify external organisations to enable partnerships to be established

In addition NWSLC will:

- Create access to resources and online support through a dedicated area of the College website
- Establish a team of Mental Health First Aiders who are able to provide immediate support
- Ensure that there is recognition of the importance of mental wellbeing at student induction, tutorials and through awareness raising events
- Establish an initial assessment process to identify all students who have previously suffered from mental health issues or are at risk of suffering
- Create an individual emotional wellbeing support plan for each student where a concern is identified
- Encourage active participation within both the college and local community
- Establish support groups in areas where students have identified a need, such as anxiety.
- Assist mature/part-time students to access appropriate support services either through the College or externally
- Ensure that the Chaplaincy services are part of the support available to students
- Work with employers to support apprentices appropriately
- Ensure access to external specialists where necessary

- Work with teaching/assessing staff to help them manage the student's behaviour within the classroom/workplace, taking into account the needs of other students/employees
- Listen to student views and involve them in the design and implementation of this strategy
- Create a wellbeing area on each campus where students can access physical support and resources
- Where necessary the College will work with GPs and other health professionals in order to ensure appropriate expertise and medical support.

Across the Learning Group our commitment to staff is that we will:

- Provide support and training for all frontline staff who work with students on a day to day basis to identify those whose behaviour suggests that there is a problem or that a student is at risk of developing one
- Review policies and procedures to ensure that they support wellbeing
- Listen to staff views and involve them in the design and implementation of this strategy

* At NWSLC we will:

- Train all staff in mental health awareness
- Identify and train a significant number of staff who can act as Mental Health First Aiders
- Provide support and training for frontline staff to help them manage and support students who are suffering from mental health issues within the classroom and in the workplace
- Provide staff development sessions which seek to improve the wellbeing of staff
- Ensure that the Chaplaincy services are part of the support available to staff
- Provide an annual calendar of wellbeing activities
- Liaise with external agencies such as Mind to deliver support and awareness raising sessions
- Offer sessions designed to improve financial health
- Provide an occupational health service which supports staff
- Work with other departments in the college to enable the provision of workshops and activities which seek to

promote healthy lifestyles and both physical and mental wellbeing activities
- Review related policies to ensure that mental health issues are considered
- Encourage active participation within both the College and local community
- Seek to measure wellbeing on an annual basis
- Include wellbeing as a part of appraisal review

(* These additional services may be made available to staff working across the Multi Academy Trust)