



**Haberdashers' West Midlands Academies Trust**

**Haberdashers' Abraham Darby**

**Haberdashers' Adams**

# **Mental Health and Well-Being Policy**

<b>MENTAL HEALTH and WELL-BEING POLICY</b>	
<b>Named Responsibility of Policy</b>	Miss E Norry – Assistant Vice Principal (HAD) Mr D Biggins – Deputy Head (HA)
<b>Date of Policy</b>	September 2024
<b>Date of next Review</b>	September 2026
<b>Governor Accountability</b>	Pupil and Staff Welfare Committee
This policy will be readily accessible to Parents/Carers/Pupils/Staff/Visitors/Members of the Public through the school website	

## 1. Introduction

The demands and subsequent pressures on young people are continually increasing. These can, if not dealt with manifest themselves into a mental health issue that could hinder that person's development academically and socially. Due to the possible prevention of a young person from meeting their normal developmental needs, to not address this serious issue could be interpreted as a failure to safeguard our pupils.

Those who are mentally healthy can make the most of their potential, cope with the stresses and pressures of everyday life, and play a full part in their family, school, community and among their friends. ([www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk))

At Haberdashers' Adams and Haberdashers' Abraham Darby we are committed to the safeguarding and promotion of every pupil's mental health, not just those who are suffering from mental health issues. This policy explains the way in which pupils are supported, the framework used to develop and improve mental health, and the support on offer in school and externally for those who are suffering from mental ill-health.

## 2. Embedded curriculum (compulsory)

The curriculum and the way it is delivered at Haberdashers' Adams and Haberdashers' Abraham Darby is designed to incorporate skills that are necessary in developing one's mental health. Leading mental health charity, Mind ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)) believe that there are certain facets to a person's personality that can be developed so a mental toughness is developed which helps to prevent mental health problems from occurring. These are as follows: being resilient, boosting self-esteem, developing assertiveness, knowing how to relax, being social, developing interests and hobbies, and looking after one's physical health. Through its embedded curriculum, the schools seek to meet these areas in the following ways:

### 2.1 Being Resilient

Resilience is defined as *"the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness"* (Oxford Dictionary). As such it is important for young people to be able to cope with the stresses, difficulties and inevitable failures that life brings. Our embedded compulsory curriculum holds many opportunities for young people to develop resilience:

- PSHE curriculum – many young people do not understand what to do when faced with adversity. In extreme cases this can lead to a pupil simply "giving up" on a task the moment it becomes too challenging, and even manifesting itself in physical reactions such as pushing work away and moving physically away from a workspace. We use our PSHE curriculum to make young people firstly aware of their own mental strength levels, and to provide guidance on what they can do alternatively when faced with difficulty. Hopefully, when pupils get older and face more challenges in their academic, personal and professional lives they will be able to cope with this having developed the skills from a younger age.
- A commitment to growth mindsets – based on the work of Dr Carol Dweck, initially based on the publication *"Mindset: How you can fulfil your potential"* teaching staff at Haberdashers' Adams and Haberdashers' Abraham Darby have been exploring ways that they can be embedded with the concept that ability is not fixed, or limited and that through hard work and perseverance growth and improvement can be made in many areas such as sport, music, and in particular

in academics. Many pupils automatically rank themselves compared to others in their classes and activities, and immediately then start to believe in socially constructed norms such as “I am not good at Maths,” “John is better than me at rugby,” “I cannot draw” etc. The concept of growth mindsets is that ability and in particular brainpower is like a muscle – the more we work at developing it, the better it will ultimately become. The ways in which the concept of growth mindsets is embedded within the school are several. These include – assemblies on the stories of individuals who have gained success through hard work and dedication rather than talent (many examples can be found through the work of Matthew Syed, initially developed in his book, *“Bounce”*), the language that we ask staff to use in their oral and written feedback and reporting e.g. a conscious move from *“Jane is not a natural at Economics”* to *“Jane is not currently working at a hard-enough level to succeed in Economics. In order to do so she can access online resources through EzyEconomics, come to mentoring sessions on Tuesday lunchtimes and hand in extra past paper work.”* Finally, there is a commitment towards recognizing effort, not necessarily always attainment or outcomes – for example, there is no onus on sports teams to win all of their matches, but more so to work hard, develop teamwork and continually improve their skills. House effort is a cup that is awarded based on the cumulative total of effort grades, whereas House attainment is not awarded.

- Allowing pupils to experience failure – in very young children, continual learning takes place mostly through experience, and most of this experience is through failure and self-correction. For instance, a baby will eventually learn to walk through the development of their bodies and a lot of falling down! We warn toddlers of the dangers of touching the oven, but this does not stop them coming near it over and over again. Only when they touch the oven and experience pain do they themselves stop trying to touch it (this is not in any way an endorsement of allowing young children to touch hot ovens!). If a parent does everything possible to protect a child from harm, danger and upset then that child will not be able to cope with this when it comes naturally, and the parent cannot be there to protect them. The child will not develop resilience, but rather become reliant on other people. As such when it is left to them, they will inevitably fail but not be able to cope with that failure. As young people get to secondary school, particularly those who come to Haberdashers’ Adams, failure in an academic sense is for a lot of pupils an alien concept. At times, even those in the 6<sup>th</sup> form have found their studies well within their grasp and have not yet experienced failure. However, we are very clear that failure will come at some point a person’s life and failing to provide those experiences means that young people will be unable to cope with it when it does come. The amount of house and school competition in more areas than sport provide enough chances for pupils to fail and learn from it. We very strongly emphasise the mantra that ‘FAIL’ stands for “first attempt in learning.”
- An escalated sanction system – the “rewards and sanctions” policy clearly shows that there is no automated, standard tariff of sanction for a particular misdemeanour, but that a failure to learn from one’s mistakes will see any sanction increased. This helps pupils understand that it is OK to make mistakes and get things wrong, but only if you learn a lesson from it and alter future behaviours to ensure the same mistakes are not being repeated.
- Positions of responsibility – (in forms/mentors and the whole school) the school prefect system naturally means that most pupils will not become School Captain. Only two pupils in the year or close to 180 will achieve this. As such, pupils learn a great deal through application and interview processes, and many of them fail to achieve what they set out to. This means that when it comes to their futures, lessons have already been learned.
- A focus on stretch and challenge – as all pupils by sheer nature of their presence at Haberdashers’ Adams

are considered “gifted and talented” it is crucial that the curriculum ensures that pupils at all levels are challenged. This means that pupils not only do not experience boredom in a classroom but find very quickly things that they cannot do first time around. This ensures that in order to succeed pupils know that they must try hard, work hard and are therefore developing key skills of resilience in doing so.

- A commitment to new experiences – The Headmaster/Principal’s visions for the schools, regularly shared with pupils, put the onus on them to try out new things. This will be reflected in form/mentor tutoring and through the house system, and in the award of school and house colours. It may well be the case that pupils come to the school being excellent in music, so we then challenge these students to find a sport that they can get involved with. This commitment ensures that pupils leave Abraham Darby/Adams knowing not to fear the new and the unknown, so that when it is thrust upon them, they are able to cope with it.
- House events – there are numerous house events that are compulsory for all pupils, regardless of age, gender or ability. The event that typifies this most is House Cross-Country. This event may be most new pupils’ first experience of a house event and the whole school participates. The scoring system ensures that even those with little talent in this area know that if they try hard, it is worth it. For some, tackling the course and simply completing it is a significant achievement that shows that difficult and challenging circumstances can be conquered with the correct frame of mind.

## 2.2. Boosting Self-Esteem (value and perception of ourselves, [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))

In order to boost self-esteem, the schools place great value on participation and effort over achievement (not to say this is not applauded). It can be very easy for a pupil at Haberdashers’ Adams/ Haberdashers’ Abraham Darby to feel insecure or feel like they are failing due to the high academic and extra-curricular standard of all pupils around them. We seek to ensure that pupils are valued in the following ways:

- Mentoring – every student has at least one 1-to-1 mentoring meeting with their form tutor/mentor at least once each year. This in itself shows that the pupil is valued, but this is an opportunity to reassure pupils who need it that they are doing well. It is also the chance for those not doing so well to get some support, again showing that we care a great deal about the welfare of our pupils.
- Countless opportunities to be good at something – while it is important (as suggested above) for pupils to experience failure, it is also important that pupils are given chances to succeed and enjoy their time at school. Through the huge opportunities on offer at Adams/Abraham Darby, it is clear that pupils have an opportunity to be “the best” at something. This provides some motivation to keep attending, to keep trying and ultimately succeeding.
- Social connections in form/mentor/year/house – while the schools are separated by house and year group, there are plenty of opportunities for younger pupils to mix with those older than them and vice-versa. This allows pupils to feel valued by their (older) peers but also allows older pupils to feel valued by younger pupils they have coached, mentored etc
- A focus on “getting on, not just getting in” – pressures build up within pupils who aspire to join our sixth form, and in sixth formers looking to attend universities, apprenticeships, internships etc that are very competitive. Pupils already place a large amount of pressure on themselves to do so and this often makes them feel like they are not good enough. At Adams/Abraham Darby we are very careful to ensure that our guidance is not all aimed towards getting in, but on ensuring that pupils will be able to handle the pressures of that

environment once they are there. The entrance criteria for the 6<sup>th</sup> form does exactly this – ensures that those who join the sixth form will be able to cope with the academic rigour and pace that the sixth form provides. It would be negligent of us as a school to insist that all pupils MUST go to Russell Group Universities, or all pupils MUST attend our sixth form. The message that is communicated to pupils is about getting on the right course for them, not for us. The careers programme in place widens pupil views to all opportunities that are available to them after leaving school.

- PSHE activities on the pitfalls of social media – social media plays a significant part of a pupil's self-worth. It is very easy for them to compare themselves to others on social media, and misinterpret other's posts, stories and photos as a true reflection of their lives. Our assemblies and PSHE activities in this area make it clear to pupils that social media is very much intended as a "highlight reel" of that person's life, and not something to compare your own life to.
- Breaking down the stigma attached to mental health – through assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and our school systems it is made very clear to pupils that it is "OK not to be OK" and that feeling down is mostly natural and normal. As mental health has such prevalence in the media it is easy for pupils to believe that if they feel sad then that means they are mentally ill. Our programmes ensure that pupils know this is not the case and that most of the time feeling sad is a natural emotion that everyone feels from time to time.
- Opportunities to recognise and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of students. Incorporate multicultural events and language days. To have an inclusive curriculum, incorporating diverse perspectives and materials that reflect the cultures of EAL students. This can help them feel represented.

2.3 Developing assertiveness – assertive people are often able to sort problems out rather than let them fester and develop into real issues that are more difficult to resolve. At Adams/Abraham Darby we do this in the following ways:

- encouraging pupils to speak – in class teachers are careful not to only ask those with hands up but to look out for those who are remaining silent. While there is no pressure on those less extrovert to become something they are not, we do encourage all pupils to get used to asking questions, speaking to teachers and providing opportunities for their voice to be heard. This will allow them the confidence to "speak up" when something is not right
- developing pupil voice through school council and other student groups
- encouraging pupil participation in assemblies – in house assemblies each form/mentor will make a presentation to their house of roughly 225-250 pupils at least twice during an academic year. This allows opportunities for all pupils to gain confidence in speaking in front of large groups. There are also opportunities for pupils to present and speak in full school assemblies and this is encouraged, where possible.
- debating society – At Haberdashers' Adams there is now both a junior and senior debating society. This allows pupils to develop skills in diplomacy and debate, ensuring that while assertiveness is valued, it is important that it is done in the right way.
- open dialogue with form tutors/mentors - pupils are always encouraged to have an open dialogue with form tutors/mentors and it is the aim of the schools to ensure every pupil can name at least one member of staff they feel comfortable talking with if they have any problems or issues to discuss. Pupils also have several other members of staff (teaching

and non-teaching) that they can talk to

2.4 Knowing how to relax – while there are lots of opportunities at Adams/Abraham Darby to ensure pupils are kept busy, free from boredom and achieving well, it is important that a balance is struck as some pupils are often guilty of doing too much and suffer from this later on down the line.

- assemblies/information on the importance of sleep. Some staff have undergone accredited training in the importance of sleep, and this is passed on to pupils through assemblies and the PSHE curriculum
- encouragement in revision skills work to factor in “downtime,” – all year groups are taught revision skills, but within this it is made clear that revision is not pupils working for every waking hour. Pupils know to understand the importance of having a break and doing things they find relaxing. This is why students are expected to attend Games/PE in years 11-13 and why Games/PE continues to run right up until the time that pupils leave.
- encouraging pupils to reduce their reliance on mobile technologies – various studies show that increased screen time can have negative effects on both short and long-term mental wellbeing. Through assemblies and form/mentor activities (as well as school rules) pupils are limited to the screen time they have, and this is also encouraged when pupils are at home. In general terms, mobile phones are banned at both schools.
- PSHE curriculum for younger pupils has a section about developing good relationships with others and conflict resolution. This will then ensure that young people can experience downtime without negative thoughts and concerns looming over them.

2.5 Being Social – connecting with others is vital for positive mental health. The schools allow and promotes the opportunities for the development of friendships that make coming to school and enjoying life easier. It also means that there is a strong level of pupil-driven support that helps issues not become serious

- Social areas – while the school in itself is a working environment, we are committed to ensuring pupils have spaces to play and socialise. The social area in the Sixth Form Centre, the seating area on ground floor, and the playground all help to facilitate face-to-face interaction between pupils
- Mixing with pupils from other year groups – the house systems, peer mentoring and house events in both schools ensures that pupils have plenty of opportunities to mix with those from other year groups
- Mixing with pupils from other schools – there are lots of opportunities for pupils to take part in activities with and/or against other schools. This allows for social circles to develop outside of the classroom with pupils both at this and other schools. This then helps pupils to be able to replicate this when they leave the school.

2.6 Developing interests and hobbies – wider interests can help young people to not only develop wider friendship circles, but in extreme cases such as those who are suicidal provides something to live for, to look forward to and something to take mind off what is causing stress and negative thoughts. The embedded curriculum at Adams/Abraham Darby ensures that pupil's interests are widely stimulated in many different areas. There is a large focus on trying new things and enjoying new experiences, many of which pupils develop a significant passion for. Our curriculum allows pupils to develop interests and hobbies significantly. There is, of course a great deal within the extended curriculum too (see section 3).

2.7 Looking after one's physical health – clinically proven to reduce stress and improve mood in both the short and long term. Examples of the way that this is promoted at

Adams/Abraham Darby are:

- Assemblies and the PSHE curriculum on the importance of getting enough sleep
- PSHE sessions on eating healthily and the importance of exercise. (also taught in Biology)
- Core PE taught up to year 9
- Lessons on hygiene, puberty etc
- Compulsory Games for all year groups
- Whole school House Cross Country, Swimming, Athletics and other sporting competitions

### **3. Extended curriculum**

Much like the embedded (compulsory) curriculum, there is much in the extended curriculum that is designed to develop a pupil's mental health so as to hopefully prevent mental health problems from occurring or providing pupil's with the skills to deal with them when they arise. It is worth noting that the small number of pupils who are diagnosed with a mental health issue are generally those who choose not to involve themselves in much of our extended curriculum. Again, following the guidance from leading mental health charity, Mind:

- 3.1 Being resilient – much of the extended curriculum is based around competition, whether it be through houses or the school, in sports, academics or other areas pupils will develop skills of resilience in order to help them out of difficult situations. This may be to prevent an embarrassing defeat on the rugby field, in working together to overcome having weaker players in a house team, or simply turning up and having a go when victory is unlikely. Through sport in particular, both our Head of PE and Head of Sport are not after continuous victory, but those who can win, and lose in the right ways, and not let this affect their mental state. In addition to sport, many of our academic competitions place students in an unknown, challenging situation such as the unknown questions in House Bibliophilist and the unseen elements of House Geography and Maths. The entire concept of both junior and senior debating societies is that you do not really know what arguments the opposition are going to provide, so pupils are able to think quickly on their feet, overcome problems and find a way to overcome barriers.
- 3.2 Boosting self-esteem – one's self worth is greatly enhanced by being a part of something, feeling that you are making a difference and contributing greatly to the school or to society. There are many pupils who volunteer to mentor younger pupils and in primary schools as part of our outreach programme. There are various clubs and societies such as the charities committee and school council that allow for pupils to feel valued by others and hence themselves, as well as student groups set up and run to celebrate diversity. The vast majority of our sporting competitions are set up so that those who do not have as much talent in that area can still make a difference. For many, simply being a part of any team or group is a massive boost to self-esteem, so opportunities for those to be part of the technical crew for school events, those in bands, orchestras, choirs and productions benefit greatly from the opportunities in place.
- 3.3 Developing assertiveness – various opportunities such as the debating societies, school council, sporting activities, CCF, all help to develop assertiveness in pupils. The majority of house events are pupil-run; this may see pupils face the unenviable position of having to tell

a friend that they are not part of a team.

- 3.4 Knowing how to relax – this is very much about switching off from the stresses and pressures of everyday life, whether it be family, friendships, relationships, academics etc. By offering pupils a great amount of opportunities beyond this through our extended curriculum / extra-curricular this allows pupils to turn their focus to something else on a regular basis. For example, pupils with challenging home circumstances are able to stay behind at school a little longer and participate in an activity that they are passionate about which means that for that hour then are not having to face their circumstances at home. For those suffering from depression, having attention solely focused on building a robot, developing a website or hitting hockey balls can be a perfect diversion tactic.
- 3.5 Being social – by default, much of the extended curriculum is designed to get people together, many of whom would not do so otherwise. This will inevitably provide opportunities to socialise e.g., on the minibus to a netball practice, whilst getting changed after a rugby match etc, which reduces feelings of being alone and not understood and by extension improves one’s mental health. Being a part of a team or group provides a talking point that some young people find it otherwise difficult to engage in – for instance shy or introverted individuals may find it difficult to make friends or socialise with others, but involvement in an activity immediately allows them a talking point to begin with for others e.g. “Are you going to netball tonight?” “What is your Young Enterprise idea?” “Which group are you in for CCF?”
- 3.6 Developing hobbies or interests – both schools offer many activities and opportunities none of which require any form of entry level skill to be able to take part in. This means that pupils can find new hobbies and interests within school and are always encouraged to have a go at something new.
- 3.7 Looking after one’s physical health – naturally, many of the activities do lend themselves to some sort of physical activity which helps to promote physical health.

#### **4. Early Help and Support**

While the content contained in sections 1 and 2 are designed for all pupils regardless of the current strength of their mental health to access, the schools recognise that despite these measures being in place there will be occasions when a pupil’s mental health may deteriorate and require bespoke intervention. It is the aim of the schools, should this be the case, to spot the signs of this early and intervene on an early help level rather than require the support of additional agencies (section 4).

##### **4.1 Early identification-**

All staff are trained in awareness of safeguarding issues and as such are well-equipped to spot signs of any issues that may hinder the development of a young person in their care. As form tutors/mentors see pupils everyday they are the first port of call to report any changes in a pupil which may indicate a mental health (or other) issue. We also ask support staff, subject teachers, Heads of House and others to be vigilant when it comes to spotting signs that could indicate any issues in young people, whether it be in their behaviour, manner, body language or what they say or what others may say about them. Signs that could indicate a mental health problem are (from [www.mind.co.uk](http://www.mind.co.uk)) :

- feeling down, upset or tearful for prolonged periods
- being restless, agitated or irritable
- feeling guilty, worthless and down on oneself
- being isolated and unable to relate to other people
- finding no pleasure in life or things you usually enjoy
- no self-confidence or self-esteem
- hopeless and despairing
- suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations

Behaviour which may indicate a mental health problem are:

- avoiding social events and activities you usually enjoy
- self-harming or suicidal behaviour
- difficulty speaking, thinking clearly or making decisions
- difficulty remembering or concentrating on things
- using more tobacco, alcohol or other drugs than usual
- difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- feeling tired all the time
- no appetite and losing weight, or eating too much and gaining weight
- physical aches and pains with no obvious physical cause
- moving very slowly or being restless and agitated.

In such cases staff have an obligation to pass on their thoughts to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (Abraham Darby: Mrs. Isobel Williams, and Adams: Mr Daniel Biggins). Often in these situations discussions with the pupil will take place, and it is most likely (unless there is good reason not to) that parents will also be brought into a discussion about our concerns.

#### 4.2 Early Help

Before any professional involvement is required, a stage of early and self-help may be suggested. It is likely that a pupil's lifestyle will be looked at, and any changes to that person's life be explored. It may be the case that at this stage a young person may be able to avoid having to seek professional help. For instance, a pupil may experience signs of anxiety in the build-up to exams. On discussion with a form tutor it may be clear that the pupil is putting huge pressure on themselves by working solidly for 10 hours per day. We may then suggest that this time is broken up with time to connect with friends, some regular exercise and a good pattern of sleep, which may prevent the signs of anxiety and prevent a fall into depression. For early help in school, we offer the following:

- regular offers for discussions with form tutors/mentors
- a peer listening service
- opportunities for involvement in activities that may improve any of the factors mentioned in sections 1 and 2 of this policy.
- Opportunities for signposting and discussion from staff trained in mental health first aid (Mental Health Champions)
- Opportunities to speak and work with experts in the Learning and Intervention Centre (LINC) for those who suffer Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health difficulties (SEMH)

- ELSA sessions
- A professional counselling service (on a referral basis from Heads of House)
- Various other interventions through Learning Support and the Inclusion Office (a full list of interventions can be found here [Pupil Welfare | Haberdashers' Adams \(adamsgs.uk\)](https://www.adamsgs.uk))

Regular reminders regarding self-help are also available on noticeboards, through assemblies and the form time curriculum.

#### 4.3 Signposting

Should staff feel that pupils need more than the early/self-help suggestions in 4.2, the school's mental health first aiders can help to signpost support available to the pupil and their family outside of school. We have strong links with a number of organisations who deliver presentations and assemblies to pupils regarding their provision. Examples of this are:

- Kooth – an online platform for young people who can gain anonymous counselling support online. This is often helpful to pupils as they can access the service at time from any device and do so anonymously. The service can be found at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)
- GP referral – staff may advise families to seek advice and help from the GP. As mental health issues are classed as medical issues GPs are trained in understanding mental health issues to a greater depth than teachers. The GP may prescribe medication, advise on ways to self-help or refer to another agency (see section 3.4)
- Beam – this is a drop-in clinic that specialises in mental health support for young people. This is available in both Telford and Shrewsbury. This is a face-to-face service that can be used to provide support to young people and also refer to other agencies such as CAMHS.
- Samaritans – the Samaritans can help support young people through difficult times through prevention and postvention activities
- Childline – a telephone service that young people can use to access support
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#### 4.4 Urgent Care

In the case of urgent care being required the schools would direct a young person and their families to the most appropriate support from the list below. This will likely be accompanied by support taking place in school as well.

- GP appointment – where there is no immediate risk, we will work with families to secure an appointment with the GP to begin this process.
- Accident and Emergency – in the case of significant self-harm, suicidal thoughts or a suicide attempt the school would direct parents to take their child to their local A&E unit where a psychological assessment may be carried out. It may be the case, in certain circumstances where injuries or life-threatening acts have taken place the school will phone an ambulance
- CAMHS referral – the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service can be referred to by those with mental health needs beyond that which can be provided by universal services (school, GP). This is likely to lead to psychological assessment and treatment by Doctors who specialise in mental health.
- Samaritans – the Samaritans specialise in suicide prevention. In such circumstances their support could be accessed in order to help support a young person who has attempted to, or has a desire to take their own life. For further details on this specific issue please refer to our suicide prevention plan