



CAST Angling Project – Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Policy Statement

CAST is an Alternative Provision with mixed learners. Ages from 11-18 years, and for some; transitional opportunities for Post 16 Learners.

CAST is predominantly an Outdoor Learning Alternative Provision and is set within an environment which prides its ethos in Land Based Studies and Social Development.

CAST is a work related and community driven project offering learners the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills within this, supporting those with practical community projects within the area.

The Educational Day at CAST supports all educational, social, emotional, and mental health needs with those who have specific difficulties; some will have diagnoses. Learners are referred by Schools, Local Authorities and Social Services to engage and experience life with CAST and an opportunity for them to feel safe and enjoy their learning experience.

Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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. ~ World Health Organization.



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At CAST, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, throughout CAST Angling Provisions whole approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. *In an average school classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue.* By developing and implementing practical, relevant, and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

At CAST Angling Project, students will attend the provision, and within our role we strive to:

- Help our students to understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Help students feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- Help students socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure students know that they count.
- Encourage students to be confident and 'dare to be different'.
- Help students to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.
- We promote a mentally healthy environment through:
 - Promoting our values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
 - Promoting 'student voice' and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
 - Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements (Most Improved Learner, Best Angler, Hardest Practical Worker) (See CAST Behaviour and Reward Policy).
 - Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
 - Providing opportunities to reflect.
 - Access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

Further to this, CAST will:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers.



Document Purpose

This document describes the CAST's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors, in line with Government Guidelines set in 2018.

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our CAST Supporting Students with Medical and SEN policy where a student has an identified special educational need. The CAST Medication Administration Policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and links to the Medication Administration Policy. The CAST Safeguarding and The Lone Working Policy reflects practise that links with Mental Health and wellbeing here at CAST.

Students are asked to read the Student Version Anti-bullying Policy and read our Code of Conduct as part of the Induction process. Tutorials are set to support our learners in a Pastoral Way.

With relation to teaching Mental Health and Wellbeing, links to the CAST Curriculum and SMSC Policies note where Mental Health is targeted. Many of our learners do not attend schools and this is a huge part of the learning needed within our curriculum and bespoke to some of our learners needs.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant designated role include:

- Mick Leivers - designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer/Mental Health lead.
- Ash Day - Lead First Aider.
- Mick Leivers - Pastoral lead.
- Mick Leivers – Data Protection Officer lead (referring to breaches)
- Dean Gladwin - CPD lead and organiser for training sessions (external and internal).
- Ash Day - Co-ordinator of PSHE/SMSC Curriculum.

Any member of CAST Angling staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. All staff are responsible for reporting any concerns.

If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Child Protection Officer, Education Manager or Director.



If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, CAST First Aid Emergency Needs Policy; including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

As an Alternative provision we work with schools and other external agencies closely working around a student with needs. It maybe we are invited to meetings as an organisation, e.g. (EHP) and asked to support information as evidence. CAST will liaise with other schools/keyworkers for further guidance.

Information Gained for Individual Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan with other agencies/or support and read care plans and meeting targets set by others; so, CAST can support where necessary; for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, discussions in Tutorials may be where this occurs. And with the parents and relevant health professionals.

Information needed:

- Details of a pupil's condition.
- Special requirements and precautions.
- Medication and any side effects.
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency.
- The role the school can play.

Teaching About Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental SMSC/PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

It may be evident that Mental Health, resilience, confidence and Independence can be developed within our Community and Practical Work within CAST, outdoor learning (aspects of Forest School) and through SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects to their Learning) offering teambuilding and offsite visits to encourage this hidden curriculum that occurs within CAST Angling Provision.



We will follow the [SMSC/PSHE Guidance](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our SMSC/PSHE curriculum and throughout their day at CAST.

The specific content of sessions will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort who attend CAST and that we teach but we will also use the SMSC/PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted Support

CAST offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include: Within bespoke SMSC/PSHE/Nurture groups.

We will use:

- Targeted use of SEAL resources.
- Managing feelings resources when appropriate.
- Managing emotions resources when appropriate.
- Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups (Could be in the form of an outdoor learning programme, e.g. Forest School/Team Building.
- Therapeutic activities including art, fishing.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students, and parents are aware of sources of support within CAST and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as main classroom and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next.

Warning Signs



School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mick Leivers (Safeguarding and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead).

Possible warning signs include:

1. Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
2. Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
3. Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
4. Changes in activity and mood.
5. Lowering of academic achievement.
6. Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
7. Abusing drugs or alcohol.
8. Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope.
9. Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather.
10. Secretive behaviour.
11. Skipping PE or getting changed secretly.
12. Lateness to or absence from school.
13. Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
14. An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Managing Disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. (If Lone Working follow procedures linked to the Policy).

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own Mental Health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive, and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file.

This written record should include:

1. Date.
2. The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made.
3. Main points from the conversation.
4. Agreed next steps.



This information should be shared with the Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead, Mick Leivers, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to?
- What we are going to tell them?
- Why we need to tell them?

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. Within CAST our learners are between 11-18 years and can consent this and be aware to understand why we do this.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Safeguarding Lead at CAST. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed however students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer Mick Leivers and Directors, Ash Day/Mick Leivers/Dean Gladwin must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At CAST, designated school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, other members of staff.



- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting CAST Angling Project, with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from CAST Angling about supporting their children's emotional and mental health.

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues in the community with a range of information.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our Mental Health Policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE/SMSC and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home. It maybe students have leaflets to take home. Visitors to the Provision to discuss sensitive issues.

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to



one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told.
- How friends can best support.
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves.
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition.
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will complete an online training session on Mental Health and Wellbeing Level 2. And as part of the Induction process. External providers as part of CPD can be accessed. This will be completed yearly.

Designated staff will be more informed as part of their role here at CAST, e.g. Safeguarding Officer.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole of staff; CPD should be discussed with Isis Watson CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](https://www.cwmt.org.uk/schools-families-resources) provides funded training and a variety of topics related to mental health. Resources for Parents/Carers to add to the support they may require. <https://www.cwmt.org.uk/schools-families-resources>.