



Hidelow Grange School

Supporting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

	Reviewed: Oct 2024 – Sam Goodchild
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CareTech's children's education services provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which young people are always offered a fresh start, and empowered to achieve and fulfil their unique potential

Description and Ethos of Hidelow Grange School

Hidelow Grange is an Independent School operating within the Branas Isaf Company, a subsidiary of CareTech Community Services Ltd., who are the proprietors.

Hidelow Grange is an independent school providing specialist education to boys aged 11 to 18 years with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and who are Looked After Children. The school specifically caters for boys who present with a range of complex interpersonal, emotional and behavioural issues.

For a more detailed description of what the school offers see “Statement of Independence” and School Prospectus.

OUR PUPILS

All young people at Hidelow Grange School have a history of harmful behaviours, including harmful sexualised behaviours and social, emotional and mental health needs often accompanied by a range of additional learning needs.

Most of the pupils have had interrupted histories in education and care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission. All have fragile self-esteem and demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. Many have experienced loss and trauma, leading to attachment difficulties. As a result, many experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with others and have a limited ability to work cooperatively.

Pupils are:

- aged 11 to 18;
- boys only;
- placed within the residential setting of Branas Isaf;
- residents from placing authorities throughout the United Kingdom;
- all present a range of harmful behaviours;
- most are in receipt of an EHC plan.

THE VISION

Our school aspires to become a centre of excellence renowned for making outstanding educational provision for the very special pupils we teach.

This vision drives everything we do and will be achieved through...

- A rich, deep and personalised education designed to meet the needs of each pupil;
- A pupil centred, skills focused curriculum that is relevant to the 21st century and inclusive of all;

- Encouraging all members of the school community to strive beyond expectations and develop a lifelong love of learning;
- Offering a broad range of learning experiences within a curriculum that values academic attainment as well as social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of education;
- Providing personalised careers education and guidance, with aspirational next steps planning, preparing pupils for their future;
- Recognising that time is precious: working quickly to turn around pupils' attitudes towards education so they enjoy their time at school and make the most of the opportunities on offer;
- Working collaboratively with our professional partners to support the needs of each individual pupil.

Pupils will:

1. Be challenged to engage in learning and achieve meaningful qualifications that will enable them to take their next steps in education, employment or training;
2. Develop into healthy, resilient and confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society;
3. Create, nurture and maintain healthy positive relationships with others;
4. Experience success, whatever form it takes;
5. Become enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work;
6. Celebrate diversity and develop into ethical, informed young people who are ready to be citizens of the world.

OUR MISSION

Our mission statement is:

We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that nurtures mutual respect and encourages reflection so that our pupils develop the knowledge skills and confidence to enable them to achieve their potential in all aspects of their lives.

OUR VALUES AND INTENT

Our values

- **Aspiration** : We encourage each other to be the best we can be
- **Curiosity**: We never stop learning and wondering about the world
- **Independence**: We think for ourselves and determine our own future
- **Innovation**: We look for new and creative solutions to problems
- **Reflection**: We learn from our experiences
- **Tolerance**: We value difference and respect other people's opinions
- **Trust**: We believe in the honesty and reliability of others

Our Curriculum Intent

For our staff: Everyone at Hidelow supports and challenges pupils to invest in education as a priority for a successful placement

For all learners:

- To undergo an initial 6-week assessment so we fully understand their needs for effective learning;
- To achieve at least 95% attendance in school;
- To engage in creative learning experiences appropriate to their needs, supported by an accurate individual learning plan;
- To achieve nationally recognised academic awards in core subjects;
- To achieve accreditation in a wide range of subject areas;
- To become independent learners;
- To learn how to keep themselves safe, and build positive relationships with those around them;
- To take part in decisions that shape their lives, the school and the community in which they live;
- To demonstrate the behaviours needed to stretch themselves and cope with the challenges of learning;
- To attend and participate in regular therapy sessions;
- To learn strategies to manage their feelings and know where to go for help when things are difficult;
- To have the opportunity to participate in work experience and work related learning opportunities;
- To develop the Literacy skills they need for adult life;
- To learn the skills to apply mathematical concepts;
- To learn the skills to use digital technologies creatively and safely in preparation for the world in which they will live;
- To lead healthy, active lifestyles;
- To develop as social, moral, spiritual and culturally aware individuals who are ready to make a positive contribution to society as adults.

Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB)

Rationale

Wellbeing is all about our holistic health, including the physical and emotional. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged, we're resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as 'bounce back' from life's challenges. Mentally Healthy Schools, 2019

At Hidelow Grange School we place great value on protecting the Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) of all members of our community. We recognise that for various reasons, the young people we work with all have mental health issues at times; and we acknowledge that the environment we work in can be stressful. We recognise that school has a central role in promoting and protecting positive MHWB. Therefore we look after the MHWB of our staff and students through a framework of different approaches: including proactive strategies, responsive measures and specialised targeted interventions, drawing on the professional expertise of all those who are part of our organisation. This document sets these out in detail.

Proactive Measures

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

It is important to talk openly about mental health. Life has its ups and downs and at times, these can be difficult to cope with by ourselves. Therefore we teach the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others mentally healthy as a core part of our PSHCE curriculum. Topics covered include the concepts of mental health and ill-health; relationship and sex education; developing resilience; recognising and managing difficult feelings; and effective strategies to cope when life gets hard.

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

Developing Healthy Habits

We provide many formal and informal opportunities through the curriculum and beyond to help our students develop habits for positive mental health. We do this through:

- **Encouraging play and having fun** together e.g. through tutor activities, Enrichment Activities; end of term traditions;
- Enabling them to be **part of a community** in school and beyond: e.g. John Muir Award; gardening; charity work; School Council; Voluntary Work; Pupil Voice activities;
- **Keeping active** e.g. through PE and Enrichment; gardening; and at break time;
- Promoting **healthy eating** e.g. through Food Technology lessons, and work with the Care Team;
- Helping them **manage transitions** e.g. daily tutor time; end of day reflections; clear and predictable structure to the day; consistent daily timetable;
- **Celebrating success** in all forms e.g. reward points; Pupil of the Week; Pupil of the Month; Rights Respector of the Week; positive behaviour management strategies; highlighting staff achievements in De-Brief and Supervision; sharing good news with their Care Team; Care Staff of the Week Award; celebration assemblies;
- **Caring for each other** e.g. modelling positive relationships between staff; the pastoral role of the form tutor; restorative practices to repair and rebuild relationships following incidents; a no-tolerance approach to bullying;
- Ensuring all staff and students have **regular breaks** and are encouraged to look after themselves;
- **Learning strategies that will help when times are hard** e.g. therapy; DBT group therapy; PSHCE lessons; developing emotional literacy;
- **Helping each other to manage the difficult times** e.g. staff daily de-briefing; staff supervision; key role of the form tutor; multi-agency team support for every child; consistent use of MAYBO de-escalation strategies when a student is in a crisis.

The Role of the Tutor

Every pupil is part of a tutor group with an allocated form tutor. The form tutor is key: they provide consistent pastoral support; they monitor progress academically and socially; they encourage involvement, commitment and high standards of work and behaviour. We start every morning with a tutor session to support the students in their transition from home to school; to help them prepare for the day ahead; to pick up any issues or worries that the student may have that day; to review what has gone well and where difficulties may have occurred previously: helping each pupil plan for success. Each tutor group also has an extended tutor time once a week to provide the opportunity for more in-depth work on individual or group issues, and as an opportunity to spend some relaxed time together as a group.

Positive Behaviour Management

Many of our pupils have attachment difficulties and our behaviour policy is underpinned by the Nurture Group Principles. These foster positive mental health and create an environment that is conducive to emotional development.

These principles are:

- **Children develop social, emotional and behavioural skills developmentally:** their emotional stage of development may differ from their chronological age- we try to work with them at the level they are at;
- **The classroom offers a safe base** that reduces anxiety, where adults are reliable and consistent;
- Nurturing approaches are key to **developing positive self-esteem**;
- **Language is a vital means of communication** to help us put thoughts and feelings into words;
- **All behaviour is communication**;
- **Transitions are significant** and need to be managed carefully and with support.

We take a positive and proactive approach to behaviour management ensuring that our expectations are clear, and that these are reinforced consistently across the school. We support our students on an individual level when they are in difficulty, and work with the multi-professional team to plan and implement individual support plans that take social, emotional and mental health needs into consideration.

For a more detail please see the Behaviour Policy

Signposting and Support

We ensure that all staff and students are aware of the sources of support within school and beyond. Every student is supported by a personal tutor, their Care Team and their Therapist- these professionals work together to monitor every young person's MHWB, to identify issues quickly and to create a plan of support.

We display information about sources of support in communal areas such as the Thrive / Sensory Room and toilets and regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the

curriculum. When we do this, we increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring they understand:

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

Staff training

- All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.
- Teaching staff and the Therapy Team have Reflective Team meetings to discuss issues relating to the MHWB of our students and teachers can access formal training and support about specific issues such as Attachment Disorder and Autism awareness through this route.
- Formal training opportunities are offered as part of the organisation's CPD programme, delivered by the Branas therapy team and other specialist practitioners. This includes training on recognising mental health difficulties and suicide prevention.
- Where the need to do so becomes evident, we host additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff mental health and wellbeing

At Hidelow Grange School, we recognise that our most valuable resource is our staff team. Staff deserve to work in a supportive environment that enables them to be the best they can be, to experience job satisfaction and gives them the capacity to fulfil their role with regards to our students.

- **Formal support:** All staff have access to one to one supervision with their line manager on a regular basis but at least once a term. They are encouraged to request additional supervision if required. This is an opportunity for their line manager to check in with them and discuss any concerns or worries the staff member may have, as well as any concerns the line manager may have picked up.
- **Informal support:** We are a small school with a close-knit supportive staff team. The teaching team meets on a daily basis at the start and end of the day. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice with their colleagues- reflecting on their teaching as well as on how best to support and respond to the behaviour of the students. We support and care for each other, especially when there has been an incident or when it appears that a member of our team is in difficulty. The Headteacher (Sam Goodchild) has an 'open door' policy and encourages all members of the team to approach him with any issue, worry or concern they may have. The Deputy DSL (Charlotte James) has a responsibility for staff wellbeing.

- Work/life balance: Evidence shows that teachers feel a responsibility to their colleagues, pupils, students and schools even when they are not working. We promote the importance of achieving a healthy work-life balance; open dialogue between line managers and staff about workload, and we encourage a culture of ‘working smart not working long’. All staff have regular breaks during the school day and are encouraged to look after their colleagues and ensure they take breaks too.
- CareTech provides a free Employee Assistance Programme. All employees can access confidential support and advice relating to a range of issues including stress, health, workload and family issues. This service is available 24 hours a day for 365 days a year. Telephone: 0800 030 5182. Information about this service is given to staff on induction and is on display in the staff room.

Responsive Measures

Staff responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific remit include:

Sam Goodchild – Mental Health Lead; Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Hidelow Grange School; Headteacher

Charlotte James – Deputy DSL for Hidelow Grange School; Staff Wellbeing Lead; SENCO; Exams Officer; Maths Teacher

Juliet Smith – Teacher of PSHE; Form Tutor

Mark Maddock – Teacher of Science & DT; Form Tutor

Victoria Cooper – Teacher of English; Form Tutor

Rebecca Potter – DSL for Hidelow Children’s Home

Carl O’Neil – Hidelow Therapy Team

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to Sam Goodchild in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, the school Child Protection procedures should be followed by making an immediate referral to the DSL. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Sam Goodchild (DSL) as soon as possible.

Possible warning signs include:

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

Supporting Students with Mental Health Issues

Mental illness can have a range and complexity of causes, however risk factors include: childhood abuse, trauma or neglect; family breakdown; bereavement and loss of a loved one; social disadvantage, poverty or debt; parental mental illness; and being in care. All our students have experienced some or all of these and are therefore more susceptible to mental ill-health than their mainstream peer group.

At Hidelow we are able to respond quickly at the first signs that a young person is in difficulty. We provide high staffing levels; a depth and breadth of professional expertise on our team; access to the therapy team; and effective multi-agency working.

Every student at the school has an allocated therapist who is a qualified Psychotherapist. The school works closely with these professionals to enable the young people to attend weekly individual therapy sessions and to participate in DBT group therapy courses.

Every student has a Positive Handling Plan which sets out the strategies and approaches that support them best when they are in difficulty.

When a student is in crisis, the school works closely with their therapist and care team to put together and implement a plan of support.

Supporting other Students

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, sometimes friends 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 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

Statutory framework and guidance

Hidelow Grange School has due regard for:

- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education- Statutory Guidance, DfE 2020
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (July 2014)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, 2018

Monitoring

There is an opportunity to raise any concerns about the MHWB of individual pupils on a daily basis as part of the staff briefing and de-brief meetings. It is also a standing item on the staff meeting agenda. Concerns may be recorded as a School Welfare concern or as a Child Protection concern, depending on the level of risk of harm. The concerns and the action taken are recorded on our online system *Behaviour Watch* as well as in the individual Child Protection file for each student. Patterns of concerns will be monitored by the multi-agency team and discussed as part of the 6 weekly Placement Planning Meeting or more regularly when necessary.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head Teacher and Head of Education Services. It is due for review in **October 2025**.

Roles & Responsibilities

Teaching Staff	Qualifications
Sam Goodchild Headteacher; DSL; LAC; Teacher: PE	BSc (Hons) in Sports Studies; PGCE: Secondary Education
Charlotte James DDSL; SENCO; Exams Officer; Teacher: Maths, ICT, Art	BA (Hons) in Primary Education specialising in SEND
Mark Maddock 0.6 FTE Teacher: Science, DT	B.SC. (Hons): Applied Zoology (with Agriculture); PGCE in Biology and Science (Distinction in Teaching Practice) Post-Graduate Certificate of SEN
Victoria Cooper Teacher: English; Enrichment	BA (Hons) English Literature and minor Religious Studies; Dip (HE) Diploma in Community, Youth and Play Work; PGCE Secondary English
Juliet Smith Teacher: PSHE; Humanities; Art; Enrichment	BA (Hons) in Humanities with History; PGCE Secondary Geography

References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and documents listed below:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- PSHCE curriculum map and planning
- Induction Manual