LONDON VOCATIONAL
BALLET SCHOOL

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education the school's safeguarding policies including online policy, SEND policy, healthy eating and NICE July 22 guidance, LVBS first aid policy and Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy.

LVBS engaged with the professional mental health organisation 'Anna Freud' to help support everyone in the school's community.

The World Health Organization in 2014 defined good Mental Health as:

"a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community".

Whilst mental ill health has been described as 'A disturbance of function in one area of relationships, mood, behaviour or development of sufficient severity to require professional intervention' (Dept of Health 1995).

At LVBS we understand the pressures of the world of dance on young students. Dancers by their very nature may have perfectionistic tendencies, They spend hours in the dance studio going over steps until they are correct. The pressures on physical appearance may also put pressure on young dancers and staff must be aware of the signs and how to act if they have a concern.

Identification of Mental Health Difficulties

It can be very difficult to recognize a student with mental health difficulties. However, staff should be alerted to changes in a student's behaviour, presentation and engagement and should raise any concerns on the school's MyConcern and then to the DSL. Any immediate concerns such as a student at risk of harm to themselves or others must be raised immediately to the DSL or in their absence to the school's directors.

Intervention

It is in the best interests of the student to offer support for mental health problems when they arise as the longer a student struggles the more complex the problem becomes. Supporting a distressed student can take up a lot of time and be challenging so please follow the guidance below:

- Be realistic about what help you can offer.
- Do you have the time and expertise to help them? Is a referral appropriate?
- Is there a conflict with another role you may have?
- Clarify your role/limits to the student, particularly with regards to confidentiality.
- Be decisive about actioning any concern and remain clear about the appropriate degree of your involvement. Report, monitor and record as required by KCSIE.

If you are concerned about a student:

- Be proactive, don't evade the problem
- Collect more information from faculty/staff members to determine if your concern is shared do this by first placing concerns on the school's MyConcern
- Tell the student that you may not be able to maintain confidentiality, explaining you will converse with them if information needs to be shared and with who.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, then staff should refer to the school's safeguarding policy for guidance.

Concerns to look out for:

- Changes in activity or mood
- Conduct Disorder (aggression, destroying/losing property, theft, running away etc.)
- Lowering of academic or dance standard
- Deliberate Self Harm
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (obsessions, compulsions, personality characteristics verging on panic)
- Anxiety Disorders (including panic attacks)
- Expressing feelings of failure
- Substance Abuse
- Depression
- Suicidal Thoughts (not a disorder but thoughts based and equally as serious)

MyConcern reporting

Staff have access to the National College CPD courses and it is encouraged for staff to complete a course on mental health awareness. The DSL is the Mental Health Lead at LVBS.

- State the main conversation areas

Say what you are going to do next (ie I will now raise this concern with the school's DSL)

- Type in all forward steps
- Report what level of concern it is

If any member of staff feels that the student is in immediate danger of harm then they should contact either the DSL or School Directors immediately!

Staff wellbeing and mental health support

In June 2021 the Department for Education published 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources for Teachers and Teaching Staff'. Their statement said:

The wellbeing of all our staff, especially those in the roles of DSL and SMT are to be monitored and ongoing meetings to support those members of staff with a high level of responsibility within the school setting. At LVBS we have three members of staff who are trained in mental health first aid and all staff are offered CPD in this area. Weekly safeguarding meetings are held; however, any concerns should be placed by all staff on the school's MyConcern and a meeting will be held in the time frame suitable to the disclosure.

The Department of Education states:

'Teachers and teaching staff should also prioritise looking after your own wellbeing and mental health. Every Mind Matters campaign self-care tool offers a free online action plan, approved by the NHS, that offers simple steps you can take to care for your own mental health. The tool can help to deal with stress and anxiety, boost mood, improve sleep quality and take control of your wellbeing'

As with most school staff across the UK our faculty worked relentlessly to make sure our students' wellbeing- both mentally and physically - was looked after during the Covid pandemic. The directors and trustees place equal importance on looking after our staff as we do our students and as such any staff member who is needing extra support must speak to a member of the SMT so they can find the best way to support them.

Support details for students

1) ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people.
   0800 1111
2) Samaritans are an organisation you can ring at any time of the day or night.
   116 123

3) BEAT's Youthline offers support to children and young people with an eating disorder.
0808 801 0711

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