

Ysgol Hendrefelin



Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

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1. Introduction

Ysgol Hendrefelin recognises that mental health is everybody's business. We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our school community — learners, staff and families. We pursue this aim through a whole-school approach and, where needed, targeted specialist interventions for individual learners.

Our learners present with a complex range of additional learning needs. This policy is written with that learner profile in mind throughout.

This policy sits within the wider Welsh legislative framework. It should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Equality Act 2010 and Welsh Government statutory guidance including Keeping Learners Safe (2022).

2. Recognising Heightened Vulnerability

Research consistently shows that learners with one or more protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 face higher risk of mental health difficulties. At Ysgol Hendrefelin we recognise that our learners, all of whom have disabilities and additional learning needs, will also hold further protected characteristics including race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, sex and pregnancy.

We also recognise that care-experienced learners, young carers, bereaved learners, learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and learners seeking sanctuary face elevated risk of mental health difficulties. These vulnerabilities can compound where a learner holds multiple characteristics linked to higher risk.

Where a learner holds one or more characteristics linked to higher vulnerability, staff apply additional vigilance, ensure individual support plans reflect this and record any concerns through MyConcern. The school's commitment to equality, inclusion and learner wellbeing applies equally to every learner regardless of background or characteristic.

3. Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out Ysgol Hendrefelin's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all learners and staff. It is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, and is available on the school's website for parents and carers.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all learners and staff

- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues within the school community
- Alert staff to early indicators of mental health difficulties in the context of complex additional learning needs
- Provide clear guidance on how to respond when a learner presents with or discloses a mental health concern
- Connect mental health support to each learner's Individual Development Plan (IDP) where relevant
- Ensure staff have access to appropriate training and support

4. Definitions

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and contributes to their community. (World Health Organisation)

Mental ill health refers to a range of diagnosable conditions that affect thinking, emotion and behaviour. These include depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, self-harm and psychosis, among others.

Wellbeing encompasses emotional, social, physical and psychological health. For learners with complex additional learning needs, wellbeing must be understood in the context of individual communication profiles, sensory needs and adaptive behaviour.

Under the ALN Act 2018, all learners with additional learning needs at Ysgol Hendrefelin have an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Mental health and wellbeing targets must be connected to the IDP where relevant. The ALNCo holds responsibility for IDP co-ordination.

5. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The mental health and wellbeing of every learner is a priority for all staff at Ysgol Hendrefelin
- Early identification and intervention produce better outcomes
- Mental health support must be personalised to the communication profile, sensory needs and learning style of each learner

- Learner voice will be sought in all decisions about support, using whichever communication approach is appropriate for the individual — including AAC, Makaton, PECS and objects of reference as appropriate.
- Families and carers are partners in supporting learner wellbeing
- Staff wellbeing is inseparable from learner wellbeing
- The school has a duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to promote wellbeing and take a preventative approach

6. Whole-School Approach

Ysgol Hendrefelin takes a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This means that every member of staff, across all sites, has a role in noticing, responding to and supporting learner mental health.

The school operates across two sites: Bryncoch and Port Talbot. Procedures in this policy apply across all sites. Where roles are site-specific, this is stated clearly.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- A Health and Well-being curriculum that addresses mental health in age and ability appropriate ways
- Staff training to recognise early indicators of mental health difficulties in learners with complex needs
- Clear escalation pathways for staff with concerns
- Joined up working with external agencies including CAMHS, the school's Educational Psychologist and Neath Port Talbot Social Services
- Regular wellbeing check-ins as part of IDP review and pastoral planning

7. Lead Roles and Responsibilities

All staff

All staff of Ysgol Hendrefelin are responsible for:

- Promoting positive mental health in their day-to-day interactions with learners
- Recognising possible indicators of mental health difficulty, including behavioural indicators for learners who communicate non-verbally
- Reporting concerns promptly to the Well-being Lead, Unit Leader or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

- Recording disclosures accurately using MyConcern

Well-being Lead

The Well-being Lead has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the school's response to mental health concerns. This includes managing referrals to CAMHS, liaising with external agencies, supporting staff and overseeing the wellbeing aspects of learner IDPs.

Unit Leaders

Unit Leaders are the first point of contact for staff who have concerns about a learner's mental health. They co-ordinate pastoral support within their unit, attend and/or inform the SLT well-being meeting and escalate to the Well-being Lead or DSO where required.

Education Social Worker / Play Therapist

The Education Social Worker / Play Therapist provides direct therapeutic support to learners identified as requiring it and contributes to multi-agency working around individual learners.

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

If a mental health disclosure raises immediate safeguarding concerns, or if a learner is at risk of harm, staff must contact the DSO for their site without delay:

- Mr P. Thomas — Designated Safeguarding Officer, Bryncoch Site
- Mr N. Lloyd — Designated Safeguarding Officer, Port Talbot Sites

If a concern involves the DSO or a member of the senior leadership team, staff must not report to that individual. Staff must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) directly via Neath Port Talbot local authority. All staff are made aware of this escalation route as part of their safeguarding training.

ALNCo

The ALNCo is responsible for ensuring that mental health and wellbeing targets are reflected in learner IDPs where appropriate, and that support plans are consistent across healthcare and education planning.

Governing Body

The Governing Body of Ysgol Hendrefelin approves this policy and all revisions to it. The Governing Body receives annual reports on the school's approach to learner and staff wellbeing.

8. Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our learners to keep themselves and others mentally and emotionally healthy are embedded within the Health and Well-being area of the Curriculum for Wales, as set out in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

The content and delivery of mental health education will always reflect the specific communication profiles, cognitive levels and sensory needs of the cohort being taught. Teaching will use a range of approaches including visual supports, social stories, sensory resources and AAC where appropriate.

Where appropriate, staff also receive wellbeing sessions that address their own mental health, in recognition that staff wellbeing directly affects learner outcomes.

9. Recognising Warning Signs

Staff at Ysgol Hendrefelin must be alert to signs that a learner may be experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. For learners with complex additional learning needs, many of these signs will be behavioural rather than verbal.

Possible indicators include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Increased self-injurious behaviour or a change in existing self-injurious behaviour
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns (where this information is available from families)
- Withdrawal from preferred activities, interactions or routines
- Increased levels of distress, agitation or challenging behaviour with no evident cause
- A significant change in communication — reduced initiation, withdrawal from AAC use or changes in vocalisation
- Changes in mood that are sustained over time and represent a departure from the learner's baseline
- Lateness or increased absence from school
- Regression in previously established skills

Warning signs must always be taken seriously. Staff must not attribute changes in behaviour to a learner's diagnosis without first considering whether a mental health

or emotional cause may be present. Any concern must be communicated via MyConcern promptly.

10. Managing Disclosures

A learner may disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a peer to any member of staff. This may be through speech, AAC, written communication, drawing or behavioural expression. Staff must be prepared to receive and respond to disclosures in whatever form they arise.

When a learner makes a disclosure, the member of staff must:

1. Remain calm, supportive and non-judgemental
2. Listen without pressing for detail or asking "why"
3. Reassure the learner that they have done the right thing by communicating their concern
4. Avoid making promises of confidentiality
5. Complete the school's disclosure recording form (yellow form) as soon as possible after the disclosure — see Appendix A
6. Inform their Unit Leader or the Well-being Lead without delay
7. Escalate immediately to the DSO for their site if there is any concern that the learner is at immediate risk of harm

For detailed guidance on handling disclosures sensitively, see Appendix C.

11. Confidentiality

Staff must of Ysgol Hendrefelin be honest with learners about confidentiality. Staff must not promise to keep a disclosure confidential. If information needs to be shared with another person, the learner must be told:

- Who the information will be shared with
- What will be shared
- Why it needs to be shared

Learner consent is sought where possible. There are circumstances where information must be shared regardless of consent — specifically when a learner is at risk of harm or when others are at risk. This is addressed in detail in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where there is reason to believe that underlying child protection concerns are present, parents and carers must not be informed. Staff must contact the DSO for their site immediately in those circumstances.

Where it is appropriate to inform parents or carers, this must be done with sensitivity and with the learner's awareness wherever possible. Staff must refer to the guidance in Section 11 below.

All disclosure records are stored securely and treated as confidential. Access is restricted to the relevant staff and senior leaders with a safeguarding responsibility. Records relating to learners with ALN are retained for a minimum of seven years or until the learner reaches the age of 25, whichever is later, in line with GDPR requirements and the school's data retention policy.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of Ysgol Hendrefelin are essential partners in supporting learner mental health. Where it is appropriate to inform a family about a learner's mental health concerns, staff must approach that conversation with care.

Before contacting or meeting with parents or carers, staff must consider:

- Whether the meeting should happen face to face — this is preferable in most cases
- Where the meeting should take place — at school, at home or at a neutral venue
- Who should be present — this may include the learner, depending on their communication profile and level of understanding
- What the agreed aims of the meeting are

Parents and carers may respond to difficult news with distress, confusion or anger. Staff must remain calm and allow time for the parent or carer to process the information. A follow-up meeting or phone call should be offered and, where agreed, booked in at the end of the first conversation.

To support all parents and carers proactively, the school will:

- Provide information about mental health and wellbeing on the school website
- Share details of how parents and carers can raise concerns with the school
- Communicate with parents and carers about the health and wellbeing curriculum their children are accessing
- Provide information about local and national support services — see Appendix B

Communication with families must always use the approach most accessible to that family. This includes translated materials, visual resources and alternative formats where needed.

13. Supporting Peers

When a learner is experiencing mental health difficulties, their peers may also be affected. Within Ysgol Hendrefelin's learner population, peer awareness and peer support must be approached on a highly individualised basis, guided by each learner's communication profile and level of social understanding.

The Well-being Lead and Unit Leader will consider on an individual basis which peers may benefit from additional support, and whether that support is best delivered on a one-to-one or small group basis. These decisions will always involve conversations with the family of the learner concerned.

Where peer support is provided, it will address:

- What it is appropriate for peers to know
- How peers can offer support in ways that are accessible and safe
- Where peers themselves can access support if they are distressed

14. Signposting

Staff, learners and families must be aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Details of these sources are set out in Appendix B.

The school will display relevant sources of support around the school and will highlight these through the curriculum. When signposting learners to sources of support, staff will ensure learners understand:

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

Signposting must always use formats accessible to the individual learner, including visual supports, symbols and AAC-compatible materials where appropriate.

15. Record Keeping

All mental health disclosures and concerns must be recorded using the school's reporting platform, MyConcern.

Records are shared with relevant staff and brought to the SLT well-being meeting for review and action.

Records are stored securely on the school's SharePoint system and/or with the MyConcern platform and treated as confidential. Access is restricted to relevant staff and senior leaders with a safeguarding responsibility. Records relating to learners with ALN are retained for a minimum of seven years or until the learner reaches the age of 25, whichever is later, in accordance with GDPR requirements and the school's data retention policy.

16. Training

Where appropriate, staff will receive training on recognising and responding to mental health issues in learners with complex additional learning needs.

Additional training will be made available to staff who require more in-depth knowledge.

Training needs are identified through the school's performance management process and through the ongoing review of individual learner support plans.

The SLT will maintain a record of training completed across the school and will advise the Headteacher and Governing Body on training priorities.

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years as a minimum, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or school circumstances change. The next review is due in April 2028.

All revisions to this policy must be approved by the Governing Body before implementation.

The Headteacher and Well-being Lead will monitor the implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis and will report to the Governing Body annually on learner and staff wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The school's Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- The school's Positive Handling, Care and Control Policy
- The school's Intimate Care Policy

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
- Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2022)
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) — cross-referenced with Neath Port Talbot Regional Safeguarding Board updates

Appendix A: Sources of Support — School and Community

Within school

Any member of staff with a concern about a learner's mental health should contact:

- Well-being Lead
- Unit Leader
- Education Social Worker / Play Therapist
- DSO for their site (Mr P. Thomas — Bryncoch; Mr N. Lloyd — Port Talbot Sites) where there is a safeguarding dimension

Local and national support

- Neath Port Talbot CAMHS — referrals via GP or school Well-being Lead; see Appendix D for referral guidance
- Neath Port Talbot Social Services: 01639 686802
- Young Minds Parents Helpline: 0800 802 5544 (free, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4pm)
- MIND Cymru: www.mind.org.uk/cymru
- Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours a day)
- Childline: 0800 1111 (free, 24 hours a day)
- NHS 111 Wales: 111
- MindEd (free e-learning for professionals): www.minded.org.uk

This list is reviewed annually by the Well-being Lead. Staff should check that contact details are current before signposting learners or families to any service.

Appendix B: Guidance on Handling Mental Health Disclosures

This guidance is for all staff. It sets out how to respond when a learner communicates a mental health concern, in whatever form that communication takes.

Before the conversation

Be aware that disclosures may be verbal, written, drawn or behavioural. A learner may not use words at all. A significant change in behaviour, affect or engagement may itself be a disclosure.

During the conversation or episode

- Stay calm. Your response sets the tone
- Give the learner your full attention
- Listen. Do not advise, reassure prematurely or attempt to solve the problem immediately
- Do not ask "why" — focus on how the learner is feeling right now
- Use the learner's preferred communication approach — AAC, Makaton, PECS, pointing, or speech, as appropriate
- Do not make promises of confidentiality
- Acknowledge what the learner has communicated: "Thank you for telling me. That took courage."

After the conversation or episode

- Record on MyConcern
- Inform the Unit Leader or Well-being Lead without delay
- Contact the DSO for your site immediately if there is any risk of harm
- Take care of your own wellbeing. Receiving difficult disclosures is emotionally demanding. Speak to your line manager or a colleague if you need support

What to avoid

- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not investigate — your role is to listen and refer, not to establish facts
- Do not contact parents or carers if there is any possibility of a safeguarding concern, without first speaking to the DSO
- Do not leave a learner alone if they are in immediate distress or at risk

Appendix C: Neath Port Talbot CAMHS Referral Guidance

Referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Neath Port Talbot are managed by the Well-being Lead, Education Social Worker / Play Therapist or relevant Unit Leader, in consultation with the learner's family.

Before making a referral, staff must:

- Meet with the parent or carer and, where appropriate, the learner
- Obtain consent for the referral from the parent or carer
- Seek the learner's views using their preferred communication approach
- Have a clear outcome in mind — what are you asking CAMHS to do?
- Be able to evidence what interventions and support the school has already put in place

For urgent referrals, the Well-being Lead must initiate contact by telephone so that CAMHS can advise on the most appropriate next steps.

Contact details

Swansea Bay CAMHS Telephone Single Point of Contact

- Open access 'front door' to Swansea Bay CAMHS
- For all children / young people & their families, and for all professionals
- Provides telephone advice, support and referral triage for all
- Provides access to the CAMHS Crisis Team for urgent referrals
- Provides Duty Clinician support for those already open to CAMHS
- 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.
- Please contact 01639 862744

Swansea Bay CAMHS Crisis Team

- Operates 9am – 9:30pm seven days per week
- Provides direct assessment and short-term follow-up for urgent referrals
- Referrals should be made via the CAMHS Telephone Single Point of Contact / Referral Line (01639 862744) Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and via Morrison Hospital Switchboard (for hospital and GP referrals only) outside of these hours.

[CAMHS - tidyMinds](#)

For further information on accessing CAMHS support in Neath Port Talbot, staff should contact the Well-being Lead in the first instance.

Appendix D: UNCRC — Key Related Articles

Wales was the first country in the UK to embed the UNCRC in domestic law through the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. This policy actively upholds that commitment by placing learner rights at the centre of every decision made in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

Article	Title	Relevance to this policy
Article 2	Non-discrimination	This policy applies equally to all learners regardless of protected characteristic, communication need or disability.
Article 3	Best interests of the child	All decisions about a learner's mental health support are made with their best interests as the primary consideration.
Article 6	Life, survival and development	The policy supports learner wellbeing and development by identifying mental health needs early and connecting learners to appropriate support.
Article 12	Respect for the views of the child	Learner voice is sought in all mental health support planning, using communication approaches appropriate to individual need including AAC, Makaton and PECS.
Article 23	Children with disabilities	The policy is designed to meet the needs of learners with complex additional needs, including ASD, ADHD, BESN and SLD.
Article 24	Right to health	The policy promotes positive mental health and wellbeing as a component of every learner's right to the highest attainable standard of health.
Article 28	Right to education	Mental health support is provided to remove barriers to learning and ensure every learner can access their education.

Article	Title	Relevance to this policy
Article 39	Recovery from trauma	The policy supports learners who have experienced adversity or trauma through targeted therapeutic and pastoral interventions.

Policy Review Record:

Policy Review		Signature	Signature
Date approved by Governors	18/07/2023	<i>R M Blank.</i> (Chair of Governors)	<i>[Signature]</i> (Headteacher)
Date Reviewed	07/07/2026	Mr R. Blank (Chair of Governors)	Mr R. Duford (Headteacher)

