



The 1757 Voices Charter

The Southend Youth Council Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Charter



Introduction

"We, the 1757 Southend students who gave our opinions in the SYC Mental Health survey, believe in better Mental Health and Emotional Well-being provision in schools for all Southend pupils. Our views on our personal Mental Health experiences, the available support services and what we think our schools could provide for us have inspired this Charter, which condenses these wishes and gives greater transparency for our aims. Based directly from our survey responses, these Charter terms specify how we feel our schools can ensure every Southend pupil be better supported with their Mental Health and Emotional Well-being in four key areas: by strengthening trust, having better promotion, increasing support and by creating a more open and safe school environment."

1 Trust

We should be informed about our confidentiality rights when we disclose information about our Mental Health and Emotional Well-being. This should be treated as confidential and handled discreetly. However, if the information raises a concern about the safety of that student or another person we need to be told who else it might be disclosed to and why.

We need to be able to organise appointments for use of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being services discreetly and be able to access them without being collected by a member of staff in person.

We should be able to choose how we contact any Mental Health and Emotional Well-being support services in school and have the option of contacting pastoral support staff via an email address or in a location that ensures us privacy and discretion.

Our counselling sessions should be out of the view of peers.

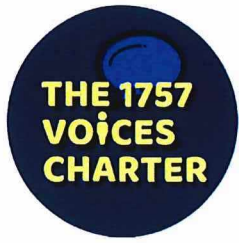
Students should have the option to speak to pastoral support staff who are not in positions of authority over them.

2 Promotion

Our schools should regularly ensure that all students be made aware of how to contact and access the Mental Health and Emotional Well-being and pastoral support within school.

We would like our schools to advertise the Mental Health and Emotional Well-being support services available within school and locally e.g. via posters or assemblies.

We would like to be consulted on the development of our schools' anti-bullying and Mental Health and Emotional Well-being strategies and these should be clearly displayed on our schools' websites.



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3 Support

Our schools' staff need to have regular opportunities to be trained and supported to have the necessary skills, information and awareness to support students' Mental Health and Emotional Well-being.

If there are limits on session numbers for internal school counselling, students should be provided with the option of referral to an external counsellor.

We need our schools to provide us with a designated 'safe space' room in a private and comforting location for students to access freely and discreetly to support students' Mental Health and Emotional Well-being.

4 School environment

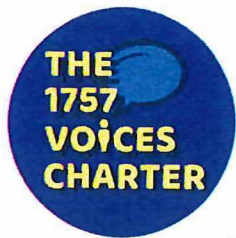
Our schools should deal with all issues of bullying and cyberbullying immediately and consistently.

We need our schools to provide all students with timetabled PSHE lessons which include discussion and learning of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being and coping strategies.

We would like our schools to provide students with awareness and education of Mental Health and Well-being issues, including acknowledging the stressors of everyday life, through forms such as assemblies to create a more understanding and tolerant school environment.

Evidence

Our schools should provide yearly evidence of how well they are delivering the principles of the Charter through methods such as case studies, examples of changes made, and student feedback.



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The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Charter

Supporting notes for Schools



What are the supporting notes?

The supporting notes are a set of guidelines and suggestions to help schools to adhere to the points of the charter. The guidelines offer more detailed advice including examples of charities and organisations to help with teacher training and support for students.

1

Trust

Making young people aware that after 16 they can re-register with the GP with their own number. This could be explained in PSHE lessons for over 16s or put in informational leaflets.

Develop links with local GPs and invite them to speak to pupils about Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health and how they can get help or help themselves.

Let young people know that EWMHS (Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service) will not always accept a referral without parental involvement.

Inform students of safeguarding procedures and confidentiality rights before starting counselling for the first time.

Pastoral support email addresses could be visible on the school's website with the caveat that only school emails can contact them.

Counselling rooms could be dedicated rooms with a closed door or classrooms which are not used by other students at counselling times. Only the counsellor, the student seeking counselling and those they have chosen to bring in should be present during counselling.

If a school is providing a counselling service, the counsellors shouldn't be a subject teacher. A counsellor shouldn't be a teacher and that they may actually be being mentored rather than receiving formal counselling. If they're calling them counsellors then they should be qualified counsellors and this should be stated.

Young people could be given a card to be used discreetly and to leave class to go to appointments.

2

Promotion

Each school year could have an assembly presentation to tell them about who they should contact and what support is available and then the presentation should be made available on the school's website.

Useful contacts and where to go for support could be included in student's planners.

Support Mental Health awareness week, generally held in May. This could involve talks on Emotional Well-being and Mental Health from local services or charities.

The School Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Charter -Supporting notes

Schools to acknowledge the challenges that students face during modern day living – bullying, exam stress, anxiety, stress, lack of sleep and in some cases abuse.

Schools can use posters, informational leaflets and other forms of advertising to ensure that students know about different sources of support and information available to them.

Schools could create a group representative of year groups to consult on anti-bullying and Mental Health and Emotional Well-being strategies or bring to the current school council if there is one.

Organisations that provide mental health support for young people in the UK:

Relate South Essex

Website: <http://www.relatesouthessex.co.uk>

Tel: 01702 342901

A charity providing youth counselling and meditation, among other things, for those based in Basildon, Thurrock and Southend. The counselling is often at cost depending on income. They have a location in Southend.

Kooth

Website: <https://www.kooth.com>

A digital mental health support service where children and young people have easy access to an online community of peers and a team of experienced counsellors. The access is free, has no waiting lists and is completely anonymous. Many counties in the UK have commissioned Kooth, including Essex.

Young Minds

Website: <https://youngminds.org.uk>

A UK based charity for supporting young people's mental health. They offer resources to educate on mental health issues and teaching resources. They also offer teacher training and speakers for those working with children and young people.

Mind

Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk>

A UK based charity that provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. They have an Infoline to offer callers confidential help and provide information on mental health.

Samaritans

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org>

UK Hotline: 116 123

A 24/7 mental health hotline for those experiencing mental health issues.

Childline

Website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Hotline: 0800 1111

A confidential service for those who are under 19 in the UK to talk about issues they might be going through. They can be contacted by telephone, email or a one-to-one counselling chat.

The School Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Charter -Supporting notes

The Mix

Website: <https://www.themix.org.uk>

Tel: 0808 808 4994

A UK based charity who provide mental health support and information for under 25s. They have options to access support with them over phone, email, peer to peer and counselling services.

SOS Domestic Abuse Projects

Website: <https://www.sosdap.org>

Admin Tel: 01702 868026

A Southend based charity that aims to support people affected by domestic abuse. They can help educate about the impact of domestic abuse, support individuals and families to make healthy choices and provide refuge accommodation to high risk women and children.

Each school year could have an assembly presentation to tell them about who they should contact and what support is available and then the presentation should be made available on the school's website.

3

Support

Information about appointments to be shared electronically and privately e.g. direct email or option to send receive/text messages

The school office inform the young people's teacher that they will be leaving for an appointment.

Being able to choose how young people are invited and brought to sessions e.g. waiting somewhere first and then being brought in.

Schools staff should have regular opportunities either in house or outside to be trained on Emotional Well-being and Mental Health e.g. Healthy Schools or EWMHS training.

Students should be given the option to speak to someone who isn't in a position of authority over them and doesn't teach them. For example, if only teaching staff are available, it's acceptable as long as the student can speak to someone who doesn't teach them and doesn't have a role of authority (e.g. head of year) over their year group.

Pastoral support staff should inform students of external options for counselling and the possibility of referral if there are limits on session numbers which mean a student must stop counselling.

The "safe space" room could provide somewhere for students who are struggling with anxiety or stress during class to be dismissed to and would allow students to have somewhere to calm down from the stresses of school life during other times.

The School Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Charter -Supporting notes

4 School environment

Schools to have a dedicated Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Champion or representative.

Emotional Well-being and Mental Health support staff e.g. pastoral support staff." Have a regular Emotional Well-being and Mental Health agenda point for School Council and staff meetings.

Offering relaxation sessions at around periods of stress e.g. exam time.

Dedicating one of the inset days to Emotional Well-being and Mental Health.

Participating in existing accreditation e.g. Healthy Schools awards.

Regular surveys to establish what young people and staff think about how the school is performing with regards to Emotional Well-being and Mental Health.

Assemblies and PSHE lessons can explain what Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing is and help to de-stigmatise it. Coping strategies and how to best help friends can also be covered.

5 Evidence

Evidence should be submitted by case studies, written or electronic feedback from students in their own words, through surveys or polls and by encouraging students to review how Emotional Well-being and Mental Health is supported in their school.

Schools could sign up to annual SHUE survey (Health and Well-being) – there is a focus on Mental Health for years 8 and 10.

In addition, feedback from school staff could be included to share successes and ideas and to celebrate progress.

Evidence could document changes made to follow the charter or examples of how the school keeps to the charter with their practice.

Students who use or have used support services could be given questionnaires regarding whether they are satisfied with their support. This could include different areas such as privacy, whether they feel it has helped them or ease of access. - a suggestion that would allow students to review their own mental health services within their school.

Evidence will be collected electronically by Southend Youth Council on an annual basis and reviewed in line with the Charter.