**Roselyn House School and The RHISE Centre**

**SEAL Curriculum incorporating Mindfulness**

**and Wellbeing Policy**

**Background**

At Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service, we experience a wide range and degree of mental health problems. These could manifest as difficulties such as problems of mood (anxiety or depression), problems of conduct (oppositional problems and more severe conduct problems including aggression), self-harming, substance abuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Some children and young people may have other recognised disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), attachment disorder, autism or pervasive developmental disorder, an anxiety disorder, a disruptive disorder or schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Inappropriate / disturbing / challenging behaviours can be interpreted as a symptom or communication of an underlying need or difficulty. In order to address such behaviours we must address these underlying needs / difficulties. It is crucial to identify, understand and then address/support the underlying factors that impact on children and young people, such as Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties, attachment difficulties, unhelpful thought processes or learning needs.

Some inappropriate / disturbing / challenging behaviours can be avoided or significantly reduced and managed through proactively promoting and supporting positive social, emotional and mental health. Roselyn House School / The RHISE Service tolerates a wide variety of behaviours but does not accept them as inevitable and unchangeable. An individual’s behaviours will be prioritised and through planned intervention and adherence to the rewards and sanctions in the policy, ensure that the consequences to behaviour are specific and limited.

We have a mutually supportive whole school approach and a whole staff responsibility to work within the agreed parameters of the Behaviour Policy and its procedures. We intend to support our young people to develop strategies in order to help them to develop coping strategies in order to manage their own daily lives both in education and in the outside world.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for our young people to access appropriate outside Mental Health support and aim to facilitate this by providing training for our staff, working with in house therapists and providing a SEAL Curriculum and tutor/ mentor time which look at Mindfulness and wellbeing; in order to become an attachment aware school and recognise that often our young peoples’ lives are shaped by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service endeavours to reinforce the behaviour policy through the valued partnership with parents/ carers and they will be asked to complete behaviour/ emotional literacy profiles to help staff at Roselyn House School to develop a greater understanding of their child.

We have a whole school approach to creating an inclusive and positive school ethos around positivity and support for others. We place a strong emphasis on the emotional health and wellbeing of all members of our school community. SEMH needs are central to the effectiveness of our school and an Attachment Aware approach to our Curriculum.

**Attachment Awareness**

A child needs to make a secure attachment with the main significant adult or adults in its life from a very early stage, and then have consistent and warm relationships, from there onwards throughout childhood for emotional and psychological good health.

Most babies are able to make this attachment and most parents able to bond with their babies from the moment they are born. Some are not. On the strength and reliability, consistency and warmth of these bonds, much else depends for that child’s emotional health and wellbeing, for many years after infancy, possibly for life. The secure child will develop an internal model of themselves as lovable and of others as reliable and trustworthy - a crucial basis for self-esteem and resilience.

Many of our students at Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service have not been able to form early life attachments which are appropriate and necessary and as a result the attachment pattern which developed was insecure or even a ‘disorganised’ one. Significant adults’ responses to the child have been inconsistent, neglectful, unskilled, manipulative, cruel or simply absent. Research shows that where these positive attachments have not been made then a young person will have difficulty with self-regulation and the ability to express their emotions in an appropriate manner; not even having the emotional literacy capable to do so.

Often, these young people can behave in ways that confuse, wrong foot, hurt and frustrate those who live, learn and work with them. They can swing between reasonable and unreasonable, mild and furious, open and withdrawn, which can affect the relationships they have and the ability to sustain them.

At Roselyn House School and The RHISE Service, we provide training for staff and work within a Behaviour Policy which is attachment aware. We work closely with Essere Therapies Limited, a group of therapists who have attachment theory as the centre of their model. We provide staff to work with our students as support and teachers who value our young people and allow them to develop self-concept and secure attachment. Our aim is to provide validation towards our young people and their positive achievements. We want our students to trust their own thoughts and feelings and have the curriculum through which to do so.

This then leads to the belief of:

* I am a good person and people like me
* I approach others with warmth and confidence
* Others respond well to me
* My positive beliefs are affirmed

Through our curriculum for SEAL, Mindfulness and Wellbeing, we teach resilience and the ability to bounce back and stay grounded after bad stuff happens and it is vital for every child to have it. Resilience supports healthy development and learning and significantly improves health outcomes in later life. We are looking at our young people becoming self- resilient and to have the necessary tools to become stronger in a safe environment.

We aim to teach our young people to feel safe through:

**Cultural Safety**: An environment where their background and experiences are respected and acknowledge as valid and important. For example, they are treated with respect, kindness and curiosity. Their history and culture is considered when making decisions about the child.

**Physical Safety**: An environment where they are safe from being physically hurt. For example, where no-one will kick, hit, shake, drown or burn or deliberately pretends a child is ill or purposefully makes them ill.

**Emotional Safety**: An environment where they are safe from being emotionally hurt in any way. For example, shaming, teasing, taunting, threatening, isolating, ignoring, inappropriate expectations or silencing.

**Social Safety**: An environment where they can be taught how to make positive and meaningful relationships with other people. For example, key adults model respectful relationships with other parents, colleagues & professionals and the child has opportunities to meet and socialise with their peers and a school environment where relationships are prioritised.

This is achieved by working with Parents/ Carers and other relevant Professionals.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)**

The term Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is used to describe a wide range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to whilst growing up. ACEs range from experiences that directly harm a child (such as suffering physical, verbal or sexual abuse, and physical or emotional neglect) to those that affect the environment in which a child grows up (including parental separation, domestic violence, mental illness, alcohol abuse, drug use or incarceration).

A Blackburn with Darwen study found that almost half (47%) of adults across the Borough have suffered at least one ACE, with 12% of adults in Blackburn with Darwen having suffered four or more ACEs. The study has shown that the more ACEs individuals experience in childhood, the greater their risk of a wide range of health-harming behaviours and diseases as an adult.

The English ACE population study found the following across England:

* 53% Had experienced 0 ACEs
* 23% Had experienced 1 ACE
* 15% Had experienced 2-3 ACEs
* 9% Had experienced 4+ ACEs

When exposed to stressful situations, the "fight, flight or freeze" response floods the brain with corticotrophin-releasing hormones (CRH), which usually forms part of a normal and protective response that subsides once the stressful situation passes. However, when repeatedly exposed to ACEs, CRH is continually produced by the brain, which results in the child remaining permanently in this heightened state of alert and unable to return to their natural relaxed and recovered state. Children and young people who are exposed to ACEs therefore have increased – and sustained - levels of stress. In this heightened neurological state a young person is unable to think rationally and it is physiologically impossible for them to learn.

ACEs can therefore have a negative impact on development in childhood and this can in turn give rise to harmful behaviours, social issues and health problems in adulthood. There is now a great deal of research demonstrating that ACEs can negatively affect lifelong mental and physical health by disrupting brain and organ development and by damaging the body's system for defending against diseases. The more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the chance of health and/or social problems in later life.

ACEs research shows that there is a strong dose-response relationship between ACEs and poor physical and mental health, chronic disease (such as type II diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; heart disease; cancer), increased levels of violence, and lower academic success both in childhood and adulthood.

Epidemiological evidence from Blackburn with Darwen (2012) showed that there was increased risk (adjusted odds ratio) of having health and social problems in adulthood for those individuals who had experienced 4+ ACEs, compared to those with no ACEs. Individuals with 4 or more ACEs were:

* 4.5 times more likely to have become pregnant or got somebody pregnant under 18 years of age
* 30.6 times more likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
* 1.8 times more likely to be morbidly obese
* 2.3 times more likely to have liver or digestive disease
* 1.5 times more likely to have stayed overnight in hospital in the last 12 months
* 3.7 times more likely to a regular heavy drinker
* 3.9 times more likely to be a current smoker
* 9.7 times more likely to be a heroin or crack user
* 5.2 times more likely to have been hit in the last 12 months
* 7.9 times more likely to have hit someone in the last 12 months
* 8.8 times more likely to have been in prison or cells

**SEAL Curriculum incorporating Mindfulness and Wellbeing**

At Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service we have designed a Curriculum for SEAL and built it into our Pathway to Adulthood curriculum. (See Pathway to Adulthood Curriculum Policy).

The aim of these sessions is to develop resilience, understanding of self/ others, recognition of how you fit in the world around you, acceptance of others and the ability to show empathy. The ability to look after yourself in order to go on into adulthood with fewer ACES and the respect for your wellbeing and health.

**Social, Emotional, Aspects of Learning**

SEAL is “a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and wellbeing of all who learn and work in schools” (DCSF, 2007, p.4)

SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman’s (1995) model of emotional intelligence. These are:

* Self-awareness
* Self-regulation (managing feelings)
* Motivation
* Empathy
* Social skills

**Self-Awareness**

Knowing and valuing myself and understanding how I think and feel. When we can identify and describe our beliefs, values, and feelings, and feel good about ourselves, our strengths and our limitations, we can learn more effectively and engage in positive interactions with others.

**Self-regulation and management of feelings**

Managing how we express emotions, coping with and changing difficult and uncomfortable feelings, and increasing and enhancing positive and pleasant feelings When we have strategies for expressing our feelings in a positive way and for helping us to cope with difficult feelings and feel more positive and comfortable, we can concentrate better, behave more appropriately, make better relationships, and work more cooperatively and productively with those around us.

**Motivation**

Working towards goals, and being more persistent, resilient and optimistic. When we can set ourselves goals, work out effective strategies for reaching those goals, and respond effectively to setbacks and difficulties, we can approach learning situations in a positive way and maximise our ability to achieve our potential.

**Empathy**

Understanding others’ thoughts and feelings and valuing and supporting others. When we can understand, respect, and value other people’s beliefs, values, and feelings, we can be more effective in making relationships, working with, and learning from, people from diverse backgrounds.

**Social skills**

Building and maintaining relationships and solving problems, including skills interpersonal ones. When we have strategies for forming and maintaining relationships, and for solving problems and conflicts with other people, we have the skills that can help us achieve all of these learning outcomes, for example by reducing negative feelings and distraction while in learning situations and using our interactions with others as an important way of improving our learning experience.

These have been broken down further at Roselyn House School into Attainment Objectives against which each student can be tracked. They are as follows:

**Self Awareness**

* AO1: Knowing myself
* AO2: Understanding my feelings

**Managing my feelings**

* AO3: Managing my expression of emotions
* AO4: Changing uncomfortable feelings and increasing pleasant feelings

**Motivation**

* AO5: Working towards goals
* AO6: Persistence, resilience and optimism
* Evaluation and Review

**Empathy**

* AO8: Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others
* AO9: Valuing and supporting others

**Social Skills**

* AO10: Building and maintaining relationships
* AO11: Belonging to groups
* AO12: Solving problems, including interpersonal ones

**Wellbeing**

“Mental Health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises their 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 own community” – World Health Organisation

This can be achieved by the following areas:

* Relationships (social)
* Emotions (emotional)
* Body (Physical)
* Thoughts (mental)
* Environment (environmental)
* Spirit (spiritual)
* Finances/ standard of living (Financial/ Security)

In order for our young people to develop to look after their own well-being and understand what makes them work and how they can overcome barriers to life, this will be taught through the following areas:

* **Connect –** connect with the people around you: your family, friends, peers, staff and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships
* **Be active –** get involved in physical activities, PE, break times, workshops, after school. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
* **Keep learning –** learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence.
* **Give to others –** even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.
* **Be mindful –** be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is taking notice of how your body feels and what you see, smell and taste. It helps you feel the emotions in your body, perhaps through a tightness somewhere, or a good sensation. Mindfulness is also noticing what your mind is doing.

When you notice what is happening around you, you focus more deeply, and that attention to your own senses will help you improve in diverse areas of your life.

Improved focus can help you achieve at higher levels.

When you notice what is happening around you, it can help you to calm down when you’re sad, angry or frustrated. Mindfulness helps you deal with tough emotions, and mindfulness can make you happy and feel good.

Mindfulness is about paying attention in a particular way – on purpose, in the present moment and without judgment.

It helps to develop:

* self-awareness
* emotional balance
* impulse control
* recognition of our inner and outer experiences
* understanding of how experiences affect our well-being.

Naturally, we tend to be reactive. For example, when someone says something we don’t like to hear, we react. Sometimes we say something that we would like to take back the moment after we blurt it out. Or we are knocked down by a heavy emotion and it can take days to bounce back, sometimes even weeks.

Mindfulness helps us create space between a strong emotion and our actions. We learn to deal with positive and negative experiences more calmly and by making better decisions.

When we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings, we can respond in a more clever way, without hurting our own feelings or the feelings of others.

As we create more emotional balance, we are less easily knocked down by our emotions, but in moments when we are knocked down, we bounce back faster.

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom” – Victor Frankl

Mindfulness helps us sustain our awareness more often and for longer periods. We can begin to practice mindfulness by adding many brief moments of awareness into our lives on a daily basis.

This awareness comes with lots of benefits.

Mindfulness can benefit by:

* helping to create space between the emotions we have and the actions we use to respond to them
* helps to focus
* can make us feel better emotionally and physically.

Also research states Mindfulness can:

* decrease stress and anxiety
* improve health
* promote better sleep
* improve focus and awareness
* help with better problem solving
* improve impulse control
* increase compassion and kindness
* promote stronger relationships
* altruism
* higher life satisfaction.

Being mindful helps you:

* pay attention better
* be less distractible
* learn more
* stay calm under stress
* avoid getting too upset about things
* slow down instead of rush
* listen better to others
* be more patient
* get along better
* feel happier and enjoy things more

**Resilience**

As a whole school approach at Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service we aim to develop resilience in our young people by:

* Promoting positive social connections between staff and students, among students, and between schools and home
* Nurturing positive qualities, such as empathy, optimism, or forgiveness, and give students a chance to use them
* Noticing and reinforce qualities that are key to resilience
* Avoiding focusing on failure or negative behaviours
* Teaching by example, which is an effective approach; train staff to develop the same qualities
* Applying restorative justice techniques by giving students a structured opportunity to work difficulties out by encouraging reflection and empathy
* Fostering feelings of competence and self-efficacy
* Setting high expectations for students; teach them to set realistic, achievable goals, and also how to reach out for help when needed.

We introduce specific resilience strategies under the Resilience Framework October 2012, adapted from Hart and Blincow which follows the following:

* Basics
* Belonging
* Learning
* Coping
* Core Self

This is then further supported through the SEAL Scheme of work.

**Forest Schools**

The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive experiences and participation in engaging and motivating achievable tasks and activities in a woodland environment, helping to develop personal, social and emotional skills through:

* Independence
* Self-discovery
* Confidence
* Communication skills
* Raised self esteem

These sessions take place in the school grounds, on Outdoor Education in woodland and as part of Roselyn House Outdoor Centre (RHOC Programme), taking place at approved sites. These follow comprehensive risk assessment. See Educational Visits Policy.

Young people will visit the same wild space on a regular basis and through play, learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others.

Young people in a variety of learning opportunities, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Through this experience, our young people will be given the opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This helps promote an understanding of the World, the environment and everything within it through the use of their emotions, imagination and senses. Reflective practice will then be used to ensure transference of learning potential.

**Conclusion**

At Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service, our SEAL, Mindfulness and Wellbeing curriculum is not exclusive to the lessons in which it is taught and is a whole school approach; covering many aspects of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning. It is also embedded within the PSHE Curriculum and aspects covered within the CCC Curriculum. See Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy. It is an integral part of Roselyn House Outdoor Curriculum (See RHOC criteria) and is part of the transport process, mentor sessions and tutor time that the school uses. It helps our young people develop a sense of self and independence towards understanding the importance of their own well-being in order to move into adult life with more resilience, coping strategies, understanding of mental health and the desire to look after yourself whilst being mindful of others, the people that surround you and the World we live in.

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**S.Damerall**