



## Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

### Introduction:

Kimichi School works naturally and organically with students who need general and targeted support with their SEMH needs. These can be from EHCP requirements to the natural ebb and flow of mental health. This policy is an attempt to name what we as a staff body do automatically and not a doctrine that should be followed in all circumstances.

### 1. Principles

- 1:1 SEMH needs are universal for students and adults alike.
- 1:2 Such needs can often be met through treating each student as an individual within the school environment as opposed to 'just' a list of needs or diagnoses.
- 1:3 Where SEMH needs require a specific intervention, the school will seek to use one multi-faceted system throughout the school and its sixth form.

### 2. Aims

- 2:1 Provide students, staff, parents, visitors and governors a clear and concise system to use for students if and when necessary and appropriate.
- 2:2 Any system shall be embedded into the ethos of the school and shall sit alongside and compliment strategies already in place for individuals
- 2:3 Any system shall be used for all students regardless of a mandated SEMH need.

### 3. Objectives

- 3:1 Growth Mindset (*Carol Dweck, Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*) will be the main methodology that informs any system built.
- 3:2 Any such system will be able to react and adapt to the changing needs of the students in front of the teacher at any one point
- 3:3 Associated imagery and language will be used by all staff naturally through the school day and throughout lessons
- 3:4 Any such system will be introduced to students via the LIFE curriculum thus achieving the essential embedding of the system.

### 4. The System

- 4:1 ***Closed Fist & Open Hand*** – we assume that students will identify with this binary emotional choice which is actually multi-faceted depending on the situation the system is applied to (*definitions not limited to*):

- **Closed Fist**
  - Fixed mindset
  - Not asking for help
  - Struggling
  - In distress
  - Emotionally compromised
  - Hurt
  - Angry
  - Closed off
  
- **Open Hand**
  - Asking for help
  - Reaching out
  - Enquiring
  - Growing
  - Hoping
  - Welcoming
  - Friendship
  - Advice

4:2 Students will use prompts from displays and teachers to assess their own emotional resilience and subsequent response to any given situation

4:3 Such prompts could be an associated words above and around a closed fist and open hand

4:4 The open hand will have 5 key points (one for each finger) that can be remembered by all in the school community (as relevant) and will eventually become a lifelong habit for students who face any barrier in life moving forward:

1. How am I feeling?
2. Why do I think I'm feeling this way?
3. What do I think I need?
4. Could a friend help me?
5. Is it time to ask for help?

4:5 The role of **thinking** is crucial – the student must be constantly checking their own thinking against the situation in which they find themselves both academically and socially

4:6 If the student encounters a barrier (a difficult sum, a hard question or a confrontational social situation) they should go through the points until they have an answer and can process it.

- Eg: Student A does not understand the algebra question. In an ideal world where this system is fully embedded and behaviours are learnt, they will:

**1. How am I feeling?**

- **Frustrated.** Move on to the next question.

**2. Why do I think I'm feeling this way?**

- Here they analyse the emotion and decide whether it's a genuine difficulty or a fixed mindset:

- **I have tried and tried but I just don't understand.** Move on to the next question
- **I cannot do this.** Recognition of a fixed mindset might be enough for the student to reassess the situation, take an appropriate break and come back to the question later with a growth mindset (or an open hand). However, if they are not yet resilient enough to do this then move on to the next question

### 3. What do I think I need?

- Do they need extra time, another method, alternative explanations or another technique used in alternative settings from their own CBT, SOLAR, CAMHS etc. If this can be easily identified then move on to the next question

### 4. Could a friend help me?

- We want to encourage peer guidance and peer learning that not only compliments our behaviour policy and Head Student/House Captain/House structure but also feeds into the LIFE curriculum regarding adult problem-solving skills.
- If a friend can be approached without disturbing the class then this should be the first route accessed. Teachers should allow time for such occurrences should the need arise. Teachers should encourage peer learning and discussion

### 5. Is it time to ask for help?

- The final step, if 1-4 have not provided a solution, is to ask the teacher for help.

## 5. Next Steps

5:1 If a student has reached step 5 then the teacher could talk them through the decisions made at each of those steps identifying and reinforcing the positive nature of each decision.

5:2 The teacher should use their professional judgement as to the next stage depending upon the context of the difficulty encountered:

- **Social**
  - Restorative discussion between the conflicting individuals using the Open Hand approach as a basis for discussion
  - Defer to HT/DHT
- **Academic**
  - If a teacher discovers a fixed mindset then the approach is around moving them to a growth mindset
  - A genuine difficulty might lead the teacher to investigate further by speaking to the SENCO regarding specific EHCP needs or those associated with a specific individual. For instance, dyscalculia needs to be addressed as a diagnosis and not treated simply as a result of a fixed mindset

5:3 Teachers are expected to teach, however, and are not de-facto councillors. If satisfactory progress is not made by the end of these solutions, then the teacher could inform the SENCO who would investigate further using such known methods as the standard SDQ.

## **6. Monitoring**

- Feeds into the LIFE curriculum which is regularly updated
- Consistent approach across the school to positive mental health, active engagement in wellness and mindfulness as well as national days that recognise such days.
- SEMH lead in the school will take responsibility for the day to day management of SEMH issues and the evaluate the effectiveness of the system in place.
- External SEMH specialist to evaluate the effectiveness of the system in place.
- Regular staff training and courses in mindfulness, wellbeing and other associated pedagogical approaches to good SEMH practice.
- Staff meetings occur to evaluate sessions and to create curriculum links in response to real-time issues
- Staff who are trained in Child Psychology or CBT should materially contribute to the evolution of the SEMH systems in the school
- Parent and student surveys
- Feedback sought from School Council

**This policy agreed on (date) 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

**By (name) Kirstie Berry**

**(position) Chair of Governors**

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