



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.