Cambian

Cambian Home Tree School

Health Education Policy

2025 -2026

Reviewed by:	Simon Paynter
Date of next review:	November 2026

1.	Description and Ethos of The Home Tree School

The Home Tree School is an Independent School operating within the Cambian Group, a subsidiary of CareTech Community Services Ltd., who are the proprietors.

Our vision is that pupils will be supported to develop self-esteem, confidence, respect and consideration for others, to enable them to become effective and contributing citizens for the 21st Century. Through an interesting, exciting and tailor-made curriculum, they will be encouraged to develop a love of learning so that each pupil can reach the best levels of attainment that their ability allows. Every young person's talents will be recognised, developed and celebrated within a caring school community.

Our approach to education is to inspire and engage our learners through a wide range of positive learning experiences. Pupils are able to develop self-esteem and personal resilience. Our school community believes in showing respect for one another which results in a positive and happy school.

Our concern is and always will be to help our pupils to do their best and to leave our care well-rounded and prepared young people.

For a more detailed description of what the school offers see School Prospectus.

The pupils

All young people at Home Tree School have social, emotional and mental health needs often accompanied by a range of additional learning needs. Most of the pupils have had interrupted histories in education and care. There are a wide variety of attainments on admission. All have fragile self-esteem and demonstrate difficulties with authority and a lack of trust in adults. Many have experienced loss and trauma, leading to attachment difficulties. As a result, many experience difficulties in forming and maintaining appropriate, positive relationships with others.

Pupils are:

- aged 11 to 16;
- placed within the residential setting of Cambian Group;
- residents from placing authorities throughout the United Kingdom;
- most have SEN or considerable gaps in knowledge- some students are in receipt of an EHC plan

Each learner will be engaged in a personalised learning programme that is appropriate to their age and ability. Baseline assessment is used to formulate learning goals and a curriculum targeted to the needs of the individual. Literacy and numeracy are at the core of the curriculum and for key stage 4 and 5 learners there are opportunities to follow a range of formal qualifications and vocational experiences.

As a member of the Cambian Group we share a common vision statement:-

"To actively enable each and every one of the people in our care to achieve their personal best, however it is defined by or for them".

The Home Tree School Whole School Objectives/ Ethos:

1) To inspire through an academic, creative, flexible learning environment which meets individual needs.
2) Support individuals to build resilience, to develop confidence, achieve and become independent learners.

The Home Tree School Motto:

Reach for the stars

The Home Tree School Values

Kindness, Respect, Equity

The Aims of our School and our Curriculum

By working collaboratively with care staff, the clinical team and young people we aim to:

- Provide a positive, safe and caring environment within which young people and staff feel happy and secure in the process of learning;
- Remove/reduce a young person's barriers to learning;
- Provide young people with access to quality education and pastoral care which will enhance personal development, stimulate growth and provide equal opportunity;
- Develop young people's self-esteem, independence and awareness of, and consideration for the feelings and the needs of others in the school and within the community at large;
- Encourage young people to positively manage their own behaviour and difficulties;
- Establish a climate within which young people and adults can interact and relate, engendering high levels of mutual interest and personal respect;
- Develop the skills needed in each young person so that they can be as independent as possible, make safe choices and be ready for life after school;
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets each young person's needs, statutory requirements, and for those with special needs, the Education, Health and Care Plan;
- Work in close partnership with parents/carers, the clinical team and other professionals.

We strive to deliver a curriculum that meets the three intentions below:

	Intention 1- Develop our sense of self	Intention 2- Develop our sense of others	Intention 3- Develop our sense of the world
INTENT	• To develop a strong sense of personal character • To ensure high levels of mental and physical wellbeing • To be passionate about learning and life	• To understand equity for all and challenge inequality • To support the wellbeing of others • To be tolerant of others and understand everyone has their own path	• To use the world sustainably • To understand and respect rules and laws • To take part in enrichment experiences that promote & develop understanding of being a positive citizen

2 Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB)

Rationale

Wellbeing is all about our holistic health, including the physical and emotional. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged, we're resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as 'bounce back' from life's challenges.
Mentally Healthy Schools, 2019

At The Home Tree School we place great value on protecting the Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) of all members of our community. We recognise that for various reasons, the young people we work with all have mental health issues at times; and we acknowledge that the environment we work in can be stressful. We recognise that schools have a central role to play in promoting and protecting positive MHWB. Therefore we look after the MHWB of our staff and students through a framework of different approaches: including proactive strategies, responsive measures and specialised targeted interventions, drawing on the professional expertise of all those who are part of our organisation. This document sets these out in detail.

3 Proactive Measures

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

We believe it is important to talk openly about mental health. We recognise that life has its ups and downs and that at times, these can be difficult to cope with by ourselves. Therefore we teach the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others mentally healthy as a core part of our PSHE curriculum. Topics covered include the concepts of mental health and ill-health; relationship and sex education; developing resilience; recognising and managing difficult feelings; and effective strategies to cope when life gets hard.

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance[1] to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Developing Healthy Habits

We provide many formal and informal opportunities through the curriculum and beyond to help our students develop habits for positive mental health. We do this through:

- **Encouraging play and having fun** together e.g. through tutor activities, Enrichment and 1:1/group Activities;
- Enabling them to be **part of a community** in school and beyond: e.g. charity work; School Council; Voluntary Work; Pupil Voice activities;
- **Keeping active** e.g. through PE and Outdoor Education; gardening; and at break/lunch time;
- Promoting **healthy eating** e.g. through Food Technology lessons, and work with the Care Team;
- Helping them **manage transitions** e.g. daily tutor time; reflections; clear and predictable structure to the day; consistent daily timetable;
- **Celebrating success** in all forms e.g. e-praise reward points; weekly awards; positive behaviour management strategies; highlighting staff achievements in De-Brief and Supervision; sharing good news with their Care Team;
- **Caring for each other** e.g. modelling positive relationships between staff; the pastoral role of the form tutor; restorative practices to repair and rebuild relationships following incidents; a no-tolerance approach to bullying; kindness as a school value and running through our school.
- Ensuring all staff and students have **regular breaks** and are encouraged to look after themselves;
- **Learning strategies that will help when times are hard** e.g. through 1:1 key worker sessions; through PSHE lessons; developing emotional literacy;
- **Helping each other to manage the difficult times** e.g. staff daily de-briefing; staff supervision; key role of the form tutor; multi-agency team support for every child; consistent use of PILLARS de-escalation strategies when a student is in a crisis.

The Role of the Tutor

Every pupil is part of a tutor group with an allocated form tutor. The form tutor is key: they provide consistent pastoral support; they monitor progress academically and socially; they encourage involvement, commitment and high standards of work and behaviour. We start every morning with a meet and greet session to support the students in their transition from home to school; to help them prepare for the day ahead; to pick up any issues or worries that the student may have that day; to review what has gone well and where difficulties may have occurred previously: helping each pupil plan for success. Each tutor group also has a daily tutor time to provide the opportunity for more in-depth work on individual or group issues, and as an opportunity to spend some relaxed time together as a group.

Positive Behaviour Management

Many of our pupils have attachment difficulties and our behaviour policy is underpinned by the Nurture Group Principles. These foster positive mental health and create an environment that is conducive to emotional development.

These principles are:

- **Children develop social, emotional and behavioural skills developmentally:** their emotional stage of development may differ from their chronological age- we try to work with them at the level they are at;

- **The classroom offers a safe base** that reduces anxiety, where adults are reliable and consistent;

- Nurturing approaches are key to **developing positive self-esteem**;

- **Language is a vital means of communication** to help us put thoughts and feelings into words;

- **All behaviour is communication**;

- **Transitions are significant** and need to be managed carefully and with support.

We take a positive and proactive approach to behaviour management ensuring that our expectations are clear, and that these are reinforced consistently across the school. We support our students on an individual level when they are in difficulty, and work with the multi-professional team to plan and implement individual support plans that take social, emotional and mental health needs into consideration.

For a more detailed description please see the Behaviour Policy

Signposting and Support

We ensure that all staff and students are aware of the sources of support within school and beyond. Every student is supported by a personal tutor, their Care Team and their clinician- these professionals work together to monitor every young person's MHWB, to identify issues quickly and to create a plan of support.

We display information about sources of support in communal areas such as the atrium and displays through-out the school. We also regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. When we do this, we increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring they understand:

- What help is available

- Who it is aimed at

- How to access it

- Why to access it

- What is likely to happen next.

Staff training

- All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

- The Head Teacher and the home/clinical team have monthly TAC meetings (or sooner if required) to discuss issues relating to the MHWB of our students and staff can access formal training and support about specific issues such as Attachment Disorder and Autism awareness. Over the last year the whole staff team have had specific training in: OCD, self-harm and eating disorders.

- Formal training opportunities are offered as part of the organisation's CPD programme, delivered by specialist practitioners.

- Where the need to do so becomes evident, we host additional training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff mental health and wellbeing

At The Home Tree School, we recognise that our most valuable resource is our staff team. Staff deserve to work in a supportive environment that enables them to be the best they can be, to experience job satisfaction and gives them the capacity to fulfil their role with regards to our students.

- Formal support: All staff have access to one to one supervision with their line manager on a regular basis but at least once a half term. They are encouraged to request additional supervision if required. This is an opportunity for their line manager to check in with them and discuss any concerns or worries the staff member may have, as well as any concerns the line manager may have picked up.

- Informal support: We are a small school with a close-knit supportive staff team. The teaching team meets on a daily basis at the start and end of the day. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice with their colleagues- reflecting on their teaching as well as on how best to support and respond to the behaviour of the students. We support and care for each other, especially when there has been an incident or when it appears that a member of our team is in difficulty. The headteacher has an 'open door' policy and encourages all members of the team to approach her with any issue, worry or concern they may have.

- Work/life balance: Evidence shows that teachers feel a responsibility to their colleagues, pupils, students and schools even when they are not working. We promote the importance of achieving a healthy work-life balance; open dialogue between line managers and staff about workload, and we encourage a culture of 'working smart not working long'. All staff have regular breaks during the school day and are encouraged to look after their colleagues and ensure they take breaks too.

- CareTech provides a free Employee Assistance Programme. All employees can access confidential support and advice relating to a range of issues including stress, health, workload and family issues. This service is

available 24 hours a day for 365 days a year. Telephone: 0800 030 5182. Information about this service is given to staff on induction and is on display in the staff room.

4 Responsive Measures

Staff responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific remit include:

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Louise Brown (DSL) as soon as possible.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Supporting Students with Mental Health Issues

Mental illness can have a range and complexity of causes, however risk factors include: childhood abuse, trauma or neglect; family breakdown; bereavement and loss of a loved one; social disadvantage, poverty or debt; parental mental illness; and being in care. All our students have experienced some or all of these and are therefore more susceptible to mental ill-health than their mainstream peer group.

At The Home Tree we are able to respond quickly at the first signs that a young person is in difficulty. We provide high staffing levels; a depth and breadth of professional expertise on our team; access to the on-site therapy team; and effective multi-agency working.

Every student at the school has an allocated clinician. The school works closely with these professionals to enable the young people to attend therapy sessions and ensure any advice provided by the clinician is being followed in school.

Every student has a behaviour management plan which sets out the strategies and approaches that support them best when they are in difficulty.

When a student is in crisis, the school works closely with their clinical and care team to put together and implement a plan of support.

Supporting other Students

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, sometimes friends learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents/carers/social worker with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Statutory framework and guidance

The Home Tree School has due regard for:

- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education- Statutory Guidance, DfE 2020
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2025
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

- The Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (July 2014)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, 2018

Monitoring

There is an opportunity to raise any concerns about the MHWB of individual pupils on a daily basis as part of the staff briefing and de-brief meetings. It is also a standing item on the staff meeting agenda. Concerns may be recorded as a School Welfare concern or as a Child Protection concern, depending on the level of risk of harm. The concerns and the action taken are recorded on the Safeguarding Log as well as in the individual Child Protection file for each student. Patterns of concerns will be monitored by the multi-agency team and discussed as part of the monthly TAC meeting or more regularly when necessary.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head Teacher and Head of Education Services.

It is due for review in **September 2026.**

References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and documents listed below:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- PSHCE curriculum map and planning