



**Peterhouse School**

**PETERHOUSE  
WELLBEING  
STRATEGY**

Part of the



**Autism  
Initiatives**  
Group

Updated Sept 2025

## Introduction

Peterhouse is an all-age specialist school for children and young people who are diagnosed as autistic. We strongly believe that supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils, families and staff is integral to our provision. We have developed a whole-school approach and have sought input from all sections of the school community in developing our wellbeing strategy.

The wellbeing of autistic pupils is profoundly less likely to be met in the education system. This can result in academic struggles and disengagement with school life, as well as lifelong mental health concerns.

National Autistic Society, 2022

Families hold the key to supporting children's mental health through a holistic, collaborative approach.

Anxious Minds, 2025

Mental ill health can now be considered the number one cause of long term sick leave amongst employees.

Time to Change, 2024

Good mental health and wellbeing helps children and young people:

- develop
- attend school
- engage in learning
- achieve and thrive

Department for Education, 2025

Children's emotional well-being is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health helps them develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Mental Health Foundation, 2025

Disturbingly high rates of stress, anxiety, and burnout continue to affect education staff, exacerbated by pupil and parent behaviour, and a lack of support for students from public services. The impact on teachers' mental health is profound, and this must change. These issues point to deeper societal problems that extend beyond our schools and colleges.

Education Support, 2024

Peterhouse pledges to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, where mental health is supported and addressed openly amongst all our staff, our pupils and their families.

Peterhouse Time to Change Pledge

# PUPILS

## Our Vision

An educational setting where children and young people are enabled to recognise issues they may have, and develop strategies to address and manage these; where children and young people develop high confidence and high self-esteem and are able to discuss any problems and concerns; where pupils grow into successful adults using the skills and strategies learned.

## Risk Factors that may affect pupils' mental health

- Anxiety, depression, OCD and other conditions linked to Autism
- Previous educational settings that did not effectively meet their needs, potentially leading to trauma
- Home environment
- Issues with peer pressure, social media, online safety concerns
- Feelings of being different, feeling isolated
- Concerns about issues affecting the wider world

## What are we doing to support pupils' wellbeing?

- Individualised and personalised assessment and support
- Approaches such as Zones of Regulation used throughout school
- Quality of life, mental wellbeing specifically taught as part of the curriculum
- 'Hidden curriculum' to cover learning beyond the academic e.g. social interaction
- Support from staff trained in mental health, conditions such as PDA etc
- Opportunity to attend Counselling sessions at school
- 1:1 tutorial sessions
- Referrals to specialists such as Recovery Practitioner, CAMHS, Learning Disability Team
- Proactive and Positive Behaviour Support that considers pupils' wellbeing
- Pupil voice mechanisms e.g. Class meetings, Talking Mats, pupil contribution to Annual Reviews
- Innovative approaches e.g. School Dog
- Flexible Education provision to bring education to students who are unable to access school due to significant mental health needs / past trauma

## What are we developing together?

- 'Quality of Life' project
- Further development of pupil voice mechanisms, ensuring that all pupils are heard, including those who may not use verbal communication
- Further development of Flexible Education provision and curriculum, for pupils who are unable to access school provision due to trauma / mental health needs

### **How will we measure progress?**

- Annual Reviews (pupil contribution / pupil attendance at review)
- Feedback from tutorials, class meetings, Student Council meetings
- Quality of Life questionnaires

### Review Sept 2025

- Personal Tutorial or other regular 1:1 sessions for 98.6% of pupils at school, across a wide range of topics
- Pupil voice mechanisms reviewed and a wide range of effective mechanisms are in place: [Pupil voice - Peterhouse School](#)
- Parent feedback 2024/25: 93.9% of parents agree or strongly agreed that their child is happy at school, 97.8% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child is well looked after at school

# STAFF

## Our Vision

A workplace with staff who have a shared understanding of the common culture we are all working towards; who are able to utilise strategies and resources to support and enhance their own mental health and who are empowered to share any issues they may have early so that they can be addressed effectively with the appropriate member of staff.

## Risk Factors that may affect staff mental health

- Issues in their personal lives
- Challenges encountered in the workplace (e.g. behaviours of concern, staffing issues, workload, school environment)
- Cost of living crisis
- Concerns about issues affecting the wider world

## What are we doing to support staff wellbeing?

- Supportive working environment where staff are encouraged to share any issues and the SLT have an Open Door policy
- Staff Charter, developed and agreed by all staff
- Staff team meetings with Headteacher to discuss any concerns or issues
- Opportunity to attend Counselling
- Employee Champions
- Time to Change Pledge
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Post-incident reviews
- Staff voice mechanisms e.g. questionnaires
- Improved feedback system for staff through introduction of chronologies
- Requests for Flexible / Part Time Working are considered positively
- Appraisal system
- Information and signposts to further support and advice e.g. local services, mental health charities
- Mental Health First aiders
- Wellbeing Day draw
- Consider staff workload and actively seek ways to reduce this
- Occupational Health Service
- Continuing Professional Development
- Tea and coffee provided
- Salary Sacrifice Schemes
- Wellbeing information
- Medicash scheme
- Autism Initiatives staff draws

### **What are we developing together?**

- Development of a Pastoral Support team to embed values across Peterhouse
- Investigate further ways to reduce workload
- Review staff consultation and communication systems

### **How will we measure progress?**

- Surveys e.g. School Development Questionnaire, wellbeing surveys
- Feedback from appraisals
- Feedback from Employee Champions

### Review Sept 2025

- Staff School Development Survey 2025: 86.5% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that Leaders and line-managers are considerate of their wellbeing. 96.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the Staff Charter (Peterhouse values) helps to foster a culture of mutual support, respect and kindness amongst staff.
- Wellbeing offer reviewed: School offer is highly valued by staff. More information to be shared on Autism Initiatives wellbeing offer.
- Staff training on wellbeing with Kat Thorne ('The Morning Game Changes') booked for Feb 2026
- Pastoral Team actions / wellbeing initiatives: breakfast served to staff on Inset Day, Healthy Eating staff group, staff night out at Hickory's Smokehouse

# FAMILIES

## **Our Vision**

Families who feel confident in raising any concerns they may have with Peterhouse, and to seek any support they may find beneficial.

Families who are enabled to support their children and are empowered to deal with the challenges that having an autistic child brings.

## **Risk Factors that may affect families' mental health**

- Challenges of raising a child with special needs
- Lack of support from other agencies
- Other personal or work issues affecting family members
- Conditions such as autism, mental health issues etc in parents or other family members (with or without diagnosis)
- Cost of living crisis
- Concerns about issues affecting the wider world

## **What are we doing to support families' wellbeing?**

- Open door approach – school is always happy to be contacted, via a range of channels
- A dedicated Family Support Team working specifically to support families
- Specialist support and advice from Speech & Language Therapists, Autism Practice Lead, Occupational Therapist etc
- Access to Counselling
- Wellbeing advice and information available via newsletters, school website etc
- Information events, training courses and workshops for parents
- Offer a range of channels for communication e.g. Class Dojo, emails, phonecalls, in person meetings
- Parent Buddy Scheme
- Friends of Peterhouse School group

## **What are we developing together?**

- 'Quality of Life' Project
- Research into further support and events for parents

## **How will we measure progress?**

- Surveys / questionnaires
- Parent contribution to annual reviews
- Feedback from Family Support Team
- Parental engagement

## Review Sept 2025

- Parent surveys 2024/45: 97.8% agreed or strongly agreed that school is a welcoming and friendly place for them.

- Parent Wellbeing Day and free 'Autism and My Family' course was well received
- Leading Parent Partnership Award re-accreditation Jan 2025: *"The school support the whole family including parents and siblings which is very much appreciated and valued by parents, staff make every effort possible to support the families and ensure their needs are met."*

# WHOLE SCHOOL

## **Our Vision**

A safe and secure environment where the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all members of the school community are effectively safeguarded and supported.

## **Risk Factors that may affect mental health**

- Challenges of an educational environment where all pupils are autistic and many may present with additional conditions and/or behaviours of concern.
- Cost of living crisis

## **What are we doing to support wellbeing?**

- Wellbeing and mental health recognised as an important factor for pupils, staff and families
- 'Hidden curriculum' ensures that learning goes beyond formal curriculum to cover e.g. interactions and communication
- Qualified and registered Counsellors
- Mental Health First Aider
- Appropriate policies and procedures in place
- Resources allocated e.g. Employee Assistance Programme
- Staff CPD
- Time to Change pledge
- Activities to increase awareness and reduce stigma
- External links and networks e.g. Quality of Life Network
- Innovative approaches e.g. school dog

## **What are we developing together?**

- Development of a Pastoral Support team to embed values across Peterhouse
- Further training opportunities for staff
- 'Quality of Life' Project
- Further development of the school's Flexible Education provision

## **How will we measure progress?**

- External recognition e.g. Wellbeing Award, Challenge Partners, Ofsted
- Surveys e.g. School Development Questionnaires
- Links to other schools and agencies established and utilised
- Wellbeing Team Meetings to monitor progress and plan further actions

- Review and update of the Wellbeing Strategy

#### Review Sept 2025

- Poster presentation on school's research on Quality of Life and Flexible Education shared at Autism Europe Congress in Dublin in Sept 2025
- School's approach to staff wellbeing shared at EdExec Live Conference in Liverpool in July 2025
- Pastoral Team established