

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

2025 – 2026



‘The Love of Christ impels us’
To be
Ready, Respectful, Safe
To love one another as I have loved
you’

Approved: Spring 2025
Review: Spring 2026

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date: Spring 2026

Policy Statement Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her 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 community. (World Health Organization)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents and carers
- Provide support to staff suffering mental ill health
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Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Tracey Peters, Mental Health Lead, supported by Michelle Bessant, DSL, PSHE Coordinator Theresa Pryce and H&S Lead Maria Bennett. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the usual child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the standard procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary and notifying the Headteacher. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Michelle Bessant. It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and carers and relevant health professionals.

This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Warning Signs School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the DSL.

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 secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen rather than advise and the first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' All disclosures should be recorded using CPOMs. This information should be shared with the DSL/DDSL who will offer support and advice about next steps.

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them

- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent/carer. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague usually Michelle Bessant/Katie Hankins, DSL/DDSL. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil; it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues we follow the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

Working with Parents and carers/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents and carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents and carers we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents and carers, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents and carers to learn of their child's difficulties and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents and carers can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents and carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

In order to support parents and carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents and carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents and carers

- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings and leaflets from Charlie Waller Trust, NSPCC, NHS and other partner organisations
- Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may 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 pupil who is suffering and their parents and carers with whom we will discuss:

- What 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 want to 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

Training

Two staff have undertaken ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) training in the past year. All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep pupils safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with SLT, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Links to other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies and documents: SEN Policy, First Aid and Medical Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Equality Report, PSHE Policy. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect changes.