



Mental Health and Wellbeing of Our Pupils Policy

2020 - 2023

*A cheerful heart does good like medicine; but a broken spirit makes one sick.
(Proverbs 17:22)*

Document Control

Owner

The owner of this document is the Headteacher. All requests for change should be directed to them. Any printed copies of this document are for reference only; the definitive version is the computer file held on the school office administrator's computer.

Revision history

Version	Date	Changes	Author(s)
1	19/01/21		HS

Approval

Version	Date	Approver(s)	Minute number
1	15/03/21	Full Governing Body	GB 35/21

Review period This policy will be reviewed every three years; as a minimum.

Version	
	March 2024

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our Mental Health Lead Ruth Houghton via phone 01629 636289 or by email through: enquiries@youlgrave-allsaints.derbyshire.sch.uk.

Policy Statement

‘Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 2020)

Here at Youlgrave, All Saints’ Co f E (VA) Primary School, our Christian vision shapes all we do.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and each individual child. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable children.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures; we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Aims

This document describes our 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 SEND policy where a child’s mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and children.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Provide support to children suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children; at Youlgrave, All Saints' Co f E (VA) Primary School, we have staff with a specific, relevant role include:

- Ruth Houghton - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.
- Jo McVeigh – Wellbeing Ambassadors' Lead.
- Heather Stelling - Designated Safeguarding / Child Protection Lead/Headteacher.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child 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 normal Safeguarding/Child Protection procedures should be followed; with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead/Headteacher.

If a child presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed; including administering first aid and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Heather Stelling (Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead/Headteacher).

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for a child causing concern; or who receives a diagnosis linked to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the child, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a child'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 and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by the children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our school's developmental Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort/Year groups; but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

At Youlgrave, All Saints' Co f E (VA) Primary School, we follow the PSHE Association Guidance¹*to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

*¹ Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.psheassociation.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

Signposting

At Youlgrave, All Saints' Co f E (VA) Primary School, we will ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined on our school website.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of children help-seeking by ensuring children understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why to access it.
- What is likely to happen next.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 Ruth Houghton (our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead) and Heather Stelling (our Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead/Headteacher).

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating / 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 child 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 child 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 our first thoughts should be of the child's emotional and physical safety: rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the child's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Ruth Houghton, who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

Staff should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If staff think it is necessary to share concerns about a child, then staff should discuss with the pupil:

- Who they are going to talk to
- What they are going to tell them
- Why they need to tell them

Staff should never share information about a child without first telling them. Ideally, staff 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: particularly if a child is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable for staff to share disclosures with a colleague (usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead Ruth Houghton) as this helps to safeguard staff's own emotional wellbeing; as one member of staff is no longer solely responsible for the child: it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. Staff should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents/carers should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, the child should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents/carers. School should always give the child the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers should not be informed; but the Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead (Heather Stelling) must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/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/carers, the child/children, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's issues 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/carers can also be helpful too; e.g. parent/carer 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/carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents/Carers

Parent/Carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their child's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, if they have concerns about their own child/children or a friend of their child/children.
- Make our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents/carers.
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their child/children; through regular Newsletters/Letters to Parents and website updates.
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child/children are learning about in PSHE; and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers

When a child 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 by the pupil who is suffering and their parents/carers 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Warning signs that their friend needs 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

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual Autumn Term Safeguarding/Child Protection training; in order to enable them to keep children safe: and the MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.^{2*}

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our Performance Management process; and additional CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will be supported throughout the school year: where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more children.

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 and/or wellbeing.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Heather Stelling, (our CPD lead) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

* ² www.minded.org.uk [accessed 02/02/18].

