

Westhead Lathom St. James' CE Primary School



Emotional Health Policy

Last Reviewed Date: Spring 2023

Next Review Date: Spring 2026

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Revision Notes
V 1.0	11th March 2006	Linda McVey	Original Policy documents copied into new format, with header, footer and version control. Policy reviewed and updated to ensure reflects current policy and practice
V1.1	18/9/08	Alison Albion	Policy reviewed and updated to ensure reflects current policy and practice
V2	May 2012	Alison Albion	Policy reviewed and updated to reflect current policy and practice
V3	January 2016	Alison Albion	Minor up-dates due to class reorganisation.
V4	Autumn 2018	Alison Albion Lynda Tither	Policy updated in line with LCC guidelines
V5	Spring 2020	Helen Clark	New vision and values.
V6	Spring 2023	Helen Clark	Policy rewritten

Our motto

“Enjoy, Respect, Learn, Achieve”

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

‘A curriculum that is challenging, inspiring and engaging; in which all pupils flourish spiritually, creatively and academically to become confident young people.’

‘With God’s power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.’ Ephesians 3:20 New Century Version (NCV)

Mental Health & Well-Being Policy

Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At Westhead Lathom St James' CE Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

- We all have a mental health – whether it is good, bad or in the middle. Put simply, your mental health is the way you feel on any particular day. (CAMHS)

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying, Relationships Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The school's Mental Health Team (*SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Leaders and PSHE Leader*):

- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- School nurse
- CAMHS core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- Children and Family Well bring Service

Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

Pupil-led Activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

Class Activities

- Worry boxes
- Kindness/Compliment Boards
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Classroom scripts and signposting
- Yoga

Whole School

- Wellbeing Focus
- Assembly themes
- Worry Warriors

- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - the whole school will explore the same PHSE themed book

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support (Worry Warriors)
- Rest Breaks for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming
- Sensory area for EYFS/KS1 pupils

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:

- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- home visits in Foundation Stage to identify needs
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining school
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and weekly Behaviour
- using PIVATS to track children identified as having difficulties

- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the DSLs and SENCO
- weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- drop-ins with School Nurse or Children and Family Wellbeing Service

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- drug or alcohol misuse
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

- **Verbal Disclosures by Pupils**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

- **Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils**

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

- **Confidentiality**

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

- **Assessment, Interventions and Support**

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded on CPOMS. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the SENCO
Early Help Referral	Accessed through the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead
Children and Family Wellbeing Service	Accessed through the SENCO

- **10, Involving Parents and Carers**

Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

- **To support parents and carers:**
 - we organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from voluntary services such as the Children and Family Wellbeing Service. This includes topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management, Sleep and Positive Parenting.
 - we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
 - have an Open Door Policy.
 - supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.
- **When a concern has been raised the school will:**
 - contact parents and carers and meet with them
 - in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
 - offer information to take away and places to seek further information
 - be available for follow up calls
 - make a record of the meeting
 - agree an Action Plan
 - discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
 - keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Involving Pupils

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, class questions and suggestion boxes
- KS2 Pupils lead a Worry Warriors lunchtime group

Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing with relaxation activities such as yoga, steel pans and staff choir.

Staff have access to Occupational Health through Lancashire County Council.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by headteacher. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.

