

# Ashleworth C of E Primary School



## Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Reviewed:	15 November 2022
Date of Next Review:	November 2025

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

### **Ashleworth Church of England Primary School**

#### **Policy Statement**

*Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work purposefully and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community. (World Health Organization)*

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do – *Through our core Christian values (Friendship, trust and respect) we respect and nurture every child, encouraging them to flourish as a unique child of God.*

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school family. To achieve this, we have in place whole school approaches that are accessible to everyone. If we have concerns regarding the mental health of an individual, we will use a specialised, targeted programme. Depending upon the need, this could be delivered by a member of school staff or a trained professional.

#### **Scope**

This document describes our school's approach to promoting positive mental health. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- 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 pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

#### **Lead Members of Staff**

Michelle Kelly & Elaine Huggins – Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Michelle Kelly – Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Elaine Huggins – Lead First Aider

Michelle Kelly – PSHE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health and 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 normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSLs. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

When a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Michelle Kelly, Mental Health Lead.

### **Individual Care Plans**

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

- Details of the 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 and Wellbeing**

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 PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the pupils we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and conditions to seek help, as needed, for themselves and others.

We follow guidance and planning from SCARF to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and 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 in our Offer of Early Help.

We will display relevant sources of support on display boards in Reception and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils 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

### **Possible warning signs include:**

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and/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 – EG long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- 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 response will always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring "Why?"

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

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

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead (Michelle Kelly) who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice on next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

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

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

We must never share information about a pupil before first telling them. Ideally, we would gain their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff/parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share information with a fellow member of staff, usually the Mental Health Lead or DSL, 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.

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

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL/DDSL must be informed immediately.

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions:

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable
- Where should the meeting happen? Home/school/neutral
- Who should be present?
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for a parent to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during that 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 find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing. Sharing sources of specific support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too.

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 often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential file.

## **Working with ALL Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues
- Ensure that all parents 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through regular meetings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for exploring and extending learning at home

## **Supporting Parents**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends will often want to support but they may not know how to. 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 peers 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 advertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friends need help

Additionally, we want to highlight:

- 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 regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 issues 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 Michelle Kelly who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individual needs as needed.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in October 2025

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 Michelle Kelly, our mental health lead, by contacting the school.

*In all aspects of our work at Ashleworth C of E Primary School, the safety and well-being of our children is paramount. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*