

# Mental Health & Well-Being Policy



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Next review: November 2025

Headteacher:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Jones", is written over the text "Headteacher:".

Chair of Governors: certified via email by CofG (Eve Whitmore 11/05/22)

## 1. Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At West Felton CofE 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 wellbeing 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. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need 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 and this is demonstrated through our School Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing charter (DfE Feb 2022).

Our Christian Values - Kindness, Dignity, Community and Aspiration echo these aims and permeate life at West Felton.

## **2. Purpose of our 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

## **3. Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

*"... 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."*

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

## **4. Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

## **5. 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 understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a school with an 'Open Door Policy'.

## **6. 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 and Wellbeing Support Team (Headteacher, SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Team and ELSA):

- 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
- liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
- 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:

- Mental Health Support Team (NHS)
- 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.
- ELSA
- BEE U core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils

## **7. 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*

- Helping Hearts team (trained and managed by the MHST & SLT)
- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Prayer space boxes

### *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/toys
- Mindfulness and breathing in class
- Classroom signposting

### *Whole School*

- MHST Action plan
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Using our love 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
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school

### *Small Group Activities*

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Peer support (in development)
- Jubilee Garden for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming (other indoor are available)

### *Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being*

- Through high-quality, rigorous PSHE delivery, 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

## **8. 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
- being an Attachment Aware School
- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- analysing behaviour, exclusions and attendance
- pupil surveys at the beginning of each term
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Team and report via CPOMS
- 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'

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

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
- 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 noncompliant, 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.

## **9. 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 Sleep Talk and Understanding your Child. This includes topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations via our APP 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.

## **10. Involving Pupils**

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys and class questions.
- we are building a peer support programme

## **11. 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 (see Appendix 1).
- 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 (see Charter).

## **12. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the SLT and Governors. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Where to get information and support**

For support on specific mental health needs:

- Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)
- Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)
- Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)
- National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)
- Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)
- Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK - POPYRUS: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

For general information and support:

- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems
- [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)
- [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health
- [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health