



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Updated

March 2023

Approved by Behaviour and Safety Committee

March 2023

Review Date

March 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 Organisation)

In our school we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and our children. 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 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 pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Scope

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 links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.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. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical 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.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental 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 children with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils 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 pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Head teacher – Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Head teacher
- inclusion lead
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
- PSHE lead

- Designated Safeguarding Leads Team
- Family Support Worker

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 normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to a Designated Safeguarding Leader or the Head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Inclusion and 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 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 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 developmental PSHCE curriculum - Jigsaw. We access age appropriate resources, including those from the Anna Freud organisation including their booklet 'It's never too young to talk about mental health'. We talk about little feelings and big feelings in assemblies and in lessons. We take part themed events which promote awareness of good mental health - Place2Be Children's Mental Health Week, Just like Us – diversity week.

We also work alongside the Mental Health in Schools Team programme to promote awareness of good mental health and wellbeing.

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.

We will 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents 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 in Appendix1 on Page 9.

We 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 pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils 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 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 our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Inclusion Lead or a DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

¹ Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 06.11.2019)

- 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 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 our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded and logged on CPOMS and must 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 the mental health lead or a DSL who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Nurture groups – working with pastoral team (Family Support Worker/ELSA/Mental Health Lead)
- Counselling Mental Health in Schools Team – Low intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- Mental Health Support Team in Schools (MHST). <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/service/mental-health-support-teams-in-schools-mhst/>
- GP or pediatrician
- School nursing service
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we 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. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead or a 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. All disclosures and CPOMS logs are discussed with the DSL team every two weeks.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but a DSL 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 (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.

- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents 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 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 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

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the 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 through our school class dojo, website and emails, school newsletters and parent forum meetings.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings.
- Keep parents 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 by the pupil who is suffering and their parents 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 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 regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. 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 will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff wellbeing and support services

Employee support services (Occupational Health Service / Vivup) are available to discuss any concerns employees may have directly related to their health, and to provide appropriate support. You can access to their service by registering at <https://leicester.vivup.co.uk/> It provides support for mental health, physical, financial or personal issues you may be facing, giving access to expert help and support 24/7, 365 days a year. Schools-based employees can ring direct on 0800 023 9324.

Their programmes can be accessed via multiple devices (phones, tablets and computers) and are available whenever you need them.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. 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 FAO Head teacher or Mental Health Lead via the school's email address office@dovelands.leicester.sch.uk. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Staff

Directed hours
Conferencing
Meetings held during the school day
Staff events
Staffroom
Opinions sought – staff surveys/feedback
Protected PPA and leadership time
CPD – mental Health issues
Vivup – counselling services
<https://leicester.vivup.co.uk/>

Well being

Health and wellbeing festivals
Pupil voice
Votes for School
School Council
UNICEF Rights Respecting School
PSHE – Jigsaw
SRE curriculum
RE
Assemblies
School Nursing service
Early Help
SEMH team
Mental Health in Schools Team
Restorative Approaches
Family Support Worker

Physical activity

Swimming
Bikeability
Swimming
Active play ad lunchtimes
Intra sports competitions
SEND sports activities
Sports equipment on the play ground
Lunchtime supervisors/lunchtime equipment
Sport clubs – after school
SSPAN
Football leagues
Competitive sports
Range of competitions
Walk to School
Beat the Streets

PE

PE sessions/curriculum taught by PE specialist
Specialist PE coaches- Mrs. Christmas Mr. Bahrey
Year 4 Swimming
Year 6 residential

Health and Wellbeing at Dovelands Our Whole School Offer

Extra-Curricular Activities

Variety of Sports clubs depending on competition calendar
Proactive football
Proactive gymnastics
Move it Boom
Karate
School football teams
Basketball
Cross country
Boccia
Dance
Art club
Music
Young Voices
Place2Be Children's mental health Week
Just like Us – Diversity