

Box CE VC Primary School
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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)

Our school vision is:

'It's like a mustard seed that man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree and the birds in the sky nested in its branches.' **Luke 13:19**

Plant, Nurture, Flourish, Serve

The school garden is a very special and unique part of our school and is enjoyed for its beauty as well as a place to play and learn. On their journey through the school the children are taught gardening jobs and are responsible for areas of the garden. There are many opportunities for them to plant seeds, nurture plants and watch them flourish. During our work on the vision the children were helped to explore how 'plant, nurture, flourish, serve' is a metaphor that can be applied to many aspects of their life. Looking after children's mental health is crucial in enabling them to flourish and serve others. This policy sets out how children will be supported to develop good mental health and also the support that we have in place for when they need some extra support.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- PSHE&C Policy
- SEND Policy
- Spirituality Development Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Our Christian vision and our associated values: perseverance, peace, truthfulness, compassion, creativity, friendship, responsibility, trust and respect, courage, forgiveness, wisdom and sharing shape all that we do. We aim to promote positive mental health for staff and pupils.

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 pupils suffering mental ill health and for the staff, peers and parents/carers looking after them.

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Lead Members of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit are our designated safeguarding lead (DSL), **Jo French**, our deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL), **Nicola Phillips**, our inclusion manager **Cathy Clack** and PSHE&C subject leader, **Lisa Reed**. Staff who are concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to them. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed.

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 PSHE&C curriculum. There is an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. Children needing additional support with emotional well-being will be offered weekly sessions in a small group with an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) For children with more severe and complex needs a Behaviour Support Service referral CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) referral will be made.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. 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

My Support Plan

Children with mental health and well-being issues who are supported by external agencies will have a 'My Support Plan' or IEP which will summarise the areas of concern and the actions and support provided. For more information see our SEN policy.

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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 on our school website
- 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, and other relevant policies, easily accessible to parents
- 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
- We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance^[1] to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.
- Help give children strategies, such as mindfulness, to help manage their emotional and mental health

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. We will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support and what support to provide. The support 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)

Training

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 e.g. from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, and Mental Health First Aid. ELSAs will receive regular supervision sessions from an educational psychologist.