



St White's Primary School

## **Mental Health & Well-being Policy**

Date of Review: May 2023

Date of Next Review: May 2026

Signed, Head Teacher:

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## Introduction/ Policy Statement

***“Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (World Health Organization, 2018).***

Research conducted in 2017 found that one in ten primary school aged children (5-10 year olds) had a mental health disorder, increasing to one in seven children by secondary school (Office of National Statistics, 2019). The Office of National Statistics (2019) states, "Our research also found children of parents who had poor mental health were more likely to be identified with a mental disorder themselves than children whose parents showed little to no evidence of a mental disorder." This information highlights the importance the school plays in supporting parents/carers and pupils with their mental health. In addition to supporting pupils and their parents/carers, St. White's Primary recognises the importance of the mental health of all staff members. According to recent research, 75% of all education staff have faced physical or mental health issues in the last two years because of their work and 53% have considered leaving as a result (educationsupport.org.uk, 2018). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for the parents/ carers, pupils and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

## **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 should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health 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 in all pupils, their parents/ carers and our staff
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students, parents/ carers and staff who are suffering with mental ill health

## **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a

specific, relevant remit include:

Clare Tilling – Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Erica Fearn – FSW, Mental Health Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Jasmine Hall, Luke Jones, Luke Brown, Ryan Cassidy, Erica Fearn – PSHE Leads

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, the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. 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 CYPS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Mental Health Lead. The school now hosts Young Minds Matter, Mental Health Support in school. These referrals are also led and managed by the Mental Health Lead.

## **My Plan/My Plan Plus**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan as part of a My Plan/My Plan Plus for pupils causing concern or who receive 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

At St White's Primary School, pupils with special needs around mental health will be put onto the Special Educational Needs register and this information (see above) will be entered onto their My Plan or My Plan Plus.

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance](#) to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

## Signposting

We will ensure that pupils, parents/ carers and staff are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. The Mental Health Lead will regularly update the Family Support Resources Padlet and will also highlight relevant social emotional/ mental health information/ resources regularly in the school newsletter and in Parentmail emails. The Mental Health Lead will have an open door policy whereby pupils, parents/ carers and staff can arrange a meeting as needed and support will be offered. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of the pupil, parent/ carer or staff member 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

## 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 Lead.

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

## **Managing Disclosures**

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff must 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 student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring, 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file. This written record should 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, who will then store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **Confidentiality**

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

- 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. Unless there is

a very good reason for not informing them, parents will always be informed of any concerns that the school has and any disclosures that a child makes. This will first be discussed with the child. Permission to share with other members of staff, or professionals from other agencies will be sought from the child first.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It also 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 must always be informed unless the child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, and therefore parents should not be informed, but the 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? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the student, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

If parents are hard to reach, and unwilling to come into school, this conversation will happen by phone.

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. Each meeting should be finished with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting will be kept 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 mental health and well-being. Parents may need support around their own mental health as well. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight relevant information on mental health and well-being and the supports available in the community (for both children and their parents) on our school website.
- 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, a friend of their child or if they need support themselves.
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in themselves and 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 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 needs help (eg. 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**

All staff will receive 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.

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 provided where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

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 the Headteacher, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via:

Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)),

Mind ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) (<https://www.ghll.org.uk/>)

Place to Be (<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>)

There are plenty more resources available. Please see the Mental Health Lead if more information is required.