



Shawfield Primary School

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Written: January 2021

Reviewed:

Next Review: December 2023

This policy covers our school's approach to Mental Health & Wellbeing and is informed by our school's ethos as a caring and supportive establishment where each individual is valued for who they are. The policy is available to parents and carers through our school website. Should a paper copy of the policy be required, please contact the School Office on 01252 320379.

1. Introduction

In our school we define mental health as:

'... 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, 2021)

1.1 Aims

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community; pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors. 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, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue (NHS, 2021). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

The policy aims to:

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

1.2 Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mr Stephen Corcoran – Headteacher
- Mr Tom Hilyard – Deputy Headteacher
- Mrs Debora Griffith – SENDCo & Designated Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Angela Dixon - Pastoral Lead and Designated Mental Health Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a 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 designated safeguarding lead or the headteacher. 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 Debora Griffith or Angela Dixon.

1.3 Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP)

Individual Health Care Plans (Appendix A) may be written 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. They may also be drawn up in conjunction with an individual risk assessment for the child.

The IHCP 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

2. Content and Delivery

2.1 Teaching about Mental Health & 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 cohort we are 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 ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

2.2 Targeted Support

We will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time
- Targeted use of resources or managing feelings resources e.g. worry boxes and worry eaters

- Managing emotions resources e.g. The Incredible 5 Point Scale, Zones of Regulation
- ELSA support
- Therapeutic Activities including story writing groups, construction club and mindfulness techniques

2.3 Assessment & Tracking

We will assess and track wellbeing as appropriate using resources such as:

- The Boxall Profile
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- ELSA referral and review forms

2.4 Signposting

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

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms and toilets, parent notice boards and newsletters 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 pupil help-seeking 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

3. Guidance to Staff

3.1 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 Angela Dixon or Debora Griffith our mental health and emotional wellbeing leads.

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
- Refusal to take part in 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

3.2 Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves, a friend or parent/carer to any member of staff; therefore 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 or parent/carer to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgmental.

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?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see Appendix A.

All disclosures should be documented on CPOMS. 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 one of the mental health leads, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps

3.3 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 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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually one of the mental health leads, 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 must always be informed.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

3.4 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 pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

We understand that it can be distressing for parents to learn of their child's issues and that many may respond with anger, fear or upset during our conversations. We are accepting of this and give parents time to consider and reflect.

It may be necessary to highlight further sources of information and signpost parents to appropriate support groups. See Appendix B.

We will always provide clear means of contacting the school 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. We aim to finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on CPOMS.

3.5 Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends, who may want to support but 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 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

3.6 Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. A list of free online training and materials suitable for staff wishing to know more about mental health issues is provided in Appendix C.

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 situations with one or more pupils.

3.7 Links to Other Policies

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including support staff and governors, and should be read in conjunction with our:

- Accessibility Plan
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Drugs & Alcohol Education Policy
- Equalities Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy (in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue)

Appendices

Appendix A: Shawfield Primary School Individual Health Care Plan

Name of School	
Child's Name	
Class	
Date of Birth	
Child's Address	
Medical diagnosis or condition	
Date	
Review date	

Family Contact Information

Name	
Phone number (work)	
Home	
Mobile	
Name	
Relationship to child	
Phone number (work)	
Home	
Mobile	

Clinic/Hospital Contact

Name	
Phone number	

G.P.

Name	
Phone number	

Who is responsible for providing support in school	
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Describe medical needs and give details of child's symptoms, triggers, signs, treatments, facilities, equipment or devices, environmental issues etc.

Appendix B: Talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures

The advice below is from pupil themselves, in their own words, together with some additional ideas to help you in initial conversations with pupils when they disclose mental health concerns.

The ALGEE approach will be used when dealing with concerns:

A = Approach (Have a conversation and be sensitive)

L = Listen (Don't interrupt, let the other person speak and don't judge)

G = Give Support (Treat with respect and give practical help)

E = Encourage (To speak to a staff member)

E = Encourage (To speak to family/friends and other agencies/helplines)

Focus on listening

"She listened, and I mean REALLY listened. She didn't interrupt me or ask me to explain myself or anything, she just let me talk and talk and talk. I had been unsure about talking to anyone but I knew quite quickly that I'd chosen the right person to talk to and that it would be a turning point."

If a pupil has come to you, it's because they trust you and feel a need to share their difficulties with someone. Let them talk. Ask occasional open questions if you need to in order to encourage them to keep exploring their feelings and opening up to you. Just letting them pour out what they're thinking will make a huge difference and marks a huge first step in recovery. Up until now they may not have admitted even to themselves that there is a problem.

Don't talk too much

"Sometimes it's hard to explain what's going on in my head – it doesn't make a lot of sense and I've kind of gotten used to keeping myself to myself. But just 'cos I'm struggling to find the right words doesn't mean you should help me. Just keep quiet, I'll get there in the end."

The pupil should be talking at least three quarters of the time. If that's not the case then you need to redress the balance. You are here to listen, not to talk. Sometimes the conversation may lapse into silence. Try not to give in to the urge to fill the gap, but rather wait until the pupil does so. This can often lead to them exploring their feelings more deeply. Of course, you should interject occasionally, perhaps with questions to the pupil to explore certain topics they've touched on more deeply, or to show that you understand and are supportive. Don't feel an urge to over-analyse the situation or try to offer answers. This all comes later. For now your role is simply one of supportive listener. So make sure you're listening!

Don't pretend to understand

"I think that all teachers got taught on some course somewhere to say 'I understand how that must feel' the moment you open up. YOU DON'T – don't even pretend to, it's not helpful, it's insulting."

The concept of a mental health difficulty such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can seem completely alien if you've never experienced these difficulties first hand. You may find yourself wondering why on earth someone would do these things to themselves, but don't explore those feelings with the sufferer. Instead listen hard to what they're saying and encourage them to talk and you'll slowly start to understand what steps they might be ready to take in order to start making some changes.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact

"She was so disgusted by what I told her that she couldn't bear to look at me."

It's important to try to maintain a natural level of eye contact (even if you have to think very hard about doing so and it doesn't feel natural to you at all). If you make too much eye contact, the pupil may interpret this as you staring at them. They may think that you are horrified about what they are saying or think they are a 'freak'. On the other hand, if you don't make eye contact at all then a pupil may interpret this as you being disgusted by them – to the extent that you can't bring yourself to look at them. Making an effort to maintain natural eye contact will convey a very positive message to the pupil.

Offer support

"I was worried how she'd react, but my Mum just listened then said 'How can I support you?' – no one had asked me that before and it made me realise that she cared. Between us we thought of some really practical things she could do to help me stop self-harming."

Never leave this kind of conversation without agreeing next steps. These will be informed by your conversations with appropriate colleagues and the schools' policies on such issues. Whatever happens, you should have some form of next steps to carry out after the conversation because this will help the pupil to realise that you're working with them to move things forward.

Acknowledge how hard it is to discuss these issues

"Talking about my bingeing for the first time was the hardest thing I ever did. When I was done talking, my teacher looked me in the eye and said 'That must have been really tough' – he was right, it was, but it meant so much that he realised what a big deal it was for me."

It can take a young person weeks or even months to admit they have a problem to themselves, let alone share that with anyone else. If a pupil chooses to confide in you, you should feel proud and privileged

that they have such a high level of trust in you. Acknowledging both how brave they have been, and how glad you are they chose to speak to you, conveys positive messages of support to the pupil.

Don't assume that an apparently negative response is actually a negative response

"The anorexic voice in my head was telling me to push help away so I was saying no. But there was a tiny part of me that wanted to get better. I just couldn't say it out loud or else I'd have to punish myself."

Despite the fact that a pupil has confided in you, and may even have expressed a desire to get on top of their illness, that doesn't mean they'll readily accept help. The illness may ensure they resist any form of help for as long as they possibly can. Don't be offended or upset if your offers of help are met with anger, indifference or insolence, it's the illness talking, not the pupil.

Never break your promises

"Whatever you say you'll do you have to do or else the trust we've built in you will be smashed to smithereens. And never lie. Just be honest. If you're going to tell someone just be upfront about it, we can handle that, what we can't handle is having our trust broken."

Above all else, a pupil wants to know they can trust you. That means if they want you to keep their issues confidential and you can't then you must be honest. Explain that, whilst you can't keep it a secret, you can ensure that it is handled within the school's policy of confidentiality and that only those who need to know about it in order to help will know about the situation. You can also be honest about the fact you don't have all the answers or aren't exactly sure what will happen next. Consider yourself the pupil's ally rather than their saviour and think about which next steps you can take together, always ensuring you follow relevant policies and consult appropriate colleagues.

Appendix C: Further information and sources of support about common mental health issues

Below, we have sign-posted information and guidance about the issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents but they are listed here because we think they are also useful for school staff.

Support on all of these issues can be accessed via [Young Minds](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) (www.youngminds.org.uk), [Mind](http://www.mind.org.uk) (www.mind.org.uk) and (for e-learning opportunities) [Minded](http://www.minded.org.uk) (www.minded.org.uk).

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support

[SelfHarm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk): www.selfharm.co.uk

[National Self-Harm Network](http://www.nshn.co.uk): www.nshn.co.uk

Books

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Carol

Fitzpatrick (2012) *A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support

[Depression Alliance](http://www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression): www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Books

Christopher Dowrick and Susan Martin (2015) *Can I Tell you about Depression?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support

Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Books

Lucy Willetts and Polly Waite (2014) *Can I Tell you about Anxiety?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Carol Fitzpatrick (2015) *A Short Introduction to Helping Young People Manage Anxiety*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support

OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Books

Amita Jassi and Sarah Hull (2013) *Can I Tell you about OCD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Susan Connors (2011) *The Tourette Syndrome & OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents and teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Suicidal feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support

Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/

Books

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Terri A. Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer and Scott Poland (2015) *Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention*. New York: Routledge

Eating problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online support

[Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders](http://www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders)

[Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children](http://www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children)

Books

Bryan Lask and Lucy Watson (2014) *Can I tell you about Eating Disorders?: A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and Eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2012) *Eating Disorders Pocketbook*. Teachers' Pocketbooks

Appendix D: Training Resources

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) - departmental advice for school staff. Department for Education (2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools> - departmental advice for school staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2015)

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (2019). PSHE Association. Funded by the Department for Education (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> - statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Department for Education (2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

- Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. Department for Education (2014)

[Future in mind – promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing](#) - a report produced by the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce to examine how to improve mental health services for children and young people. Department of Health (2015)

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph12>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/ResourceFinder/What-works-in-promoting-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-in-schools-2015.pdf> - Advice for schools and framework

document written by Professor Katherine Weare. National Children’s Bureau (2015)

<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/> - Training and support

<https://www.beingwellagenda.org/> - Resources and ideas- ten themes

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> - Dealing with safeguarding, bullying and mental health issues Y5/6

<https://www.minded.org.uk/> - Online training

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/> - Useful resources for children, parents and staff

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/> - types of meditation

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/> - mindfulness techniques