Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

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Date of Next Review:	October 2027
Signed: Executive Headteacher	M Talbot
Signed: Chair of Governors	M Hall

Document History

Date	Change Reference	Summary of Change
05.11.2023	Throughout	Replaced Learning Mentor for Pastoral HLTA Removal of the Useful and Kind project as this has been ceased.
26.9.25	Throughout	Converted to ALPS Policy. Terminology that was specific to individual schools changed as appropriate e.g. 'Mental Health Team' used rather than individual job roles which are unique to each school.
	6.2 and 6.3	Additional paragraphs on out of school hours working added and email communication in the supporting staff with their own positive mental health and well-being section

Contents

1. **Context**

In our Federation, 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 well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils experiencing significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age.

We recognise that children can go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. The *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England* survey (an ongoing national study tracking the mental health of 8- to 25-year-olds) reported that in 2021, one in six (17%) children aged 6 to 16 had a probable mental disorder. By 2023, this figure had risen to one in five (20.3%). These mental disorders can have an enormous impact on a child's quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that schools have a central role in supporting pupils to be resilient and mentally healthy in order to help them succeed (DfE, *Mental health and behaviour in schools*, 2014; updated 2018)

Schools can provide children and young people with a nurturing and supportive environment that helps to develop self-esteem, build resilience, and offer positive experiences for overcoming adversity. For some, school is also a respite from difficult home lives, offering positive role models and relationships that are critical in promoting pupils' well-being and fostering 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, our Federation places a high priority on maintaining the well-being of all employees. Our people are our most valuable resource, and we are committed to supporting their mental and physical well-being. We take our responsibilities under national health and safety law seriously, assessing risks and creating a supportive environment where workloads are fair, roles are clear, relationships are positive, and staff are listened to. By fostering this culture, we aim not only to meet our legal duties, but to help every employee thrive and feel valued.

The School, as an employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees, so far as is reasonably practicable. It is also required to have measures in place to mitigate, as far as practicable, factors that could harm employees' physical or mental well-being, including work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the School's control.

1. **Purpose of the 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

2. **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 ow 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

3. **A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**

Schools within our Federation take a whole school approach to promoting 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 secure 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 recognise that stigma can be a barrier to understanding mental health, and we are committed to fostering an open, positive culture that encourages dialogue and deepens awareness. We aim to be a 'talking and listening school' with an open-door policy.

4. **Links to other policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, Behaviour, PSHE/RSE and SEND.

Links to 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 form of communication.

5. **Supporting staff with their own positive mental health and well-being**

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

Role of all staff
All staff are expected to:
- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Follow the expectations on out-of-school hours working, including guidance on when it is and isn't reasonable to respond to communications
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers
Line managers are expected to:
- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work

Role of senior staff
The senior staff with the responsibility of mental health and well-being are expected to:
- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations

- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes are made
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Establish a clear procedure on out-of-school hours working, including on when it is and isn't reasonable for staff to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

Role of the governing board

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

6.2 Out of school hours working

Out-of-school hours working refers to tasks undertaken by teachers outside the normal school day that directly support them in meeting the Teachers' Standards, such as planning, assessment, preparation, or professional development. All teachers receive their entitlement to PPA within their directed time each week. Out of school hours working covers the provisions in 51.7 and 51.8 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which address the expectations for teachers' working hours beyond their contracted time:

> 51.7. In addition to the hours a teacher is required to be available for work, a teacher must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties, including in particular planning and preparing courses and lessons; and assessing, monitoring, recording and reporting on the learning needs, progress and achievements of assigned pupils.

> 51.8. The employer must not determine how many of the additional hours referred to in paragraph 51.7 must be worked or when these hours must be worked.

We do not expect staff to undertake work purely to increase workload. Staff are encouraged to manage their time in a way that ensures they are meeting the Teachers' Standards whilst maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Line managers can provide advice to teachers who may need support in doing this.

6.3 Email communication

We acknowledge that each staff member has different working patterns that fit around their personal lives. Therefore, placing restrictions on when emails can be sent is not appropriate, as staff may carry out work outside of school hours at different times. Staff are encouraged to ensure that emails do not encroach on their non-working time, for example, by adjusting settings on email apps. When emails are sent outside school hours, the sender should understand that there is no expectation for the recipient to respond until they are next working.

6.4 Managing specific wellbeing issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:
- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

A bank of mental health and well-being resources can be found within this policy (appendix 3). These can also be found on boards within each school's staff room.

If any member of staff feels they are suffering from ill mental health or their well-being is not being fully supported, they can ask for support through the Senior Mental Health Lead.

6. Supporting pupils' positive mental health

7.1 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 the possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such as 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.

Each school's Mental Health Team:

- Lead 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
- 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 emotion al 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:

- Pastoral staff
- Safeguarding/Child Protection team
- Supporting staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENDCo who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities, including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Mental Health support team
- School nurse team

We believe that 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:

- Active listening
- Building positive relationships
- Building resilience
- Promoting physical exercise
- Promoting healthy eating

7.2 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 from getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identifying individuals that might need support
- Being an 'attachment aware' school (regular attachment training)
- Pastoral staff being aware of where to signpost families in need of support within the school
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance, well-being concerns and referrals to pastoral staff
- Using pupil surveys throughout the school year
- Staff reports and referrals to the pastoral team
- Worry/connection boxes in each class which the class teacher monitors and passes on to pastoral staff where appropriate
- Gathering information from previous schools where children join us

- Parent's evenings

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviours 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 schools safeguarding procedures are followed.

7.3 Assessment, interventions and support

All concerns are reported to the DSLs and recorded. Actions are then taken by the DSLs/Pastoral team to ensure the pupils get the support they need, whether from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes; there are no absolutes.

Need The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings/panel with key members of staff	Evidence-based Intervention and Support – The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils For example	Monitoring

Highest need	• Referral to CAMHs • Educational Psychologist involvement • If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.	All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out – • The needs of the pupils • How the pupil will be supported • Actions to provide that support • Any special requirements Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers
Some need	Access to in school Lounge 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends Referral to school nursing team Referral to Mental Health Support Team	An electronic log is kept and monitored in safeguarding supervision meetings Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate
Low need	General support e.g. class teacher/TA, Pastoral staff 'Check-in', 'Lunch Club'	

7.4 Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some cases, a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by someone from each school's Mental Health Team, usually the SENDCO, following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

7.5 Involving parents and carers

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.

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.

7.6 Involving pupils

We seek pupil's views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health and well-being activities through pupil voice, surveys, class questions and suggestions boxes located throughout the school.

7. Disclosures

8.1 Verbal disclosures by pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the DSL team and recorded in order to provide them the support they need and to keep them safe.

8.2 Non-verbal disclosures by pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or communication.

8.3 Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupils safeguarding log, including the date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and the next steps.

8. 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 2).

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics is managed by the senior mental health lead.

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.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness will be monitored by the senior leadership team and reported to the Governors. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1 Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	• Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEND	• Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the Family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	• Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
In the Community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2: Where to get information and support for pupils:

For support on specific mental health needs
Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk
OCD UK www.ocduk.org
Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org
Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk
Self-Harm www.selfharm.co.uk
Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

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

Appendix 3: Where to get information and support for staff's own mental health and well-being

Education Support UK - Mental health and well-being - Helpline: 08000 562 561
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-individuals/

Mentally healthy schools UK https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/supporting-staff-wellbeing/

Public Health England – Every Mind Matters
https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/every-mind-matters-self-care-tool

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/teacher-support/new-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-teachers/z4g4scw