



LORDSWOOD
SCHOOL

Mental Health and Well Being Policy

Date: October 2024
Review Due: October 2025
Reviewed Annually

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)

At Lordswood School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff, pupil body and our school community. We pursue this aim using universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches, supporting vulnerable individuals, where needed.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for those affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

We have taken part in the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools award, in partnership with Leeds Beckett University. The school achieved the prestigious gold award. In addition to this, we have trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant's (ELSA) in school and have a number of safe spaces and adults to support our school community should the need arise. We provide the opportunity of one to one support for pupils, staff and parents within school at no cost to those who need it. Additionally, we have a governor who has completed the mental health governor training.

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 needs policy in cases where a pupil's emotional and 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 staff, pupils and the school community.
- 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.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of those within the school community. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Jayne Lusinski – Head/ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Kayleigh Butcher – ELSA, Pastoral Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- Lorraine Horgan – Pastoral Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- Keighley Baker-May – AHT, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- Georgina Marks – AHT/Mental Health Lead, DDSL
- Claire Beehan – SENDCO, Safeguarding Level 3 and Trained Mindfulness Teacher
- Diana Wilks – Mental Health Governor
- Charlotte Ciftci– PSHE Lead
- Lisa Wright – ELSA
- Otis the school therapy dog.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a member of SLT/ DSL in the first instance, where “safe and familiar adults” can talk to the children in a designated nurture space. 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 DSL/DDSL.

If the pupil presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CYPMHS (The Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Pastoral Lead and SENDCO.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an Individual Care Plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents, SENDCO and Pastoral Lead 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

Individual Care Plans will be kept securely by the Pastoral Lead, SENDCO and class teacher.

Teaching about Mental Health

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 curriculum (Jigsaw). As part of our monthly online safety focus, we recognise how to manage our mental health online and keep ourselves safe.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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 make use of the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Mental Health sessions will be focused on termly during PSHE/ Circle Time activities, alongside a school wide adoption of the Zones of Regulation, which encourages members of the school to discuss how they are feeling and adopt strategies to support them further, where needed. Parents will also be supported with these strategies through our bespoke Top tips and workshop sessions.

Signposting

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

This will include: what support is available within our school and local community; who it is aimed at and how to access it is. This will be discussed/ arranged with those who need it by our Pastoral Lead and SENDCo. . This information can also be accessed through the local authority's Local Offer <https://www.medway.gov.uk/localoffer>

To promote staff wellbeing, all staff have access to a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme run by Strictly Education, <https://strictlyeducation.optimise.health/#/>. This provides confidential emotional support, advice on money management, consumer and legal support.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas. 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?

In the first Instance, support for pupils with Emotional Health Difficulties can be referred to the School Health Team by the SENDCO.

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 the Pastoral Lead and / or SENDCo. take the time to listen to the child/ adult.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental (e.g. self-harm)
- 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 (in line with our Child Protection procedures).

Staff should listen, rather than advise, with the focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?' It is important to reassure the pupil and never promise not to tell anyone. Further information can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMs.

This 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 - at each level of discussion
- Any notes made during the conversation

This should be written straight after the discussion and the DSL/DDSL notified.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we would normally, if age-appropriate, discuss this 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, although an age-appropriate approach is required here. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent, especially if the child is a danger to themselves.

It is necessary to share disclosures with the Pastoral Lead's, DSL or DDSL, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil and 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 in line with the Safeguarding Policy. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents, on their behalf or meeting them with the child.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues the DSL must be informed immediately, who will take appropriate action.

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, 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 be upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parents time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of support and provide materials to read, as they will often find it hard to take all the information in, whilst coming to terms with the news. Sharing sources of support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide a clear means of contacting us to discuss further questions, as they process the information and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call. Meetings will conclude with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting included in 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 and provide opportunities for them to talk with our Pastoral Lead.

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help, if they have concerns about their own child or any other child.
- Make our Mental Health Policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.
- Share resources with parents, where necessary.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends, who often want to support but do not know how. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis what support is appropriate.

Staff Positive Mental Health

At Lordswood we realise the importance of looking after our own mental health and that of our colleagues. We aim to keep and encourage a positive working atmosphere, where staff can speak openly and honestly. Regular activities are scheduled to promote wellbeing which ensure staff feel valued and appreciated. Meetings are scheduled to ensure staff are not overwhelmed with workload.

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, in addition to annual child protection training.

The MindEd learning portal (<https://www.minded.org.uk>) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

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. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Mental Health Lead/ Head.

Useful website

- <https://www.minded.org.uk/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-mental-health-in-schools-and-colleges>
- <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>
- <https://www.place2be.org.uk/what-we-do/school-resources.aspx>
- <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources>