

For with God nothing is impossible.
Luke 1:37

Church Lench CE First School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

2024

At the heart of the school is our belief that 'with God nothing is impossible', which allows our children to have high aspirations and know that they are part of a loving family. We have a flexible, child-led, broad and balanced curriculum where every child can thrive in a happy, inclusive and safe environment.

Responsibility

Compassion

Perseverance

Hope

Thankfulness

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Church Lench C E First School

Perseverance, Compassion, Hope, Responsibility, Thankfulness

At Church Lench C E First School we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing 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 wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.

We aim to create an environment where pupils and staff feel safe, happy and secure. Through our Core Christian Values of Perseverance, Hope, Compassion, Responsibility and Thankfulness we enable every member of the school community to feel that they are treated fairly and consistently and know they are valued and respected.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy." We foster positive and caring attitudes as well as promoting good relationships so everybody can work together and children can become confident, independent and resilient learners. We pursue this aim using universal and whole school approaches such as Relax Kids sessions as well as targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students such as Rock Steady music interventions.

We feel that positive mental health is important to enable all children to fulfil their potential and benefit from all the opportunities available to them. In addition to promoting the positive mental health of our staff and pupils we also aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health as well as promoting 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.

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 children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems.
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

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Definition of mental health and wellbeing

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 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".

Mental health and wellbeing 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.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Single Equalities, PSHE and SRE. Links with the School's 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.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

We are dedicated to:

- Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Promoting our core Christian Values throughout our Mental Health curriculum.
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Helping children to be independent, confident and resilient learners.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- Effectively working with parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

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We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Staff 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 children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying, caring for a family member, trauma in childhood and domestic abuse.

They should 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.

Our Inclusion Lead for Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Leads on PSHE teaching about mental health.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional 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 children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our own Senior Leadership Team
- Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead
- Our SENDCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Our School Nurse
- Relax Kids therapist
- Rock Steady teacher
- Social workers attached to specific children

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- Our church leader (Reverend Canon Richard Thorniley)
- Worcester Diocese

Support can be offered in school or at an external venue.

Supporting children' positive mental health

We believe the school has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems.

Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child.

Designated places in school, such as the 'friendship bench' where children can show they need help and support from other members of the school community.

Transition programmes

- Supportive Transition Programme to Middle School
- Supportive Transition programme from Class 1 to Class 2 and from Class 2 to Class 3 involving children and staff to ensure that this is as smooth as possible.

Class Activities

- Class Dojo- a reward system where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done including our core values of Perseverance, Compassion, Hope, Responsibility and Thankfulness, and have them celebrated in class
- Relax Kids meditation sessions, regular sessions where children learn to regulate their feelings through meditation.
- Circle time and PSHE lessons (see PSHE policy)
- Designated resilience lessons.
- Spirituality is planned throughout the curriculum
- Posters and displays are up in classrooms to enable children to know how to help themselves and each other.

Whole School

- Worry boxes - where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class

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- Positive Mental Health week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- NSPCC addressing to the whole school about how to keep safe 2 yearly cycle.
- Flexible curriculum which allows teachers to plan, explore and deliver positive mental health life skills throughout the curriculum and puts the physical and mental wellbeing of each child at its heart.
- A strong RE and Spirituality curriculum which emphasises community and supports this policy.
- Staff who are open and honest to offer good role models for the children.

Small group activities

- Nurture groups to support wellbeing and emotions
- Relax Kids – a weekly intervention with a focus group as well as every child in the school having the opportunity to be involved.
- Rock Steady – a therapy session for vulnerable children which involves becoming confident and resilient through music.
- Talking intervention groups

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, confident and independent, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems. Our core Christian values, spirituality and positive mental health are interwoven throughout our curriculum to ensure that children fully understand the importance of their mental health and that they have the opportunity to explore their mental health and coping strategies in all areas of their school life.

However, we also teach about physical and emotional well-being throughout our curriculum. For example, in PE we incorporate yoga and relaxation techniques as well as showing the benefits of exercise for our emotional and physical health. In all our subjects we encourage group work and promote talking and asking for help, as well as active listening, a skill modelled by all adults in school also. We have time for play as well as work and give time for short mindfulness activities such as colouring, art and music, or time to exercise – activities led by an adult and allowing the children to have a bank of ideas they can use to help them when times are tough.

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EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings.
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down and self regulate.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, who to go to and how to get help.
- how to be resilient through play and activities
- About how to become compassionate and responsible citizens of the world.

Key Stage 2 children learn:

- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media).
- Positive and healthy coping strategies.
- About good and not so good feelings.
- To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others.
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- About resilience.
- How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something.
- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.
- About how to become compassionate and responsible citizens of the world.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

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 getting worse.

We do this in different ways including:

- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Mental Health Lead (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular classes regularly).
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Weekly meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff. All staff at Church Lench C E First School have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems.

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health Lead or the SENDCO.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.

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- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour 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 school's child protection procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency, then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Safeguarding/ Mental Health Lead or the and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Safeguarding /Mental Health Lead and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either 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 monitor these records regularly to ensure that the child is getting the best possible care.

Support for friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support. We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help. We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Support for children after inpatient treatment

We recognise that some children will need ongoing support and the Safeguarding/Mental Health Lead will meet with children on a regular basis. We are careful not to “label” children with diagnoses without prior and sensitive consultation with family/carers and other relevant professionals. We have a duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children.

We will carry out a risk assessment and produce an Individual Care Plan to support children to re-integrate successfully back to school. When a child leaves an inpatient provision and is transitioning back to school, we discuss what needs to happen so the transition will be smooth and positive.

Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some case a pupil’s mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the children’s Individual Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health Lead or 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 pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil’s specific needs.

Main Specialist Service	Referral process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through the Mental Health Lead or SENDCO

SEND and Mental Health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN).

Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting mental health.

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 children who do have mental health needs.

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On first entry to the school, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers:

- We provide information and websites on mental health issues which can be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves. This can be accessed in the Early Help offer and Safeguarding policy in the policy section.
- We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.
- If necessary we will also help parents with their own mental health, supporting them in locating other professionals who might help or signposting them to agencies for support.

When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a mental health Individual Care Plan if appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves and accompanying and supporting them to do so. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, 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.

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Involving children

We seek pupil's views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

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 children and know what to do and where to get help.

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.

We strongly believe that being part of a strong community is beneficial for creating a positive work place. While children are at the centre of everything we do, we also understand the importance of our staff's mental health. By creating a supportive community for our staff, one where they can discuss feelings openly, it helps them be able to support and model these behaviours to our children. At Church Lench we look out for every member of our community, children, staff, parents and carers as well governors, and members of the wider community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are offered a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work. The policy is monitored regularly by the headteacher/ safeguarding lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders: Mrs G Contardi and Mrs H Pratley

Policy Review

Written and Ratified May 2024

Signed *S Price* (head teacher)

Signed: *D Ferguson* (Chair of Governors)

Review Date March 2027