



# **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

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## **Contents:**

Introduction	3
Key premises of Mental Health and Wellbeing at Lipson	3
Our approach to mental health	4
Roles and responsibilities	4
Supporting pupils' positive mental health	5
Identification	6
Working with specialist services	9
Involving parents and carers	9
Supporting staff mental health	
Appendices	10

## Introduction

At Lipson Vale Primary School, 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 wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health issues may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

We strive to ensure that Lipson Vale is a school where pupils experience a nurturing and supportive environment where they are given opportunities to develop self-esteem and positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. We recognise that, for some pupils, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils' well-being and can help to engender a sense of belonging and community.

As laid out in our Relationships Policy, Lipson Vale has understanding at its very heart. Adults and children understand that we all come into school with varied experiences. Through our consistent, positive approach, focused on relationships, pupils develop strategies that support themselves in self-regulation, as well being secure in the knowledge that adults are there to support pupils during challenging times. Other linked policies include the attendance policy, online safety policy and anti-bullying policy.

We believe that our school values help to underpin our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy:

- Enabling children and adults to **communicate** their feelings clearly, expressing their emotions appropriately.
- Developing **resilience** in managing times of change and stress.
- Having **self-belief** in our own abilities to maintain a positive mental health, by feeling confident in themselves.
- Know that **collaboration** helps us to all to look after each other.
- Supporting pupils to understand their **responsibility** in reducing the stigma around mental health.
- Encouraging pupils to show **bravery** in seeking help when needed.

## Key principles of this policy

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health issues.
- 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 issues getting worse.
- Key information about some common mental health issues.
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing at Lipson Vale:

- 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.

- Staff feel well-equipped to approach children who are experiencing mental health difficulties, assess and advise.

### **Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

***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.***

### **Our approach to mental health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health which aims to help pupils become resilient, happy and successful and prevent challenges before they arise.

This encompasses eight aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health that everyone understands, where pupil safety is paramount.
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to.
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners and individuals.
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of pupils and staff who have mental health needs.
6. Planning support to meet need, including working with specialist services, monitoring the effectiveness of this support and involving the individual in these processes.
7. Working effectively with parents and carers, communicating their child's needs, where necessary.
8. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an open-door policy.

### **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 (Appendix 1). Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health issues and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

The school's Mental Health Team (*Mental Health Leads, SEND and Inclusion Lead, Designated Safeguarding Team, RSHE Lead*):

- Lead on and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Keep staff up to date with information about what support is available.
- Ensure the curriculum teaches up to date, relevant information relating to mental health.
- Communicate with and make referrals to mental health services.

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, specialist 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:

- Learning Mentor
- School nurse
- CAMHS, including core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- Mental Health in Schools Team
- Counsellors
- Parent Support Advisor

## **Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health**

We believe that we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health issues. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches, including but not limited to those listed below:

### Whole school

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Through RSHE, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health issues.
- Peer mediators
- Online safety lessons considering content that children should and should not access online and what to do if they are concerned
- Adults modelling vocalising worries and feelings and noticing these in children

### Class Activities

- Worry boxes / worry tree
- Kindness/compliment boards
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Classroom scripts and signposting
- Window of Tolerance boards to be used as a non-verbal method to help us to connect with and communicate our feelings
- RSHE lessons
- Circle time

### Small Group Activities

- Small friendship/social skills groups
- Lunch club support
- ELSA

### Individualised support

- ELSA
- Linked adults
- Counselling
- Bespoke timetables
- Reduced timetables

## Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support, small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly transition passports for vulnerable children
- Enhanced transition visits

## Whole School

- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school.
- School website which identifies who MHFA trained adults are, signposts to useful agencies, resources and techniques.

## 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:

- Liaising with the school office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support.
- Home visits in Foundation Stage to identify needs.
- Induction meetings for new starters.
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, medical notes and attendance during weekly safeguarding meetings and attendance meetings.
- Using CPOMS to report concerns.
- The window of tolerance.
- Discussion of concerns around individual pupils during SLT meetings.
- Pupil progress meetings.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition.
- Parents' evenings or additional meetings.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through their child's class teacher, a member of SLT on the gate or to any member of staff.
- Drop-ins with professionals such as the school nurse, educational psychologist or MHST.

We recognise the following as potential signs of a mental health need:

- Non-verbal behaviour.
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- Slowing of progress in academic attainment.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Regularly expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Avoidance of PE or getting changed for PE.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm (including hair pulling, pinching, head banging) that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- 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.

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.

All staff will receive training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health issues. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to a member of the Mental Health Team. A selection of staff from a cross-section of the school will receive Mental Health First Aid training, either for adults or children.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's safeguarding procedures are followed.

**Disclosures by Pupils**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff follow the ALGEE procedure as detailed in Mental Health First Aid Training. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded on CPOMS in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

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

<p><b>Need</b> based on discussions at the regular inclusion meetings with key members of staff</p>	<p><b>Evidence-based Intervention and Support</b> - the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils</p>	<p><b>Monitoring</b></p>
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Highest need	<p>CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies</p> <p>School Mentor/counsellor -1:1 support</p> <p>Educational Psychologist involvement</p> <p>External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work</p> <p>If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, refer to the SEND policy.</p>	<p>All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The needs of the pupils</li> <li>• How the pupil will be supported</li> <li>• Actions to provide that support</li> <li>• Any special requirements</li> </ul> <p>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</p> <p>Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers</p> <p>Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate</p>
Occasional need	<p>Access to in school lunch club with a senior leader</p> <p>1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends</p>	<p>Discussion, advice and support in Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) core hours for key staff</p> <p>CPOMs is updated and there are monthly safeguarding team meetings, where these children are raised</p> <p>Weekly staff meetings</p>
Low need	General support from class teacher/TA	

## Working with Specialist Services

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 these services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by a member of the Mental Health Team following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and their parents and/or 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.



## **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.

### **To support parents and carers:**

- we organise a range of Mental Health workshops accessing expertise from voluntary services.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

### **When a concern has been raised the school will:**

- contact parents and carers, setting up a face-to-face meeting where necessary
- In most cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- 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

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.

## **Supporting staff mental health**

We recognise that education is a demanding sector and understand that we all have a responsibility to support each other through times of challenge. Psychological safety creates the culture and conditions for staff to reduce their stress, feel valued, have open and honest discussions, be able to say 'no' without the fear of retribution and, ultimately, do their jobs to the best of their ability. Changes needed to drive school improvement are carefully considered, taking into account workload and existing pressures.

The following strategies are used to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing:

- Designated time in staff meetings for staff to share experiences and talk about their wellbeing.
- A culture of noticing, where staff check in with each other, listen and show empathy.
- An open-door policy, where adults can approach the school's Mental Health Team for support.
- Staff shout out / thank you board.

The following strategies may be used to support a staff member with a mental health issue:

- Signposting to PAM Assist for staff who are experiencing mental health issues.
- A staff well-being room – a dedicated space where staff can have the space needed to calm, reflect or share.
- A mental health day where staff choose a wellbeing day.
- Buddy system whereby each member of staff allocates a buddy who is there contact in times of need.
- A mental health support plan.

As employees, staff who feel they need support are also able to access the following services:

- The Education Support Partnership – a free service for those working in education in the UK. 08000 562 561, <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/>
- PAM Assist – a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme which offers professional expertise regarding a range of work or personal issues: debt advice, money management, stress management, relationships, domestic abuse, drug/alcohol addiction, family care or bereavement.

As well as these, support is also available for all adults from these services:

- Livewell Southwest's 24/7 First Response Service: call 0800 923 9323
- Plymouth Options' service, NHS Talking Therapies - anyone aged 16+ can self-refer to receive a range of support: <https://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/plymouth-options>
- Shout - a text support service for anyone who is struggling to cope: text SHOUT to 85258
- Head Space – out-of-hours service (6pm-midnight) for people who may be approaching a mental health crisis: call 07890257614 or email [headspace@colebrooksw.org](mailto:headspace@colebrooksw.org)
- The Samaritans – 24/7 support with any issues: call 116123

In addition to regular meetings, staff wellbeing is monitored through an annual anonymous staff survey.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

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

	<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Protective Factors</b>
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Specific development delay</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• SEND</li> <li>• Exposure to family or community violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being female (in younger children)</li> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humour</li> <li>• Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Negative peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• High morale school</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> </ul>
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> <li>• High standard of living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children**

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools-2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for

Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)

Depression

Eating Disorders

Substance Misuse

Self Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought.

#### *Suicidal Thoughts*

Young people may experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their lives. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Where to get information and support**

*For support on specific mental health needs*

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk) OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

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

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts [Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPHYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

*For general information and support*

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health issues [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)  
[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health  
[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health