

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

White Spire School



Written by: Michelle Bartle

Last reviewed on: September 2024

Next review due by: September 2025

KEY CONTACTS in school/setting

Name	Role	Contact details
Headteacher	Finlay Douglas	01908 373266
Chair of governing body	Neil Griffiths	01908 373266
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Out of hours contact for DSL	Michelle Bartle	safeguarding@whitespire.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Finlay Douglas	01908 373266
Other members of the safeguarding team (DSLs')	Sophie Lunnon Sally Seminerio Karen Richards Anton De Beer	01908 373266
Prevent lead	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Child sexual exploitation lead	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Looked after/previously lead	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Mental health lead	Michelle Bartle	01908 373266
Chair of governing body	Neil Griffiths	01908 373266
Designated governor for safeguarding	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Designated governor for mental health and well being	Tanya Stevens	01908 373266
Attendance Officer	Shanie Jamieson	01908 373266

Introduction

At White Spire School, we believe that we as a school have an important role to play by acting as a source of support and information for pupils, guardians and staff.

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 his or her community. (World Health Organisation).

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with

- Child protection policy
- Anti-Bullying policy

This policy aims to

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers
- Enable our pupils to be resilient
- To follow clear processes to ensure that pupils get the support they need
- To promote early intervention

DfE-Mental health and behaviours in school (2018)

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 PSHCE curriculum.

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.

Interventions

As a school, staff cannot act as mental health experts and should not try to diagnose conditions. When schools suspect a pupil has a mental health problem we will follow the schools set procedures. We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and local services available to individuals.

It is important that there is early intervention in place that:

- Prevents: creating a safe and calm environment. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum.
- Identification: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;
- Early support: helping pupils to access early support and interventions; and
- Access to specialist support: working effectively with external agencies

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils seeking help 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

It is important that as a school we assess, plan, do and review while keeping in line with the schools Child Protection policy.

Warning signs

There are often warning signs which indicate a child or young person is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs are taken seriously and staff observing any of them should communicate their concerns following the schools child protection procedures.

While not exhaustive, the list below details possible warning signs as follows:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- 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
- Unusual play (in playground)
- Unusual drawings (in class)
- Tendency to isolate themselves
- Compulsive lying
- Attention seeking
- Pulling hair out (self-harm)
- Hurting other children
- No empathy
- Anxiety
- Hiding inside clothes (making self invisible)
- Loud and disruptive
- Hiding lunch
- Soiling

Managing disclosures

A child or young person may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend/sibling to any member of staff. If such disclosure occurs, staff are to follow the school's child protection procedures.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

All staff are aware that they must not promise to keep 'secrets' with children. When a concern is passed on, pupils are to be made aware of whom the information has been passed onto. Staff will follow the information sharing guidelines within the school's child protection policy.

Working with parents and carers

Where it is considered appropriate to inform parents / carers of a disclosure, staff will always seek to be sensitive in our approach.

As it can be difficult to 'take in' information while coming to terms with unexpected news, the school will provide parents with additional information to further support parents/carers - e.g. Parent helplines and forums. The school will provide a contact point for parents if they have further questions.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues to enable them to keep child or young person safe.

Policy Review

The governing body is responsible for reviewing this policy annually and ensuring that it is compliant with current legislation and good practice. Also for ensuring that the school maintains an up to date list of key contacts and related policy and procedures are kept up to date.

Appendix A

Self-harm

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

Depression

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

Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias

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

Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

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

OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Suicidal feelings

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

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

Eating problems

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

CAMHS-Milton Keynes Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service supports families and professionals with children who experiencing mental health difficulties.

www.cnwl.nhs.uk

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

Anna Freud

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/mentally-healthy-schools/>

Telephone Numbers

- [Childline](http://www.childline.gov.uk) - 0800 1111 (always open)
- [Hopeline UK \(Papyrus\)](http://www.hopeline.org.uk) - 0800 068 41 41 (if you are having suicidal thoughts)
- [Young Minds Parents Helpline](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) - 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri from 9:30-4pm)

Appendix B: Guidance and advice documents

[Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges](#)- Department for Education (2018)

[Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#) - Public Health England (2023)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) - departmental advice for school staff. Department for Education (2018)

[Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future](#) - departmental - advice for school staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2016)

[Keeping children safe in education](#) - statutory guidance for schools - and colleges. Department for Education (2024)

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

Confidential

Wellness Action Plan

Name of Staff Member: _____

Headteacher/Deputy Head: _____

Initial Meeting Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Topics Discussed

Support Offered

Other Information/Actions Agreed

Signature of Employee: _____

Signature of Headteacher/Deputy Head: _____

Staff Counselling Service

DAS Helpline services: tele 0117 934 2116

*Please see Headteacher for policy number