



## Ardleigh St. Mary's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School



*Our School is a Christian place where children come to learn more about themselves and the world and where they will develop a lifelong love of learning.*

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

#### **Policy Statement**

Wellbeing refers to the quality of people's lives. It is about how well we are, and how our lives, are going. Wellbeing may be best thought as an umbrella term that can be measured via a range of indicators that together build up a picture of the quality of people's lives.

*Mental Health is a state of wellbeing 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 their community.  
(World Health Organisation)*

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. The quality, breadth and depth of our curriculum endeavours to ensure that children are open-minded, respectful, resilient, tolerant and have empathy when in school and in the wider community. Our school's vision and its associated values develop aspiration in all children, giving them resilience to cope well when things are difficult and the perseverance to overcome barriers to their own learning and to make positive choices.

As a school, we make sure all children have curriculum opportunities to look beyond themselves, ask 'big questions' and think globally about life and develop an understanding of disadvantage, deprivation and the exploitation of the natural and human world. This provides opportunities for all children to engage in social action and to understand how they can challenge injustice with now and in the future. Their behaviour and attitudes to courageous advocacy and social action are recognised both within school and wishing the community.

In addition we aim to to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at individual pupils.

The core of the Church of England's Vision for Education is underpinned by the belief that education should support human flourishing, or 'fullness of life'. This should equip children and young people in their understanding of who they are, why they are here, what they desire and how they should live. The vision also puts emphasis on a rounded education which should equip young people with strong foundations that will carry them through into adulthood.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

#### **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 policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and to the SEND policy.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms. Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school. At Ardleigh St. Mary's we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance. Staff are supported pastorally and have access to the school's designated Wellbeing Mentor. We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help; all staff should have skills to identify warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

### **Lead Members of Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of all pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Staff Member	Role	Responsibility
Ms D Parker	Headteacher	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mr N Kempster	Deputy Headteacher	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mr R Tucker	SENCo	Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
Mrs K Bament	Senior Teacher	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Wellbeing Ambassador
Mrs E McDiarmid	Classteacher	PSHE Lead
Mrs R Hoggarth	Office Manager	Lead First Aider
Mrs D Arnold	Wellbeing Mentor	Wellbeing Mentor - Pupils
Mrs K Thompson	Wellbeing Mentor	Wellbeing Mentor - Pupils and Staff
Mrs A Watts	Governor	Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Governor

Their remit includes:

- Lead and work with all staff to coOrdinate whole school activities to promote mental health and wellbeing
- Lead on PSHE teaching and advice on mental health
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them

Many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupils should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then

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

## **Early Identification**

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from becoming worse.

## **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medications and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play
- Reference to school's policy 'Children with Medical Needs including First Aid and Administering Medicines' - Section 2 (September 2020)
- Reference to the DfE publication 'Mental Health and Behaviours in School (DfE 2018)

## **Teaching about mental Health and Wellbeing**

At Ardleigh St. Mary's we follow a whole school approach to promote positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to manage problems if they arise. We do this by:

- Creating and promoting a consistent Christian and nurturing ethos, which includes policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Using the NHS 5 Steps to Wellbeing as universal provision; the Colour Monster in EYFS and Key Stage 1 and Zones of Regulation in Key Stage 2.
- Explicit teaching of emotional vocabulary across the school.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health lessons and PSHE sessions for all year groups.
- Wellbeing Weeks and access to information around the school.
- Providing frequent opportunities for pupils to engage and learn in our outside environment.
- Opportunities for pupils to socialise through clubs and joint events with other schools.
- Small group activities
  - Nurture groups and Circle Time activities focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
  - Access to professionally trained Wellbeing Mentors.

## **Skills, Knowledge and Understanding**

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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific need of the cohort we are teaching 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 will follow the PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps weather than harms. The actual curriculum programme we follow is from Coram Life Education SCARF Resources.

## What our School aims to do:

The document 'Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing' (PHE 2021) refers to planning and promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. It outlines eight principles schools should consciously adopt to promote emotional health and wellbeing:

1. Leadership and Management. We have a designated member of the senior leadership team who can champion organisation-wide practices and who looks to see actions: integrated, sustained and monitored for impact; responsive to pupils and parent/carer voice; and fully linked to other avenues of support.
2. School Ethos and Environment. We will ensure the physical, social and emotional environment for both pupils and staff promotes a culture of respect, value and diversity.

Church of England schools are also expected to ensure their Christian vision supports the flourishing of pupils and staff. It is also expected that all members of the school community should have an understanding of how the school's Christian vision shapes the provision for mental health and wellbeing.

3. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. We will provide a focus within the curriculum and informal curriculum for social and emotional learning; and developing personal resilience. Opportunities for assessing these are utilised to help identify those in need of further support. We aim to build spiritual opportunities that will nurture young people.
4. Pupil Voice. We aim to ensure pupils are involved in decisions that impact them or can benefit their mental health and wellbeing and develop agency to influence change.
5. Staff Development, Health and Wellbeing. We aim to ensure access to training to equip staff to identify mental health difficulties in their pupils and to refer them to appropriate support in school or externally. We will offer additional counselling or supervision for staff working with children and young people with complex needs and will promote staff health and wellbeing as a key principle of the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing.
6. Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact. Identifying need is an important basis for understanding and planning a response to a pupil's mental health and emotional needs and monitoring the impact of any support given. This needs to be done sensitively and where there particular concerns additional professional advice should be sought.
7. Working with Parents/Carers. We will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote mental health and wellbeing and offer or signpost support for parents and carers. We will ensure families in disadvantaged circumstances can participate fully in activities by being mindful of costs, transport and other needs.

Church of England schools are encouraged to signpost out of school provision that may benefit families and to encourage their churches to address the unmet needs of their communities through partnership working.

8. Targeted Support. We will ensure support for children's mental health and wellbeing needs is timely through identification and referral practices especially for children at greater risk. These might include; children in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to EWMHS and those living in households with mental illness or domestic violence. It is important to acknowledge that mental health and wellbeing is complex and schools need to work in partnership with other agencies to support the pupils in their care. There are some things schools are able to directly support and others which are largely outside their domain. Being clear on local support and knowing how to support families to access this in a timely manner, will make a significant difference to any holistic approach developed.

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle Time or 'Circle of Friends' activities
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'Worry Monsters' or 'Colour Monsters'
- Managing emotions resources such as 'The Incredible 5 Point Scale', Zones of Regulation
- Therapeutic and creative activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Internal wellbeing assessments
- Strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

## **Managing Mental Health and Wellbeing in our School**

### **Supporting all Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers 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/carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get information about this if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our own mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Working with other Agencies and Partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The School Nurse
- Essex Educational Psychology Services
- Community Paediatricians
- EWMHS - Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service
- Family Support Workers
- Therapists
- SEND Operations Team
- School Improvement Partner
- School Inclusion Partner

### **Signposting**

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

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and on the school's website. We will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil self-seeking by ensuring staff, pupils and parents/carers understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why there might be a need to access it
- What is likely to happen next

### **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

All staff will complete termly wellbeing trackers on their pupils, where appropriate, aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

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 Mr R Tucker, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or 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
- Frequent minor illnesses
- Lacking in motivation
- Any significant behaviour change
- Tiredness / fatigue

## **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, in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.

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.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring 'why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points of the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Mr Tucker, who will record and store appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

## **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 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 telling first them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, although there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or parent/carer. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share these disclosures with a colleague, namely the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead - Mr Tucker. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, 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 would be most appropriate and helpful to share the information with.

Parents/Carers should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers should not be informed and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ms Parker) must be informed immediately (or in her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mr Kempster).

### **Working Parents/Carers**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable or via virtual means.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be empathetic towards their feelings and give the parent/carer time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets (if they are available) to take away as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too e.g. parent/carer helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents/carers often have many questions as they process the information. We aim to finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider, on a case by case basis, which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one sessions or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friends help - e.g. signs of relapse
- How we can support children who may be living with someone who has a mental health condition

Additionally, we want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about relevant mental health conditions
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

### **Training**

As a minimum, and as part of regular safeguarding training in September, all staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep children safe.

We will host relevant information on our network drive for staff who wish to learn more about mental health and deliver in-school training through staff meetings and e-learning activities.

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 supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils. 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.

## **Policy Review**

**This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum.**

Additionally, the policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have any questions or suggestions about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Mr Tucker, our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead via phone - 01206 230394 or email - [senco@st-marys-ardleigh.essex.sch.uk](mailto:senco@st-marys-ardleigh.essex.sch.uk).

This policy will be updated immediately to reflect any personnel changes.

**Approved: Full Governing Body Meeting - 23.03.2021**

**To be Reviewed: March 2023**