



North Cadbury C of E Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

November 2023

This policy has been written with the underlying principles of our Church of England VC school status.

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)

Introduction

We are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and families). We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and their contribution is valued. We endeavour to ensure that our school community is able to manage times of change and stress and we aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or access to help when it is needed.

We also have a role to ensure that children learn about 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. We also aim to prioritise good mental health and wellbeing for our staff team, and have committed to advanced training for our Senior Mental Health Lead (Mrs Lisa Thompson).

At our school, we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable, and at times anyone might need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

Teaching about Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help our community become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising.

We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children to form and maintain healthy relationships socially.
- Helping everyone to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.

- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better. Signposting staff to counselling for their emotional health.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring everyone understands their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying when someone in our community has mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and families, as required.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting community voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups, and for staff through our Care First package
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school. We also focus on promoting a healthy work-life balance, operating a policy of no lone-working at school, a clear 5pm end of day closure time and PPA time at home/off site whenever possible.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for anyone in our community going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder. Care provision or signposting for community members in need.
- Nurture groups to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing. To include our pupil Wellbeing Team.

Signposting

We will ensure that our community is aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. We will create an Emotional Health and

Wellbeing page on our school website and regularly update it with links for the school community to follow.

Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning/work
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate that someone 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 designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Assessment, interventions and support

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and our SENCo to ensure that the support needed is given, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

Working with Parents and Families

Parents or families can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Lead and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information on our school website on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead/SENCo will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

Working with Specialist Services

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support emotional health and wellbeing. Members of our school community, including children and staff, may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Counselling Services
- Care First