

# Welton St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy



## Our Vision

As an inclusive Christian community we value each person, seeking to release everyone's full potential as promised by Jesus Christ. We seek to provide a safe, inspiring and creative learning environment providing opportunities for all to flourish. Through challenge, support and care, we strive for excellence in all that we do; always building on the foundations of shared values with consistently high expectations rooted in God's love. Together we are encouraged to be agents of positive change in this world.

*'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.'* Romans 15:13

**Wisdom Hope Community Dignity**

## Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Approved February 2025

Reviewed Biannually

# WHOLE SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH and EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

for

WELTON ST. MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND

PRIMARY ACADEMY

Written November 2021

“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

## Our vision for Mental Health and Wellbeing

*‘Together we strive to build positive health and wellbeing for all. Rooted in our Christian values we promote and encourage personal growth for ourselves and each other, develop resilience and understanding, recognise need and provide support.*

*Through challenge, care and healthy relationships our whole school community creates a safe space for everyone to be seen and heard. Together we care, learn and thrive.’*

## Policy statement

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all that we do. At Welton St Mary's, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture, along with our School Council and Staff Wellbeing Working Party, allows all members of our school community to have a voice and be heard, and with effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all. We pursue this aim using universal, whole school approaches and specialised targeted approaches to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

## Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Welton St Mary's approach to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including our SMSC policy, medical policy and SEND policy.

## Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Outlines how staff can provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Outlines principles and strategies that help to instil a positive culture of staff and pupil welfare and wellbeing.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Whilst all our staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Senior Mental Health Lead- Mrs N Gough

Mental Health First Aider- Miss D Sylvester, Mrs Claire Tunstall

Designated Safeguarding Lead- Mrs N Gough

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead- Miss D Sylvester, Mrs O Thorner, Mr Durkan

SENDCo- Mrs Z Howarth

Designated Teacher for Children in Care- Mrs O Thorner

Pastoral Lead -Miss D Sylvester

Early Help Lead – Kelly Fitzgerald

PSHE Lead- Mrs L Halliday

We also have a pastoral team that work with children and their families to support their wellbeing and ensure that they are attending school and receiving the emotional and mental health support that they need to access learning. The pastoral team includes:

Pastoral Manager and Child Mental Health First Aider: Dawn Sylvester

Attendance Officer: Deborah Charnley

ELSA and Lego Therapy Lead: Rebecca Isherwood

Team Around the Child and Early Help Lead: Kelly Fitzgerald

Forces and Young Carers Lead: Sarah Hilliard

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Mental Health First Aiders (Mrs Gough and Miss Sylvester) and follow the school's reporting procedures on CPOMS.

If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

## Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

## Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. This is continuously revised to ensure that it is meeting the current needs of our children.

Welton St Mary's  
PSHE Policy

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people. The specific content of the lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort 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 and others when faced with challenges.

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them (local and national support services and events), and how they can access these services. This might be through verbal communication as necessary and via staff briefing notes, newsletters, ParentMail, our school website, and our social media sites. Our Pastoral Team, who work with our most vulnerable children and their families, will also signpost on an individualised basis.

The aim of this is to ensure pupils, staff and parent/carers understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

## Sources or support at school and in the local community

### **School Based Support**

At Welton St Mary's, our whole school community take an active role in the pastoral care of our children; aiming to support all pupils including those who may be experiencing barriers to learning which could be related to social, emotional, health or personal reasons. We deal sensitively and effectively with our children's needs and concerns.

Class teachers and Teaching Assistants may work directly with a pupil providing appropriate support. They will receive guidance and strategies from the school's Pastoral Team.

Our Pastoral Team may also work directly with children/families or work alongside Class Teacher, Key Stage Lead and SENDCO to deliver support and strategies within the classroom environment.

Children may be referred for pastoral support from other adults within school where they have been identified as needing more specific interventions (managing/understanding emotions, building positive relationships etc). This might involve some 1:1 work with an adult to unpick their emotions; Lego Therapy (a social development program that uses LEGO activities to support the development of social skills); ELSA support (Emotional Literacy Support); or an alternative intervention that is relevant for the child. Parents/carers may also seek advice from the Pastoral Team when they have worries and concerns about a child's mental wellbeing.

### **Local Support**

In Lincolnshire there are a range of organisations and groups offering support Information can be found through the Family Services Directory and Local Offer

Family Services  
Directory

Further information can be found on our website: <https://weltonstmarysacademy.co.uk/well-being/>

These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

## Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert the Mental Health First Aiders- Mrs Gough, Miss D Sylvester.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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 and 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

## Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care; young carers; those who have had previous access to CAMHS/Healthy Minds; those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence; those whose parents or carers work in the armed forces. We have a staff member who works solely with our identified young carers and forces children and this proactive approach ensures that they have an adult championing them and supporting the wellbeing. This might involve some grouped or 1:1 sessions. We also have a Looked After Child Lead (Mrs Thorner) who works closely with children who are fostered or adopted to ensure that they are supported and that funding is used effectively to meet their individual needs.

We work closely with external agencies (such as Healthy Minds, the Working Together Team, the Behaviour Outreach Support Service etc) in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems.
- Working closely with Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services, Healthy Minds and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral.
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs.
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur.
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality.
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

## Managing disclosures

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on CPOMs, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information is automatically sent as an alert to the DSL and will be shared with the mental health lead.

## Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the pupil. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the pupil first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a DSL this ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

## Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – pupils, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

## Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.).
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

## Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it 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 friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

We will share relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

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 developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group, or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Headteacher or Pastoral Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## Staff Wellbeing

Welton St Mary's has the responsibility for all of its employees and supporting their wellbeing. At Welton St Mary's we have a staff 'Wellbeing Working Party' who meet three times a year to discuss wellbeing and workload. The group is a representation of our whole school community with all staff roles represented. Staff are encouraged to share suggestions for supporting wellbeing which are discussed at the meeting, and then subsequently discussed with SLT. Once agreed, outcomes are then shared with the school community via email. In addition, our wellbeing charter aims to support the wellbeing of all staff by:

### Wellbeing Charter

#### 1) Lifestyle

- Wellbeing Working Party established who meet regularly so that all staff have a voice on their workload and wellbeing. There is an opportunity for any member of staff to join the group and to contribute.
- A 24/7, 365 days a year fully funded Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) that provides any member of staff with support and practical advice on issues that might be impacting their wellbeing and performance. This includes the opportunity for a limited number of free counselling sessions.
- Staff initiatives to support wellbeing and team building e.g. shared lunches, treat a day at Christmas, staff socials, football sweepstakes etc.

## 2) Time

- Timetabled PPA time with your year group colleague to support collaboration.
- PPA can be taken at home during assessment week (3 times a year) and for a week to write reports.
- Leadership time provided during the school day for staff through a high quality and consistent, full-time cover teacher.

## 3) Training

- Extensive CPD opportunities to develop practice are encouraged and supported.
- Staff meeting time is always an opportunity to develop professionally.
- During assessment weeks, staff meetings are used as time given to staff to submit assessment data.

## 4) Leadership

- SLT open door policy, including out of hours.
- Deadlines carefully considered
- Leadership CPD opportunities to develop career development including NPQs and training trainee teachers.
- A supportive mentoring programme in school whereby early career teachers and apprentice TAs are well supported by multiple adults. This includes their year group partner, a mentor (usually outside of their year group) and a senior mentor.

## 5) Resources

- Complimentary tea, coffee, sugar and milk
- A well-resourced staff room with space to relax and space to work
- Access to suitable technology for teaching staff which includes a laptop and an iPad.
- Well resourced curriculum and environment such as a set of iPads per year group, an ICT suite, vast outdoor space, a teaching kitchen, two halls

## Additional Principles of Staff Wellbeing

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- A supportive, non-data driven appraisal cycle that challenges professionally but where workload and wellbeing is discussed during the meeting
- A sensible principled approach to feedback that allows teachers to use their professional judgement

- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Email culture – no expectation that emails are responded to on the same day. An expectation that emails will only be responded to during working hours (unless a staff member choose and wishes to respond out of school hours to support their own workload and wellbeing).
- When SLT add a new initiative or process there will be a process of weighing up impact vs workload to ensure that it is necessary
- No expectation that a teacher runs a club in every half term. ECTs are not expected to lead an after-school club.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support

### **Role of line managers and senior staff**

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Promote information about and access to external support services

## **3. Managing specific wellbeing issues**

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives. Line managers will, if required, refer

staff to the EAP who provide support for issues at work or home, financial guidance, legal enquiries, support and coaching for managers, signposting and general help. This can be accessed here: 08000856148 or via [educationsupport.org.uk](http://educationsupport.org.uk)

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **January 2025**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.

This is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Pastoral Lead.