



St Lawrence CE Primary School

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

2025 - 2028

Review date: September 2028

This policy has been developed in alignment with our Christian values, inspired by the Parable of the Good Samaritan, emphasising compassion, kindness and a commitment to help others.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Policy Statement

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 her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Our Christian vision and desire to help others gives us a sense of purpose at all times. The school's vision and values are deeply rooted at the heart of our actions; underpinning all policies and practices. The vision has its biblical roots in the Parable of the Good Samaritan which is understood and expressed in the school's development and provision. It drives leaders, including governors, to ensure that the vision shapes the experiences in school for staff and pupils to grow and flourish.

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

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 the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

This 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

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff with a specific, relevant roles include:

Alan Brannen – Headteacher Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
Zoe Robinson – Deputy DSL, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead & Family Support Worker
Sally Betton - CPD Lead and Office Manager (Lead on Communications)
Mike Reynolds – SENCO
Abby Morrison – PSHE/RSE Coordinator
Nicki Mason – ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to Alan Brannen, Zoe Robinson or Mike Reynolds. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead. 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS (this is known as BeeU in Shropshire) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mike Reynolds (SENCO) and Zoe Robinson (Family Support Worker). We have members of staff who are trained to deliver programmes of Lego therapy, 'Reach for the Top', bereavement therapy and 'Understanding Your Child'.

Individual Care Plans

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

- Details of a pupil's condition;
- Special requirements and precautions;
- Medication and any side effects;
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency;
- The role the school can play;
- Responsibilities for members of staff.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

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 PSHE/RSE 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 and/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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within our school and in the local community. The school has a Mental Health Lead (Zoe Robinson) who will assess a pupil's needs and discuss a roadmap with the parents and refer a pupil to any relevant agencies where appropriate (such as School Nurse, Autism West Midlands, Early Help and CAMHS).

We will remind pupils of ways to get help in school and at home. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Our communications will include:

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

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of signs which indicate a pupil (or another member of the school community) 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 to Alan Brannen (DSL), Mike Reynolds (SENCO) and Zoe Robinson (Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead).

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of self-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, mood and difficulty concentrating (lack of energy), detachment from reality or confused thinking.
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed.
- Lowering of academic achievement;
- Talking or joking about self-harm, suicide or death;
- 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;
- Persistent Lateness to or absence from school;
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

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.

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 for the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' Staff should seek help and support with any concerns using our in house Pastoral Support in the first instance.

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

- Date and time of disclosure;
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made;
- Main factual points from the conversation;
- Agreed next steps;
- If appropriate a diagram of injuries.

We operate a 'Wave' system that helps to identify a child's needs, which may lead to a CAMHS referral on the SEMH pathway.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to;
- What we are going to tell them;
- Why we need to tell them.

Pupils should always be informed that in order to keep them safe, staff will share information with each other. Ideally, we would receive pupil consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent and/or social services and police, particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

Disclosures must be shared with DSL and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensuring continuity of care in our absence and it providing an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with him/her who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents will be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing. This will be done in a sensitive manner and in line with our policies and procedures.

If a child gives staff a reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents might not be informed (if it would put the child in greater danger), but the designated safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead will make this decision.

Working with Parents of Pupils Needing Support

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

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?
N.B. It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of children's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give parents leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the any concerns that are shared. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent 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 often have many questions as they process the information. Each meeting should end with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential CPOMS record.

Working with All Parents

Parents 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 we will:

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

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 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 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 via staff meetings, briefings and emails about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 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.

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

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in September 2028. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Alan Brannen Headteacher via phone 01691722682 email head@st-lawrenceprimary.co.uk

This policy will always be updated to reflect personnel changes if / when they occur.