

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Vision

At Lancing Prep Worthing, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows pupils' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

This policy is a guide for all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

This policy applies to the whole school (Nursery to Year 8) and should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in pupils and staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and risk factors.
- Raise awareness amongst staff, that pupils and staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing (see also Staff Wellbeing policy).
- Enable staff to identify risk factors 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 children and young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques through the Zones of Regulation and Restorative Justice.
- Instil a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key staff members: The Wellbeing Team

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

The Wellbeing Team	2024-25
Head Teacher, DSL Trained	Francesca Milling
DSL/ SENCO	Amie Bennet

DDSL/ Deputy of the Nursery	Emma Street
Head of PSHEE/ Head of Wellbeing/ ELSA / DSL Trained	Emily Brown
Assistant Head – Positive Behaviour and Restorative Justice DSL Trained	Nick Grimshaw
Mental Health First Aiders	Emily Brown, Matt Payne
Safeguarding Committee for LPW	Amie Bennet, Emma Street, Emily Brown, Nick Grimshaw

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the class/form tutor, the Head of Wellbeing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Head of Wellbeing will place the pupil on our Wellbeing Monitoring List and will follow up with the Form Tutor and the child in regular check ins and decide if/when further support or contact with parents/carers may be necessary. If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's DSL Amie Bennet should be notified, and safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHEE curriculum which aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Are provided with the skills to live a healthy, balanced life (physically, emotionally, and socially) within relationships, work-life and when making lifestyle choices.
- To value diversity and equality in all its forms, with due regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- To acquire an understanding of healthy relationships including different types and in different settings, including online.
- To learn the skills to make informed economic choices and to explore different work roles and career pathways.
- To understand their rights (including the notion of universal human rights), responsibilities (including fairness and justice) and consent (in different contexts).

PSHEE is a timetabled subject taught throughout all key stages, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Many elements of the programme are supported through a whole school approach using activities such as whole school assemblies, visiting speakers and drop-down days.

The programme is of a spiral nature which introduces new and more challenging learning, while building on what has gone before, which reflects and meets the personal developmental needs of the children and young people designed to prepare the children physically, emotionally, socially, mentally, and intellectually for the future.

The teaching takes on a positive approach using a wide variety of teaching and learning styles with the emphasis on interactive learning, and focuses on what the children can do to keep themselves and others healthy and safe and to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Learning activities are organised to encourage the children to reflect on their learning and the progress they have made, and to transfer what they have learned to say and to do from one subject to another, and from school to their lives in the wider community. Opportunities are provided for the children to make real decisions about their lives, to take part in activities which simulate adult choices and where they can demonstrate their ability to take responsibility for their decisions.

The lessons are a safe and supportive learning environment where the children can develop the confidence to ask questions, challenge the information they are offered, draw on their own experience, express their views and opinions and put what they have learned into practice in their own lives.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website, Parent workshops), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure members of the school community 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

School support

The Hive

The Hive is our Learning Support and Wellbeing room. This is where the children can come and talk about anything and everything, their problems and worries, their thoughts and feelings, regardless of how big or small.

The Hive is available for Prep children to visit during morning break time (10.25 -10.45) and lunch times (1.00-2.00) to see a friendly face, seek some advice or take a moment to rebalance among our beanbags, cushions, and calming atmosphere. The pupils can also make an appointment to see a member of our Wellbeing Team at a time that suits them if outside of the drop-in session times.

ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support

What is it? Emotional literacy is understanding and recognising your own feelings and emotions, why we feel them and being able to express and communicate them. By supporting their emotional needs, it helps children to feel happier, improve their learning and encourage a more positive outlook.

If a pupil is receiving Emotional Support, they may be placed on our school's SEN Register and the family/parents/carers are informed if this is the case. This is to ensure the 'assess, plan, deliver and review process' is adhered to.

Who is it for? We have an Emotional Literacy Support Team in school, including a trained ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), whose role is to support children in school who are struggling to understand and regulate their own emotions, and to help them understand their feelings and those of others around them. ELSA support programmes are usually 8-12 weeks long and are suitable for children who are having difficulties with:

- Identifying, handling, and expressing emotions and feelings
- Self esteem
- Anger and anxiety management
- Social skills
- Friendship
- Transitions
- Bereavement

How is it accessed? Referral for ELSA intervention support can be via pupils, parents, member of staff and/or the Head of Wellbeing via a Referral form. Once a pupil has been identified as needing additional support, the Head of Wellbeing will notify the SENCO, coordinate with the parents and pupil to arrange the support, either one to one or in small groups depending on the nature of the needs. An ELSA assessment is completed by the referee/form tutor and/or the pupil, which is used to help set individual targets to work towards during the ELSA programme.

We are also able to offer:

- Drawing and talking therapy
- Pastoral support sessions
- Therapeutic play sessions
- Lego therapy
- Music therapy with a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered Music Therapist (at an additional charge)

If we feel, following school support, that a pupil will need additional or more specialist help, we may signpost parents to their GP, a counsellor or child psychologist /psychiatrist.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern and is receiving school support for their wellbeing, 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 will involve the pupil, staff, parents, and relevant professionals.

This plan will include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- The pupil's social and emotional learning goals
- Pupil voice
- Links between school and home

Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is our proactive approach introduced to help children learn about their emotions, to understand, validate, and develop their own skills to manage and cope throughout their day. The Zones of Regulation, designed by Occupational Therapist Leah Kuypers, aims to teach children about feelings and emotions, including their senses, and link them to situations they are in. It teaches children to express these in appropriate ways, develop a best state of alertness of both body and emotion for a specific time or situation, encourages self-control and self-management.

We believe that for each child to develop and reach their full potential they need to be supported both academically and emotionally. This is done through our whole school wellbeing approach to support the needs of each child, teaching children regulation skills and individual coping strategies. The aim of this approach is to develop emotionally literate children who are comfortable sharing and talking about their emotions and who can self-regulate and manage situations better as they navigate through life.

We have implemented The Zones of Regulation across all year groups from Nursery to Year 8; with adjustments and age-appropriate teaching, it suits all age groups and individuals. It provides the children with language to express themselves, validation that their feelings are natural and normalises communicating about emotions and thoughts. The children are developing self-awareness and exploring their individual way of processing their emotions and feelings through regulation strategies and tools.

We aim to develop and increase self-resilience and teach children and young people how to regulate from an early age. It can adapt alongside a child's natural growth and development. Regulation is a skill that needs attention and practice; as a young child, understanding your emotions and being able to vocalise them to others, and be an emotionally literate teenager and adult. Regulation and emotions are something everybody faces daily, sometimes without knowing. We wanted our children to recognise, identify and verbalise their emotions and be able to have the tools and strategies to help manage their feelings and to feel empowered to ask for help.

Local support

In West Sussex, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. 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.

<https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/Sussex-CAMHS>

Young Minds is a charity who provide support for children and young people, parents, family, and carers of young people with mental health needs. They provide advice, support, workshops, and information signposts.

The NSPCC is a children's charity who raise awareness of safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. They have resources, training and support helplines.

[NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#)

Childline has information, advice and support for professionals, parents/carers and children. They operate a 24-hour helpline and online chat. Their website is very child friendly and covers many topics for children and parents to read up on and gain support.

[Childline | Childline](#)

Warning Signs

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 alert the DSL/ DDSL and The Wellbeing Lead.

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, baggy clothes
- 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
- Talking or conversations indicating low self esteem

Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff in schools are however particularly well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those with changes in their behaviours or whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect and exploitation or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into

adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of the associated indicators and how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and access to education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they should take immediate action in referring this concern to the DSL or DDSL. Further advice and guidance can be found in our Safeguarding Policy. We have a range of resources to support our teachers' for identifying risks and signposting to support. We undergo regular staff training to keep up to date with changes to guidelines of safeguarding. These guidelines are found in the following Government documents; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024; Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023; SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Targeted support

We ensure timely and effective identification of pupils 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 West Sussex Council Children's Services, West Sussex CAMHS, Educational Psychologists and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing children who are showing signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers;
- Agreeing an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a graduated approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensuring 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;
- Providing 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;
- Providing young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;
- 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. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on My Concern or handwritten, including:

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| ▪ Date and time | ▪ Where the disclosure took place |
| ▪ 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 will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and Head of Wellbeing in line with the Safeguarding Policy, following procedures with regard to sharing information, the timeline to do this and to whom.

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. Mental Health issues are always a safeguarding concern and information will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We will discuss with pupils:

- 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
- What will happen next

Ideally, consent should be gained from the pupil first, or a conversation to make them aware of the next step, this is to maintain the trust between the pupil and the person they have spoken to. 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.

Due to the nature of The Hive and Pastoral/ELSA Sessions, the conversations between pupils and the ELSA are confidential. At the beginning of the ELSA support programme these terms are explained to the parents and the pupil. They are told the sessions are confidential and conversations will not be shared with parents, other members of staff or other pupils, unless they have given permission to do so or there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure. The ELSA will share these concerns with the DSL/DDSL. If there is a need to inform others of certain information, the ELSA will discuss this with the DSL and will talk to the child beforehand to explain the reasons of sharing the information to ensure the relationship is transparent and trust is maintained.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague (DSL, DDSL, Head of Wellbeing) this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the pupil. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers. The pupil will be informed of this next step procedure by the DSL/Wellbeing Lead.

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 by the DSL/DDSL.

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?
- 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/agreed are added to the pupil's My Concern record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

ELSA Interventions

Parents will be kept informed at regular stages through the ELSA support programme. The targets set by the pupil and ELSA will be shared with the parents. A review of their progress and new targets will be shared with the parents. The parents and ELSA will continue to have open communication regarding the programme and any concerns shared. This review will be recorded on the pupil's My Concern record.

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, resources or signposting programmes run by community nurses or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners.

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:

- That they are not responsible for their friend's difficulties
- 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 pupils safe. Nominated members of staff have received professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

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.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed the Senior Leadership Team who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Head of Wellbeing, SENCO, the DSL and the DDSL.

Created September 2019

Updated September 2024

The next review date is September 2025.