



Our Values

Dallington CE Primary

Love and care	Friendship	Respect
Hope	Thankfulness	Forgiveness

Punnetts Town Community Primary School

Love and care	Respect	Friendship
Resilience	Enjoyment	Curiosity

Woodlands Federation Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy date: September 2025

Review date: November 2026

Mental Health & Wellbeing Governor: Kirsty Coates

Mental Health & Wellbeing Champion: Paul Cox Dallington CE Primary School
Claire Kinsella Punnetts Town CP School

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues (Source: Young Minds)

1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class. Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm. There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%. More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time. Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression. The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s. Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression. 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder. 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Defining mental health - *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 their community.* (World Health Organization)

As teachers, we define mental wellbeing as children and young people's happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning- *" Children and young people feeling good, feeling that their life is going well, and feeling able to get on with their daily lives."*

How do we aim to influence pupil mental wellbeing?

In our schools we will:

- Provide a supportive culture, ethos and environment that can serve as a buffer to difficult circumstances
- Ensure teaching and learning that help pupils to build important life skills, through PSHE/RSE and strategies such as learning to learn and the growth mind set
- Support the development of skills and character traits such as self-management, compassion and team work
- Secure partnerships with parents/carers and the wider community

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

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

Mental health affects all aspects of life and behaviour.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all pupils and all staff who work within the Federation, irrespective of role. This policy encourages the mental health and wellbeing for all staff and children.

Context and Rationale

Mental Health and Wellbeing promotes school success and improvements by:

- Promoting positive mental and emotional wellbeing by providing information and support
- Creating a shared understanding of all aspects of mental health
- Enabling those with mental health related issues to self-disclose and seek support in a safe confidential manner
- Offering guidance and strategies to support pupils and staff to be mentally healthy
- Creating a culture to support and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing

Safeguarding

Both schools fully recognise the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school and beyond. We are fully committed to safeguarding our pupils through prevention, protection and support. We are also committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils are encouraged to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain. It is our duty to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism and to prevent terrorism. Any concerns are referred to the Designated Child Protection Person who have local contact details for PREVENT and Channel referrals.

What are the aims of this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy?

General:

Resilient, happier and more motivated pupils and staff who get more out of life

Teaching and Learning:

- Pupils who are more engaged in the learning process
- Pupils who can concentrate and learn better
- Improved standards in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy
- Improved attainment
- More effective teaching
- Parents and carers who are more involved in school life and learning

Behaviour and Attendance:

- Pupils with high self-esteem and confidence
- Pupils who have a say in what happens at school
- More engaged learners
- Good concentration, behaviour and attendance
- Positive peer relationships

Staff Confidence and Development:

- High morale
- Staff with high wellbeing leading to lower absenteeism
- Stable, content and consistent workforce
- Positive and effective relationships with pupils
- Positive and effective relationships within school workforce

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy Statement

We are committed to promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We are at a stage where every member of staff needs to take responsibility for being aware of pupils' mental health. People working in schools should have it in the back of their minds at all times that pupils have a mental health. We all have a mental health as well as a physical health, and if we can acknowledge that simple fact this will help our pupils significantly.

Connect – with family, friends, colleagues and classmates

Be Active – walk, run, skip, dance

Take Notice – be curious, reflect on experiences

Keep Learning – try something new

Give – do something for others

Care – for the environment inside and outside school

How will we promote mental health and emotional well-being across the Federation?

We will:

- Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing (Prevention). 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 curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others
- Follow the PSHE Solution for East Sussex Schools (escpshesolution@educatorsolutions.org.uk) to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms
- Encourage and support the whole school community to be positive in its approach to mental health wellbeing
- Promote knowledge and understanding of both internal and external support services.
- Provide guidance and support to all those connected with the organisation to help them develop confidence in their ability to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Provide appropriate training and information to staff on mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Have named Resilience and Wellbeing Champions on staff who are the contact points across the Federation and who are responsible for coordination and delivery of the school's mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy
- Seek to integrate mental health and emotional support across the curriculum.

We will keep this **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy** under review and make changes when legislation and best practice requires.

How will we address the needs and support children and staff?

Mechanisms to support children and staff will include:

- A culture which supports and encourages self-disclosure
- A framework for responding appropriately to mental health wellbeing and a Wellbeing Lead
- Recognition that staff have the responsibility to alert others to potential and actual indicators of mental health needs and to take this action whenever necessary
- Co-operation and work with other organisations involved in the delivery of mental health and emotional support services –
- The principles of confidentiality and data protection in respect of mental health and emotional wellbeing
- The East Sussex SEND Matrix assumes an essential foundation of teaching and learning, assessment and intervention

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs are always taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with their line manager, a senior leader or our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead Paul Cox or Claire Kinsella.

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 and mood ☐ Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- 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



Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

- FREE Online counselling for young people 12-18 in East Sussex www.e-motion.org.uk
- Young Minds website www.youngminds.org.uk
- Department for Education guidance for schools – Mental Health and Behaviour: Advice for Schools pdf goo.gl/GQTb0F
www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-inschools
- PSHE Association – offers lesson plans on the subject of mental health goo.gl/8pD4Zk
www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health
- Sussex Discovery College www.sussexrecoverycollege.org.uk 7. 360 website: an information portal for young people in East Sussex – www.c360.org.uk
- BoingBoing – www.boingboing.org.uk
- Chat health number in East Sussex for ESCC young people 07507 332473 10.
- Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families Schools in Mind Network www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind
- Every Mind Matters nhs.uk/mental/health
- Mind The Mental Health Charity Tel: 01323 442310
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tel: 01273 729365
- East Sussex Counselling Tel: 01424 259365
 - <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/providers/mental-health/counselling>
Counselling services SCDA Sussex Counselling - for anyone aged 16 years and above
- East Sussex mental health directory eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/healthadvice/mental-health/directory
Beechwood Unit Framfield Road, Uckfield · 01825 745015
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Bell Lane, Uckfield · 01273 336555
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Woodside Annexe 01323 446042
Sussex Partnership Trust Millwood Unit, Uckfield Community Hospital, 01825 769999
- Digital resources to support mental health czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/6151/digital-resources
- Tips for teachers and staff in schools as recommended by young people from the mental health participation group, Download; the Youth Cabinet, and with help from Lisa Buttery at boingboing www.boingboing.org.uk

The Governing Body

The Woodlands Federation governing body have a 'duty of care' towards employees and legislation and case law, require them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the school's employees.

To help meet these objectives, the school has adopted the following policies:

- The attendance management policy and procedure which provides a framework with clear milestones and enabling managers effectively to manage attendance
- The health and safety policy which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places of work

- This Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, which focuses on the School's obligations to supporting staff's health, and wellbeing.

It is vital that all staff are aware of these policies and the role all employees undertake to ensure we all work in healthy workplaces.

We need to have a clear understanding of the causes of absence in order to formulate strategies to address non-attendance (sickness absence). The main causes of absence can be viewed as four distinct areas:

Health and lifestyle factors Genuine illness/poor health Smoking Excessive use of alcohol Lack of exercise Body weight	Work place factors Working patterns Health & safety concerns Travel times Excessive hours Safe place of work Relationships at work
Attitudinal and stress factors Job satisfaction Career satisfaction Intention to leave Organisational commitment Stress Absence 'culture'	Domestic and relationship factors Divorce, separation Number of children under 16 Lack of flexible working arrangements Caring responsibilities Financial worries Bereavement

The Governing Body will continue to promote and work towards performance improvement and efficiency, getting the very best from our staff, retaining and attracting the people who are best skilled and well-motivated.

Wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce the risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health.

How will the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team show their commitment to health and wellbeing?

To fulfil this commitment the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Make health and wellbeing a core priority
- Value the strategic importance and benefits of a healthy workplace
- Encourage a consistent, positive approach to all staff health and wellbeing
- Make clear the link between employees' health and wellbeing and improved performance
- Ensure all leaders, including Senior leaders and Governors, are committed to the health and wellbeing of staff and act as good role models
- Make communication clear to ensure staff have realistic expectations of what is possible, practical and affordable

- Be aware that a return to work from sickness does not necessarily indicate that an employee's health and wellbeing has improved
- Return to work interview takes into account that aggressive return to work procedures can encourage presentism to the detriment of our school
- Recruit staff who have the positive leadership traits associated with improved staff health and wellbeing. These traits include being open, approachable, and encouraging new ideas.
- Ensure health and wellbeing policies are included in any induction, training and development programmes for new staff
- Have a proactive and visible commitment to health and safety and its role in improving the health and wellbeing of staff, that is, view health and safety as part of the culture of a caring and supportive employer – not only a statutory requirement
- Create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive when and if possible to protect and enhance their own health and wellbeing
- Seek to identify potential circumstances that may affect the wellbeing of staff and conduct risk assessments
- Increase awareness and understanding of how to promote wellbeing at work and the avoidance of absence
- Ensure advice and guidance is available to leaders in dealing with wellbeing concerns of staff
- Ensure there is a culture where there is no expectation that staff communicate about work outside of normal working hours (except in an emergency, e.g. child protection issues)
- Ensure that all staff take part in a supportive performance management process
- Conduct an annual (anonymous) staff survey in order to collate information from all staff groups, which will inform future strategies to support the health and wellbeing of staff
- Where possible, staff are supported with their work/life balance and wellbeing outside the school. Examples of this could include providing staff with paid leave for both special events and celebrations and time off to deal with family problems

All staff are encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and wellbeing issues, including adopting a robust self-management to their own health.

Wellbeing Audit

The protection and fostering of staff wellbeing is embedded in our management methods and systems. A staff wellbeing audit and a workload audit will be carried out during 2021/2022 to assess and audit current level of wellbeing so that an Action Plan can be developed - decide where we want to be and then work out how we are going to get there.

Policy Links

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following other policies and documents:

Staff handbook

SEND Policy

Behaviour Policy

PSHE/RSE Policy