



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds' Hebrews 10:24

2026-2028

POLICY HISTORY

| Policy / Version Date | Summary of change | Governor adoption Date | Signed by the Chair | Next Review Date |
|-----------------------|---|--|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Written by K. Freeman | 24/6/21 at virtual Teaching and Learning committee meeting | | Spring 2022 |
| 2 | T. Hue Hamilton | Agreed at Resources meeting on 9/6/22 | | Summer 2023 |
| 3 | Reviewed by E. Bowyer and C. Cusack | 23 rd March 2023 | | Spring 2024 |
| 4 | Reviewed by P. Gayatao (mental health lead) | 14 th March 2024 | | Spring 2026 |
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Policy Statement

At *Bickleigh Down CofE Primary School*, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows pupils' voices to be heard and, using effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all.

This policy is a guide to all staff, including non-teaching and governors, outlining Bickleigh Down CofE Primary School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

How does our ethos promote staff and pupil wellbeing?

Our school vision based on Hebrews 10:24 '***and let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds***' ensures that all staff and pupils see the need to support one another towards a common goal. Just as the writer of the letter to the Hebrews encouraged them to be more Christlike in their actions towards one another, so we as a school family will support each other emotionally and spiritually. We aim to ensure that our school vision is lived out daily and that staff and children live out our values of **love, forgiveness, spirit, aspiration** and **hope** in their actions towards one another, making our school a place where everyone feels truly valued and able to share their feelings. We encourage open communication, where people feel listened to and supported, so that we may spur one another on.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of additional mental health needs in pupils and colleagues.
- Enable staff, parent and carers to understand how and when to access support regarding mental health issues.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support for their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Provide the right support for staff members with mental health issues and signpost them to places where they can receive specific support.
- Raise awareness that staff and pupils may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Instilling 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

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

- Headteacher and Deputy Head - will ensure that all stakeholders are kept abreast of mental health and wellbeing updates and the correct procedures are always followed. Mental health and wellbeing will always be a priority and underpins decisions that are made.
- Church School Distinctiveness Lead – will ensure that mental health and wellbeing opportunities are provided through the teaching of RE, worship opportunities and the Christian values.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – will ensure that effective safeguarding procedures are followed, including networking with the necessary multi-agencies to access support.

- SENCo – will provide support for staff and pupils and ensure that the necessary referrals and provision plans are in place.
- Wellbeing Coordinator/Mental Health Lead Team – will ensure that the school mental health and wellbeing policy is fit for purpose. Activities should be planned throughout the year to support staff, pupils and parents and raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing. Mental Health Champions will be trained and supported by the Mental Health Team.
- PSHE and RSHE Coordinator – will ensure that the PSHE and RSHE curriculum are fit for purpose and address the current needs of pupils across phases.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student or colleague, in the first instance they should speak to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or SENCo. If there is a concern that the student or member of staff is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Early warning signs of mental health issues might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating or sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Grieving for a long period over the loss of a friend or family member.
- Inability to cope with daily work demands and routines.
- Increased aggression towards others.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do Physical Education (PE) or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- Increased anxiety – including panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive, or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Procedures for handling issues of wellbeing

The Senior Leadership Team encourage an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Senior Leadership Team are sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises. The school will provide support to any member of staff facing high levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with the staff member and in some cases may include external support from an

external agency such as the Local Authority Human Resource Team. During this time, the school will ensure that, at all times, the staff member’s privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee’s rights and dealing with them with tact and sensitivity. The staff member will also be advised to consult with his or her General Practitioner (GP) for an assessment and further referral to a counsellor or therapist, if needed. As a school, we will make a referral to Occupational Health if needed, so that the staff member can have access to as much support as possible. This will also provide us with the necessary professional expertise and information to better support the staff member in school.

For external support, staff can contact the Education Support Helpline at 08000 562 561. Staff can also access help from the NHS 111 online or call 111.

Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help. Therefore, we have signed up to complete the Department of Education (DfE) Senior Mental Health Lead training course. The training will focus on how a sustainable whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing can be introduced or further developed across the school. The training will further support Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School to embed the important strategic role of Senior Mental Health Lead within the school.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we will always aim to promote opportunities that seek to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing.

Teachers and some support staff have received CAMHS Early Help for Mental Health (EH4MH) training. The Deputy Headteacher and SENCo have also completed STORM training. This is a self-harm mitigation model which enables them to risk assess and safely plan where there are concerns a member of staff or pupil may be self-harming.

Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases, a pupil’s mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders. We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the children’s Provision Plan. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCo following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his or her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent or carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil’s specific needs.

| Main Specialist Service | Referral Process |
|---|---|
| Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) | Accessed through school, GP, or self-referral |
| Educational Psychologist and Behavioural Specialist | Accessed through the SENCo. |

SEND and Mental Health

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need (SEN).

Procedures for promoting staff wellbeing

- All staff will live out the vision of the school to **‘spur each other on with love’**.
- Regular communication including through team meetings, emails and informal check ins.
- Minutes from staff meetings and weekly calendars shared via email and displayed in the staff room.
- Staff ‘shout out board’ to share successes and give thanks to members of staff.
- Recognition on staff birthdays/ special occasions.
- All staff invited to attend INSET days.
- All staff and governors encouraged to contribute to the School Improvement Plan.
- A clean and tidy staff room with comfortable chairs allowing staff to relax and support colleagues.
- Staff encouraged not to stay late after school.
- The school will promote good work/life balance for all members of staff.
- A marking and feedback policy that promotes a reduced workload.
- Social events that encourage staff to meet up in the holidays and socialise together.
- Governors will run termly drop-in sessions for staff.
- The Senior Leadership Team have an open-door policy for talking to and encouraging all staff.
- Weekly meetings with Teaching Assistants to talk through timetables, training, sharing successes and offering support with difficulties.
- Staff are given adequate notice and time to meet deadlines, complete tasks, reports and prepare for activities in school.
- Headteacher/Deputy Head emails all staff as often as needed to share positive affirmations and spur them on with love.
- Senior Leadership Team will ensure that staff feel fully supported and provide the right support if and when needed.

Increasing Awareness about Mental Health

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing/Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing for Children

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 PSHE and RSHE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively (see PSHE and RSHE curriculum plans for more information). Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupils’ wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils’ own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting pupils to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Promoting mental health by involving parents and carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On entry to school, our initial meeting with parents and carers includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing, based on a list of risk factors pertaining to the child or family. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the school so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

To support parents and carers:

- We provide information and website links on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- We have produced leaflets for parents on mental health and resilience, which can be accessed on the school website. The information includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child and where parents can access support for themselves.
- We include the mental health topics that are taught in the PSHE curriculum section, on the school website.
- When children start school, all parents and carers are given our mental health and resilience leaflet that includes information on how parents can support their child's mental health and where to go for help and support.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health concern and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health concerns are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available. When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information and places to seek further information.
- Be available for follow up calls or meetings.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a mental health Provision Plan, including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children and, in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services, we will

seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Involving Children

Each year, we will train up a group of children as our **Mental Health Ambassadors** to lead on whole school campaigns regarding mental health and wellbeing. The school's mental health ambassadors are dedicated to fostering a supportive environment for students' wellbeing. Gathering weekly, these ambassadors engage in open discussions about mental health, sharing insights and strategies to enhance the overall emotional and psychological welfare of the school community. Their meetings serve as a platform to address concerns, raise awareness, and collaboratively explore initiatives that promote positive mental health practices within the school. By fostering a culture of understanding and support, the mental health ambassadors play a vital role in creating an inclusive and compassionate atmosphere where students can thrive both academically and emotionally.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents or carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school noticeboards, wellbeing boards, notices and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services for staff, families and pupils.

External Mental Health Support

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a world leading mental health charity. The Parents and Carers resources offer advice and guidance to help support children and young people who may be struggling with poor mental health.

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

Whilst self-care is important, it is important to recognise that if you are struggling as a parent or carer with your mental health and wellbeing, you know that there is help and support out there for you. Your GP should be able to offer help and support and, if necessary, refer you to an adult mental health service. Where possible, try to talk to a trusted friend or relative so they are also aware of how you're feeling and can check in on you. The below organisations also offer crisis support for parents and carers:

- **AFC Crisis Messenger** – Text **AFC** to **85258** for free 24/7 crisis support
- **Family Lives** – Charity offering crisis support for parents, guardians and carers

Parenting and Family Support - Family Lives (Parentline Plus)

For further support on specific mental health needs:

- Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk OCD UK www.ocduk.org
- Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org
- Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
- National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk
- Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org
- **Normal Magic**: a specialised UK-based mental health service and framework(founded 2016) that provides early intervention for children, young people, and families. - <https://www.normalmagic.co.uk/>

- **Parental minds:** supports caregivers of people (of any age) struggling with mental health or emotional wellbeing. - <https://parentalminds.org.uk/>

For general information and support

- www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
- www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)
- www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
- www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health.
- **Action for Children – Parent Talk:** Free articles & online chat with parenting experts.- <https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/feelings-behaviour/>
- **Place2Be:** Child mental health support, including parenting guides. - <https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/schools/mental-health-services-for-parents-and-carers/>

Sibling support

Our school recognises that children who have a sibling with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may experience unique emotional and mental health challenges. These pupils may sometimes feel worry, responsibility, frustration, embarrassment, jealousy, or sadness, and may have additional pressures at home that impact their wellbeing, behaviour, and learning.

We are committed to supporting these pupils with empathy, understanding, and appropriate pastoral care.

- Sibs – UK charity for brothers & sisters of disabled children: Advice, peer support, and sibling guides. - <https://www.sibs.org.uk/>

Grief after bereavement or loss

Most people experience grief when they lose something or someone important to them. If these feelings are affecting your life, there are things you can try that may help.

Support is also available if you're finding it hard to cope with stress, anxiety or depression.

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect us in different ways. There's no right or wrong way to feel.

As well as bereavement, there are other types of loss such as the end of a relationship or losing a job or home.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Shock and numbness- This is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze".
- Overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
- Guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly.

It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently.

[Get help with grief after bereavement or loss - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Here are some additional useful websites:

| Website Links | Helpline |
|--|-----------------------|
| Winston's Wish | 0808 802 0021 |
| Cruse Bereavement | 0808 808 1677 |
| <u>Simon Says</u> | 02038064 7550 |
| Child Bereavement | 0800 02 888 40 |
| RD4U Bereavement Support | 0808 808 1677 |
| <u>Jigsaw4U</u> | 020 8687 1384 |
| Childline – Youngmind Mental Health Charity | 0800 1111 |

Sources of support at school and within the local community

- Open door policy that pupils, staff and families can access should they wish to talk to someone.
- Staff wellbeing board/area of the staffroom with easily accessible resources.
- Pastoral Team
- Governor surgery that staff can access if they feel that they need to talk to someone. Governors can make themselves available each term to meet with staff if they have any concerns related to work.
- Clearly thought through PSHE and RSHE curriculum that helps pupils to learn strategies to support their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Cheerful Checkers in all Reflection Spaces that children can use to tell their teacher that they need to talk.
- Wellbeing time in classrooms (this may include mindfulness, reflective storytelling, discussion groups, wellbeing Wednesday opportunities etc.).
- 'This is us' reflection lessons linked to personal wellbeing/spirituality.
- The use of Windows, Mirrors and Doors in Collective Worship to help children to reflect and act upon their thoughts.
- Strong school vision that encourages children to support each other and spur each other on with love.

- The use of values to consider how we should act towards each other as a school family so that all feel valued.
- Reflection time being a strong feature in the school's Collective Worship offer. This gives children the opportunity to be still, think and reflect.
- Strong links to mental health support through SENCO.
- The use of Early Help for Mental Health (EH4MH) with the SENCO being a trained practitioner.
- Bespoke mental health and wellbeing support sessions tailored to the needs of pupils (if deemed necessary).
- 'Feel Good Fridays' on the playground where children and staff are able to sing and dance to music which will improve their mood and wellbeing.
- Wellbeing afternoons once per term. Children are dismissed at 1:15 pm to participate in wellbeing activities with their families. Staff are then given the opportunity and time to meet for team building activities which will further contribute to good mental health and wellbeing.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All mental health and wellbeing concerns that are reported must be recorded on CPOMS. We will then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

| Need The level of need is based on discussions at the regular inclusion meetings with key members of staff and involves parents and children. | Evidence-based Intervention and Support -the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and children For example: | Monitoring |
|---|--|---|
| Highest need | CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies. Other external agency support other interventions e.g. art therapy. If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report. | All children needing targeted individualised support will have a Provision Plan drawn up setting out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of the children • How the pupil will be supported • Actions to provide that support • Any special requirements Children, parents and carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact and if needed a different kind of support can be provided. The Provision Plan is overseen by the SENCo and class teachers. |
| Some need | Access to in school nurture group, family support worker, school nurse, art therapy, educational psychologist, 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends. | |

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| Low need | General support E.g., School Nurse drop in, class teacher or teaching assistant. |
| | Normal Magic Mental health framework designed to support individuals and families in achieving emotional well-being and resilience through early intervention and prevention strategies. |

Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work. The policy is monitored annually and involves the staff members with special responsibility for mental health and governors.