




***“Let your light shine” Matthew 5:16***

Everyone is encouraged to shine by encompassing our values of respect, trust, honesty, thankfulness and resilience. Enabling us to grow, learn and achieve together.

# Mental Health Well-Being Policy 2023

	Date	Signature
FGB:	6.12.23	

Responsibility of Full Governing Body

Next Review Date: October 2024

### **Vision Statement**

The School's Christian Vision Statement "Let your light shine" is our central vision.

Everyone is encouraged to shine through living out our values of trust, honesty, thankfulness, respect and resilience. Enabling us to grow, learn and achieve together

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## 1.0 Policy statement

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

## 2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the approach Cold Harbour Church of England primary school has chosen to adopt to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other school policies, such as our Relationships and Behaviour policy.

## 3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all children and staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

- 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; 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.

#### 4.0 Key staff members

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Learning Mentor (Ronnie Rowsell)                | ▪ SENCO (Michelle Laskey)              |
| ▪ Operational Safeguarding Lead (Michelle Laskey) | ▪ Mental Health Lead (Sarah Kotulecki) |
|   | ▪ PSHE Coordinator (Katie Clark)       |

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to the Mental Health Lead (Sarah Kotulecki.)

If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection 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.

## 5.0 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 child, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

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

Our Mental Health Support Team, lead by Sarah Tolhurst can be contacted on:  
Team Telephone:01908 725691 and would be able to offer immediate advice.

## 6.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Behaviour and Relationship policy (rooted in [Zones of Regulation](#)), PSHE curriculum (SCARF), whole school collective worship and our peer mentoring programme.

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](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 children's wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of children's own emotions as well as those of other people.

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

**See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

We also work alongside our Mental Health Support Team who come into school to work alongside us during the year e.g., transition workshops for Y6, whole school assemblies on Resilience and special workshops on Child Mental Health Week.

## 7.0 Signposting

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

Within the school (noticeboards, classrooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites, Class Dojo), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure children and adults understand (at an age-appropriate level):

- What help is available?
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why they might choose to access it.
- What is likely to happen next?

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

### **School Based Support:**

#### **Worry boxes.**

Our children take part in SCARF PSHE lessons each week and these offer an opportunity to raise any concerns a child might have. However, we acknowledge that not all children will feel comfortable speaking to their class teacher in front of their peers and for this reasons our PSHE Lead has arranged for each class to have it's own worry box

Worry boxes are containers into which children can post their anxious thoughts. Children can find them soothing because they:

- give them a physical way of getting rid of their worries, so they don't need to carry them around anymore.
- make them feel safer by holding their anxious thoughts for them.
- help them to understand that thoughts are just thoughts, not real things that happen in the world, and that it's possible to let them go.
- create a routine for sorting out their worries and sharing them with you.

**Wellbeing ambassadors** – these currently are our School Councillors who feedback on class concerns.

- What it is – peer support



- Who it is suitable for – all children who feel happy to talk to a peer about worries and concerns.
- How it is accessed
- How this information is communicated to children – through collective worship and the School Council

### **Pastoral support – from class teachers and other members of staff**

- What it is – Daily check-ins, weekly PSHE lessons which teach children about Zones of Regulation in line with our Relationship and Behaviour policy
- Who it is suitable for – all children
- How it is accessed – as part of the curriculum

### **Learning mentor – Ms Rowsell**

- What it is – as much or as little emotional support as is needed by a child to make learning at Cold Harbour an achievable experience
- Who it is suitable for – Ms Rowsell can provide support to any child in the Cold Harbour Community whenever it is needed.
- How it is accessed – Children can ask for support themselves or it can be requested by a family member or member of staff at school
- How is this information communicated to children? Class discussions in PSHE lessons and assemblies.
- Session with our learning mentor are tailored to suit the needs of a child at a particular moment in time, this could be a simple 1:1 conversation, or something more structured like '*Emotionally based school avoidance techniques*' or completion of the '*Three Houses.*'

### **MHST – Educational Mental Health Practitioner**

- What it is – Counselling support provided by the Wave 1 Mental Health support team
- Who it is suitable for – Children who are experiencing high level of anxiety related to coming to school

- How it is accessed – referral from the school Mental Health Lead
- How this information is communicated to children – in partnership with families
- The MHST hold screening consultations once a month where the Mental Health Lead can raise a concern about a child and receive triage advice about which service would best provide support for the individual.

### **Local Support**

In Milton Keynes, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS**, 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.cnwl.nhs.uk/camhs/our-services/specialist-camhs/milton-keynes-camhs>

As a school, we work closely with **Harry's Rainbow** who can provide guidance and support relating to child/family bereavement (01908 061676.)

## 9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 Sarah Kotulecki (Mental Health Lead) in person and record on CPOMS.

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 absence

## 10.0 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, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence or a traumatic bereavement.

We work closely with school nurses and MHST teams 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 children 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 the Wave 1 MHST team and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral.
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), 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 as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach.
- 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, including Milton Keynes CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur.

- Provide our children with clear, consistent and age-appropriate 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 our children 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.

## 11.0 Managing disclosures

If a child 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 the child's CPOMS account, including:

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

This information will be shared with (***Sarah Kotulecki, Mental Health Lead, Michelle Laskey SENDCO / Operational DSL.***)

Any disclosures made to peer ambassadors will be fed back to the Learning Mentor or Mental Health Lead.

## 12.0 Whole school approach

The role the school can play Teaching about Mental Health

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 PSHE 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 pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Teacher Guidance:

We believe that our staff need regular CPD based on the most recent research from the Anna Freud centre. Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing needs regularly updating.

Our teaching staff receive annual guidance from the MHST team e.g. How to be a mentally healthy school using '**Zones of Regulation**' strategies.

Our Mental Health Lead has completed Mental Health Lead training by the Anna Freud Centre. As a result, we have adopted the '**Five Steps to Mental Health Framework,**' created by the Anna Freud centre. This framework puts research into practise and helps our school respond to our community's needs - putting wellbeing and resilience at the heart of everything we do. This framework is not a quick fix but a long-term commitment to developing our practise and ensuring the mental health of our whole community it supported. Our SENDCo has also completed '**Autism and wellbeing in school**' by the Anna Freud centre to ensure we adopt positive approaches for those on the Autism spectrum.

As part of our approach, we will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is displayed clearly in our Rainbow room which has been created as a safe-space for all children to access and as appropriate as for support from our Learning Mentor. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils and their families help-seeking by ensuring pupils and their families understand:

- 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 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 communicate their concerns with the Mental Health Lead and the Safeguarding Leads.

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 5
- 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

#### 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 and should follow the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding policy*. 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 of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS and passed to the Safeguarding team.

### 12.1 Working with parents/carers

Given the age of the children in our care, it will be important to work with their families when there are worries and concerns about their mental wellbeing. Only in exceptional circumstances will this not be appropriate.

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.

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 student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child'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 them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g., parent helplines and forums.

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 child's CPOMS account and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

## 12.2 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.

### 13.0 Supporting Peers

When a child 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 student 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

### 14.0 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.

Our Mental Health Lead has completed the Mental Health Lead training provided by the Anna Freud Centre.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The Anna Freud centre provides a wealth of support and guidance (<https://www.annafreud.org>) as does The MindEd learning portal ([www.minded.org.uk/](http://www.minded.org.uk/) ) 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 students e.g. Our SENDCo has completed the '**Autism and wellbeing in school programme**'.

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 **Sarah Kotulecki, Mental Health Lead** who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## 16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **14.11.24**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Sarah Kotulecki, Mental Health Lead.

