

Combe St Nicholas C of E VA Primary School

Name of Policy	Mental Health & Wellbeing	
Approved by GB - Date	December 2021	
Next Review Date	December 2026	
Committee Responsible	Full Governing Body	

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

"That they may have life, life in all its fullness"

John: Chapter 10 Verse 10

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5: 22-23

Rationale

Who am I?

Why am I here?

How then should I live?

At Combe St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we see these questions as being key to our role in supporting children to flourish and to develop the strong sense of self that is central to achieving good wellbeing.

We see it as our responsibility to help to guide our pupils on their journey to discovering their own identity. All children are created in God's image, created to learn, created to explore, created to enjoy, created to create. Helping children to identify all of the things that form their own identity is key in our role of ensuring good wellbeing in them as individuals and as part of the community.

The four areas of 'The Church of England Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' 2016 gives the Christian perspective to our approach.

Wisdom Knowledge and Skills: *Who am I?* The wisdom to be able to know oneself and develop our own identity. Created in God's image, each child is an object of God's love and compassion.

Hope and Aspiration: *Why am I here?* Your purpose is where your greatest strengths intersect with your greatest passion.

Community and Living Well Together: *How then should I live?* We are a close community and rely strongly on our Christian Values to support, empower and uplift each other

Dignity and Respect: *How then should I live?* Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each and every person. This helps to shape our whole school policies.

Policy Statement

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 her or his community. (World Health Organization)

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness'. John 10:10

We therefore, aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. Please see Appendix A for our Graduated Response to Social Emotional and Mental Health Provision

The school offers young people a nurturing, safe and secure environment that supports and promotes wellbeing. We believe that building strong emotional and mental health early in life can promote self-esteem, develop resilience and help students to overcome adversity. This, in turn, will lead to students engaging positively with education, having enhanced future employment opportunities and being able to make positive life choices.

Many students have mental health difficulties at some stage in their school career or are directly or indirectly impacted by poor mental health within their family. National data identifies that:

- Half of all mental health conditions are established before the age of 14.
- 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any one year. - 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need and the policy Behaviour: A Policy for Living Well Together, particularly in relation to the development of our restorative approach.

Good Staff Wellbeing

Good staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for retaining and motivating staff and for promoting pupil wellbeing and attainment. Staff often juggle multiple tasks and demands, so a focus on staff wellbeing is also central to our ethos. Taking good care of staff both emotionally and practically helps them to perform to the best of their ability and ensures that they are better able to support pupils. Staff who have good mental wellbeing are more likely to have the necessary resources to be able to support themselves, colleagues and students.

At Combe St Nicholas we will make a commitment to:

- Involve teachers in reviewing and agreeing policies that impact on workload, especially policies on feedback and marking.
- Involve teachers in reviewing and agreeing formats for annual reports to parents. - Ensure staff meetings are purposeful and time-limited.
- Have consideration for the workload and wellbeing of colleagues, being mindful of the impact of their own behaviour on others.
- Enable staff to be responsible for one's own wellbeing, managing workload smartly and efficiently and
- sharing issues that have an impact on work.
- Share genuine concerns about colleague's wellbeing with Senior Leaders or Governors.

The following footer will be placed at the bottom of all emails within the school team:

Work-life balance is a consideration for all of us.

At Combe St Nicholas Primary School, we promote a flexible working hours policy outside of the school's core hours. I may therefore send emails outside of 'normal' hours; please be assured that I do not expect a response outside of your own working hours.

Teaching *about* and teaching *for* Mental Health and Wellbeing

Teaching for Mental Health and Wellbeing

“Learning should be a festival of the mind.” – Socrates

It has been scientifically proven that people learn more effectively when they feel motivated and when the learning is fun. A study in the journal, *College Teaching*, found that students could recall knowledge from a lesson more easily when the teacher added humour about relevant topics. Neurologist, Judy Willis showed how fun experiences increase levels of dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins – all things that promote learning and stronger neuron pathways, resulting in greater retention. The same research also determines that fun is good for your health, both physical and mental.

Therefore, our teaching staff have made a commitment that the learning experiences in our school will include a ‘DOSE’ of happiness, with ‘dose’ referring to the chemicals released in our brains when we are happy:

Dopamine

Oxytocin

Serotonin

Endorphins

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum, delivered through the One Decision materials.

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.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Whole School Approach

Combe St Nicholas C of E Primary School is committed to promoting positive mental health, following the eight principles laid out by Public Health England:

The establishment of a whole school approach to mental health aims to prevent, identify and give early support.

Prevent

Creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils and staff with the skills to be resilient, so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching students and staff about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and relevant CPD opportunities, such as exploring spirituality.

Identify

Recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.

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 SENDCO, our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.

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
- 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

Give early support

Helping pupils and staff to access early support.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Head teacher - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
SENDSCO - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
Matt Edwards - Lead First Aider
Parish Reverend - Pastoral Lead
Head teacher - CPD Lead and PSHE
School Business Manager – Mental Health First Aider

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Child Protection Office staff or the head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by SENDSCO Mental Health Lead.

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see

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

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. See Appendix for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

Confidentiality

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

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

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer must be informed immediately.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a maximum.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Christine Maxwell via phone 01460 63116 or email CMaxwell@educ.somerset.gov.uk

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Appendix A

Our Graduated Response to Social Emotional and Mental Health Provision

<i>How we identify pupils with mental health and wellbeing needs</i>	
Universal	BVPT Results will highlight need across the school
Universal	Staff observation and changing circumstances for a pupil may highlight a need for teachers to make adjustments or seek parent information to further support through the Assess Plan Do Review process Changed behaviours may alert teachers to the need for further observations, adjustments or investigations, which may proceed to discussions with senior leaders or SENCo
Universal	Wellbeing questionnaire This will be undertaken annually and the results will highlight need across the school
Targeted	Behaviour/Incident logs Completed by staff to identify patterns and trends in behaviour in order to plan specific support with SENCO advice
Targeted	ELSA assessment Focussed assessments used to explore needs, plan and monitor 1:1 ELSA interventions, completed by the ELSA with input from relevant staff
Higher needs	THRIVE assessment Detailed development assessment to inform a therapeutic intervention approach, which involves relevant members of staff
Targeted Support – Some children needing additional, individual or different support.	• Staff use praise to tell a child what they are doing well and ensure every child has opportunities to feel successful • Every classroom has a 'We Are walking with Him' display to recognise Christian Values. These are awarded by staff or other pupils. • Pupils are involved in identifying their own progress. • Wellbeing surveys are conducted with the pupils. • There is explicit teaching around bullying and kindness. This forms part of our PSHE and E-Safety teaching • Older pupils have the opportunity to act as buddies, playground leaders and peer mediators. • There are opportunities for mindfulness in each class • Provide an identified adult for the child to talk to • ELSA group or 1:1 interventions e.g.: - Emotions and Feelings - Self Esteem - Worries • This could include resources such as - The Incredible Five Point Scale - Anxiety Gremlin - The Worry Monster • Playground observation and review • Alternative provision at playtimes • Guided playground games • Social stories • Personalised visual timetable • Behaviour Support Plan used consistently by all. • Safe place to withdraw to, which may be out of class, agreed with pupil • Now/next board
Higher Needs Support – children with ongoing and significant additional Needs	• Movement breaks, sensory breaks • Adjust expectations if it is agreed to be appropriate • Key adult supports the child if appropriate • ELSA 1:1 therapeutic interventions which may be ongoing or extended in duration

	• Thrive derived therapeutic interventions including Thera-play activities • Key person builds a relationship with the pupil • Highly individualised support plan that identifies specific strategies and support, often in conjunction with external advice • Personalised work station in the classroom • School Entry plan meetings Secondary School Entry Plan meetings and • Individually planned additional secondary school visits • Completion of an EHA Referral to • PFSA Family Support Practitioner • Educational Psychologist • GP/ Paediatrician • CAMHS referral
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Higher needs External assessment Follows referral to an external agency when there is clear evidence that the Graduated Response has been fully implemented without the desired impact for the pupil

- Universal Support – for all members of the school community, all the time.
- All children have access to varied and rich curriculum experiences that are memorable and promote a sense of belonging, e.g. project based learning approach, special visitors, special activity days and outings, performances, music lessons, welly walks, Forest School, residential visits, after school clubs, sports.
- Every child is greeted by an adult at the beginning of the day to make them feel welcome and show that they are valued.
- Adults show empathy, validate emotions and feelings, help to develop emotional vocabulary by helping pupils to label them (I wonder if you are feeling...?)
- Staff are trained in restorative approach to behaviour management and follow a script when dealing with instances of poor behaviour
- PHSE includes opportunities to talk explicitly about feelings and emotions.
- Adults actively seek to build trusting relationships with children, particularly vulnerable children. - New learning is placed in context of the bigger picture – what we know already, the next step, what it looks like when we get there, how it feels to be learning
- Learning is chunked into small achievable steps
- Children struggling to understand the learning receive timely support to help them keep up within the lesson
- Growth Mind-set approach, e.g. can't do it –YET, not there YET