CASTLE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date:	September 2025
Review Date:	September 2026
Ratified by ****** on**:	ADD DATE

Policy Statement

Mental Health is a state of wellbeing 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 Organisation, 2019)

Castle Hill Primary School offers a safe, happy and caring environment. We have a unique family atmosphere where each child is valued as an individual, we encourage their love of learning and promote their natural curiosity through a variety of experiences, opportunities and challenges. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school, we recognise that positive mental health and wellbeing are essential to the development of thriving and successful pupils. It is therefore vital to our aims that we provide high quality mental health and wellbeing support. We endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and are aware of where they can go if they need help and support.

This policy sets out our commitment to monitoring and improving the wellbeing of our pupils and some of the ways in which key members of staff take responsibility for the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It also describes our process for identifying and responding to mental ill health, and the support we make available to all pupils. It is the responsibility of **all** staff to identify and support pupils with their mental health and well-being.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors and was written following consultation with all staff, pupils, parents and the governing body.

Aims

We aim to ensure that our school:

- reduces the stigma attached to mental health issues and promotes positive well-being in all pupils
- provides a secure environment that encourages openness and trust
- can respond effectively to concerns about pupils' mental health
- embeds the skills pupils need to make good decisions about their own mental health and wellbeing
- offers comprehensive pastoral and medical support that is accessible to all pupils
- alerts staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- provide support for pupils suffering mental health issues and their peers and parents/carers

Roles and responsibilities

The school's Designated Lead for mental health and well-being is responsible for:

- coordinating the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- providing all members of staff with the knowledge and skills they need to identify signs of mental ill health in pupils
- building strong working relationships with child and adolescent mental health services and other external partners
- reporting to the governing body on the school's wellbeing policy and programmes
- working with the senior leadership team (SLT), governing body, school staff, parents and pupils to create an environment where everyone feel safe, supported and motivated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- reviewing this policy on a regular basis, ensuring that it is developed in consultation with pupils, parents and members of staff
- ensuring that staff are equipped with the appropriate training to support pupils in mental health and well-being
- listening to the views of pupils and making sure that they have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process
- ensuring that the school shares information on mental health with all pupils.

The Headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and pastoral staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- keeping detailed records of any significant mental health concerns
- liaising with external services where there are any significant mental health concerns
- acting as a source of support and expertise to the school community

All members of school staff are responsible for:

- treating all pupils with empathy, respect and kindness
- encouraging pupils to disclose concerns or seek help when necessary
- reporting any wellbeing or mental health concerns to the school's designated lead for mental health and wellbeing.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst **all** staff have a responsibility to promote and address the mental health and well-being of students, staff with a specific remit include:

- Mr R. Faulkner – Assistant Head, SENCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mr A. Renwick – Head Teacher, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Mental Health Lead
- Mr L. McIntyre – Assistant Head
- Mrs J. Hoarty - Link Governor for Safeguarding
- Mrs J. Vickers – PSHE Lead

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 one of the safeguarding officers. 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 the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead.

Examples of good practice may include:

- organising whole-school or year group assemblies to discuss specific mental health and wellbeing issues
- arranging for external speakers to visit and discuss topical issues such as the use of social media or the impact of body image
- using key dates such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day as opportunities to raise the profile of mental health
- holding designated health and well-being days, organising activities across the curriculum
- dedicating time to celebrate pupils' academic and extracurricular achievements
- using quiet spaces away from the classroom (e.g. SLT Office, Chill Deck, Meeting Room etc.) for children who may need some quiet time
- implementing a 'safe zone/friendship stop on the playground for children to go and sit or talk to another child (see below)
- Appointing volunteer Mental Health and Well-being ambassadors who are trained to support other children who may want to talk to a peer rather than an adult about their feelings and well-being
- In KS1 children use emotion cards to indicate how they are feeling and concerns are addressed by staff
- In KS2 the children use a classroom resource such as 'worry box', 'worry monster' or writing on a post-it if they cannot find the words to tell someone. All classes has systems that work for their children
- All major concerns are recorded and parents are involved in support, both internal and external
- including pupil wellbeing in lesson observation criteria for teaching staff

Teaching about Mental Health

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms.

At Castle Hill we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, including the School Counsellor we employ 2 days per week and also parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- PSHE for all year groups
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school

The school will commit to promoting physical health and mental wellbeing through in-classroom teaching. In addition to the basic steps pupils can take to care for themselves, teachers will put specific emphasis on the skills young people need to overcome setbacks and succeed in the face of adversity.

The school's PSHE curriculum using Jigsaw, will include lessons on mental health and wellbeing, as well as the importance of relationships. To emphasise the benefits of spending time outdoors, pupils will spend time on the playground, the astroturf and the field (weather permitting).

Small group activities

- Nurture groups to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Children to be aware that they can drop in and see a designated adult if they are anxious or worried about a certain situation/issue.

Supporting individual pupils

All members of staff will work together and with parents to identify, support and monitor mental health and wellbeing concerns. It will be agreed what level of support is needed – from internal/informal support to immediate CAMHS referral/A&E visit. Staff will record information accurately and regularly on CPOMS in order to track concerns. Mental Health Lead and Deputy Mental Health Leads will meet half termly to discuss support and make suitable arrangements as required and phone or face-to-face meetings with parents will be arranged to discuss current situation and next steps.

Staff will be encouraged to look out for:

- erratic, unaccountable or secretive behaviour
- changes in sleeping habits
- disengagement from work or extracurricular activities
- trying to avoid lessons, especially where they need to get changed
- covering up of body e.g. long sleeves in hot weather
- unexpected or disproportionate reactions to ordinary situations
- aggressive or compulsive behaviour
- a drop in academic achievement
- a drop in attendance or punctuality
- isolation from peers
- dysfunctionality in family life
- talking about self-harm or suicide

- changes in appetite
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

The school will provide a list of all members of staff who are available to discuss mental health concerns confidentially. If a member of staff feels it is appropriate to pass on concerns, they will explain to the pupil who they are going to talk to and what they are going to tell them.

Supporting SEND pupils

At Castle Hill we are aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can be at a higher risk of mental health difficulties than children without SEND and any warning signs may misconstrued to be related to their SEND issues. All staff need to be extra vigilant to changes in behaviour, especially sudden outbursts.

Useful apps:-

- Smiling Mind app - body scan meditations to help children develop the awareness of what's happening in their bodies. Learning about what's happening in your body is one of the first steps of an authentic mindfulness practice.
- Headspace (for kids) - this app teaches parents and children together about meditation for different age levels. They focus on calm, kindness, and bedtime.
- Insight Timer - this app is free with meditations for parents and children. They focus on relaxation, managing stress, concentration and sleep.

Useful websites:-

- Special Needs Jungle - parent-led information, resources and informed opinion about children and young people with special educational needs.
- Mindfulness in Schools - mindfulness training for schools and practitioners.
- Mind Space - mindfulness resources, meditation scripts and app to bring mindfulness and meditation into children's lives.
- Cosmic Kids - yoga and mindfulness videos, training and meditations.
- nasen - resources, training, advice and information to enable staff to meet the needs of pupils with learning differences.
- Schools in Mind - sharing practical, academic and clinical expertise regarding the wellbeing and mental health issues that affect schools.
- ELSA - wellbeing training to support children with their emotional literacy, create social stories and building therapeutic strengths.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. The school may also uses a Mental Health and Well-being Ambassador to help support peers when deemed suitable.

In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either 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 may need 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

Managing disclosures

Disclosures by pupils and confidentiality:

We recognise how important it is that staff remain calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff should listen rather than provide immediate advice. Staff must be clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, along with a summary of the disclosure and next steps. All disclosures will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.

Working with families and the community

The school believes that effective mental health and wellbeing support depends on the input of parents, carers and the broader community. Through our parent and pupil surveys, we make sure that parents have regular opportunities to inform our approach.

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. 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 pupil and 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 and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and provide 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.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:-

• Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website – Think you know, MindEd, NSPCC, Young minds, Childline

• Parents/carers/staff may also require specific relevant support information regarding self-harm, eating disorders, psychosis, anxiety, depression and more. The Mental Health Lead can signpost individuals further when necessary.

• Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.

• Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents

• Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through planned information evenings.

• Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors, halls and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to staff in the staffroom and to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

The mental health lead will send out regular support information to staff and parents via email.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:-

• What help is available

• Who it is aimed at

• How to access it

• Why to access it

• What is likely to happen next?

Working with specialist services.

As part of our provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Your child may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- CAMHS
- School Nursing Service
- Children's Services.
- Therapists
- Paediatricians
- Family support workers.
- Educational psychology services.
- Counselling services
- iThrive
- Family Assist

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- anti-bullying
- child protection and safeguarding
- online safety
- personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

Monitoring & Review

Monitoring of mental health issues and policy implementation will be via:-

- Continuing professional development (CPD) sessions delivered to staff relating to mental health
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) topics relating to mental health
- There will be a full policy review every 3 years as a minimum.
- 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: Mr R. Faulkner

Useful links

- Young Minds is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health.
- Place2Be is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities.
- Mind is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health.
- Children's Mental Health Week is an annual opportunity to encourage children, young people and adults to celebrate their uniqueness.
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues