

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Named Senior Mental Health lead: Deputy Head (Inclusion)

Introduction

At Chesterton Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers). We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can significantly affect their learning and achievement. Our ongoing focus on SDG3, good health and wellbeing ensures that our whole school community develop the skills they need to look after their own and others wellbeing.

Aim

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

We help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feeling safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with a trusted adult.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

We aim to ensure all our children:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Are able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- Are able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- Can cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Can manage stress and are able to deal with change.
- Learn and achieve.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for our staff, parents and carers.

Staff roles and responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. We understand that some children will require additional help and all staff need to have the skills to look out for any early warning signs to ensure early intervention and support can be put in place. As part of our whole school approach, all staff are trained in a trauma informed approach and the evidence-based strategies that best support our pupils and wider school community. Our senior mental health lead and two additional mental health first aiders enhance our wider team and ensure that the most up to date research, approaches and best practise is shared across the school. Our collaboration with the NHS Mental Health Support Team ensures that we are up to date with initiatives to support staff, pupils and their families. An onsite Education Wellbeing Practitioner allows families to access support swiftly.

The Local Academy Committee

- Will prioritise staff wellbeing and support the SLT in reducing workload and improving staff wellbeing.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to improve staff wellbeing.

Senior Leadership Team

- Will lead by example in regard to organisational and own wellbeing.
- Will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns, and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness.
- Will provide a range of strategies for involving staff in the school decision making processes.
- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workload to ensure that staff are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Opportunities to speak with SLT when returning to work if requested
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with their line manager or a member of the SLT.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- Will make themselves aware of the school's policies on Capability, Bullying and Harassment, Staff Attendance, etc.
- Will assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues.
- Will ask their line manager for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it's important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads.
- Will identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school.
- Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at appropriate meetings.
- Conduct themselves in a way that is considerate of and supports their colleagues' wellbeing.

Supporting children's positive mental health

Chesterton Primary School provide a range of programmes to promote positive mental health as follows:

Whole school

- PSHCE lessons – specific wellbeing objectives planned into the long-term plans and evident in weekly plans. This equips pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe. Objectives are built on the skills pupils have acquired in the previous year group.

- Mindfulness exercises – part of the PSHCE lessons or completed at other parts of the day. A bank of ‘calm me’ activities has been created by the staff through the sharing of best practice.
- Worry box and worry pouches – a place where pupils can confidentially write their worries (available in all classrooms).
- Whole school and key stage assemblies – half termly focus on promoting positive well-being.
- Workshops – class workshops led by the mental health trailblazer project and personalised to the needs of the class or cohort
- House points
- School values

Pupil-led activities

- School Councillors
- House captains
- Librarians
- Eco Councillors

Targeted support

- Learning Mentors – trained in mental health first aid, provide training for staff, run groups or 1:1 sessions using emotional literacy programme, art therapy techniques, forest school and nurture nest.
- Mental Health Support Team– runs parenting programmes in school, dramatherapy 1:1 sessions and group sessions and can provide consultations for staff who have concerns about individual pupils.
- Dramatherapist – additional therapy commissioned by the school to support pupils with high level SEMH need 1:1. Also provide support and advice to staff as and when needed.

Transition Programmes

- A transition programme for all pupils going into the next year group which includes visiting their new classroom, meeting their new teacher and one page profiles (Early Years and Year 1).
- Personalised programmes for specific children (one-page profile).
- Early years – a stay and play day for pupils to familiarise themselves with their new setting, staggered start for new children in nursery and reception, meeting with the teachers and previous settings.
- All Year 6 children have a transition programme set up between their class teachers and the learning mentors or outside agencies to prepare them for secondary school.

Supporting staff positive mental health

Chesterton Primary School provide a range of programmes to promote positive mental health for the staff including

- Additional time given to class teachers for medium term planning each term.
- Additional time given to class teachers with the SENCo for planning for children working out of year group
- All class teachers are given additional PPA each week.
- Time out of class for subject leaders
- Minimised whole school displays to reduce workload
- Support staff are given appreciation time each term to celebrate their achievements and hard work throughout the term.
- Supervision for all Early Years staff and key staff working with vulnerable pupils.
- Staff events – a range of activities including socials and fundraising fun-runs are open to staff throughout the year to promote positive wellbeing and build community.
- Supervision for DSL, DDSLs and ELSA staff
- Expectations and reminders about these are sent to families to ensure consistency in approach and promote clear expectations about what behaviours are acceptable

Teaching about Mental Health

Sources of support within the school include:

- Inclusion Lead – provides in school training for staff and liaises with emotional health and wellbeing agencies.
- Deputy Head – supports PSHCE lead, ensuring all year groups are receiving appropriate mental health training, leads on mental health initiatives for staff.
- SENCO – supports staff with SEND provision, including those with SEMH which may include those with mental health problems that need specialist provision.
- Safeguarding and child protection leads – supports pupils with social and emotional needs who have external social care services in place.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 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
- 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. 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 student's emotional and physical safety.

All disclosures should be discussed with a member of the safeguarding team and recorded on cpoms.

Confidentiality

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Children need to know that in circumstances of safeguarding, information will be shared with the DSL Team to order to keep them safe. 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.

Working with All Parents and Carers

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 and carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues in our school newsletter and parent notice boards.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our mental health strategy easily accessible to parents.

- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular communication (e.g. newsletters, curriculum bulletins, homework webs)
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues to enable them to keep students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of the appraisal process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

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 the mental health lead.

Policy Sign off – Mental Health Strategy

	Reviewer	Approver	Date
Reviewer / approver	Deputy Head for Inclusion	SLT	November 2025
Next Review			November 2026