

Longlands Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Last reviewed on: 01/09/2022

Next review due by: 01/09/2025

Policy Statement and Vision

At Longlands Primary School, our vision includes fostering an environment where happiness and wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do and we aim to develop confident, independent, resilient learners who have a growth mindset and are confident to take risks.

At our school, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and members of staff and governors. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual recognises 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 his or her own community.

World Health Organisation, August 2014

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need. Also with other relevant school policies, such as PSHE.

Aims

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and children
- 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

Mental Health Problems in Children

Where children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age, they might be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders. Mental health professionals have classified these as:

- Emotional disorders, for example phobias, anxiety states and depression
- Conduct disorders, for example stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti-social behaviour

- *Hyperkinetic disorders, for example disturbance of activity and attention*
- *Developmental disorders, for example delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control, primarily affecting children with autism and those with pervasive developmental disorders*
- *Attachment disorders, for example children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents/carers or major care givers*
- *Trauma disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of traumatic experiences or persistent periods of abuse and neglect; and other mental health problems including eating disorders, habit disorders, somatic disorders; and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder*

The likelihood of young people experiencing mental health issues has increased by 50% in the last three years. Schools are well-placed to observe children on a day to day basis and to identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, key members of staff have specific roles in school:

- *Mr T Baines - Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead*
- *Mrs T Allen - Deputy Headteacher/ PSHE & RSE Lead/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead*
- *Mrs E Francis – Senior Mental Health Lead/ SENCo/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead*
- *Mr P Ward - Learning Mentor*
- *Mr S Morgan- Chair of Governors/ SEN Governor*

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 officer, the head teacher or the designated governor. If the student 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 Mrs Francis, Mental Health Lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS will be discussed with the relevant people.

Individual Support Plans

When a child has been identified as being cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue or is receiving support through either CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that clear support plans should be drawn up and recorded under the usual SEND process. The development of such plans should involve the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

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

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 PSHE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association and other mental health groups to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

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 children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting them to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

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 (displays, posters etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites and Parentmail), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure that families, pupils and staff understand:

- What Help is available
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it

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 Mrs Francis, our Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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*

Targeted support

We recognise that some children 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.

We work with local community services 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 local authorities and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral*
- *Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment, children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress or behavioural problems*
- *Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parent/carers. Agreeing a support 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*
- *Ensuring children have access to pastoral care and support, as well as referring to specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur*
- *Providing children with clear and consistent 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*
- *Providing children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it*

- The identification, assessment and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014

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 using the agreed safeguarding procedures, CPOMs, 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

The information may be shared Mrs Francis, the school's Mental Health Lead if appropriate.

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child and their family/carers. We will tell them:

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

We should never share information about a pupil without consulting or informing parents/carers first. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations (e.g. where a pupil is at serious risk of harm) when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent/carer. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Mrs Francis. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, 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/carers must always be kept informed and contacted at the earliest convenience. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues or safeguarding concerns, parents/carers should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Leads, Mr Baines, Mrs Allen and Mrs Francis must be informed immediately.

Whole School Approach

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers 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/carers, the pupil and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers 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/carer time to reflect. Signposting parents/carers to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents/carers 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 are agreed and added to the child's SEND record.

Working with All Parents/Carers

Parents/carers 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/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/carers 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/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

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. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. 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 with the student who is suffering and their parents/carers 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 or 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

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 children safe. At least one nominated member of staff in school will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent. We will host relevant information on our school websites for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

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 where it becomes appropriate.

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 Mr Baines, Headteacher, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Useful links

- **Young Minds** is one of the UK's leading charities for children and young people's mental health. www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Anna Freud Centre** for Children and Families- is a charity dedicated to providing training & support for child mental health services www.annafreud.org
- **Place2Be** is one of the UK's leading children's mental health charities. www.place2be.org.uk/our-services
- **Mind** is the UK's leading mental health charity, offering a great deal of useful information on children's mental health. www.mind.org.uk
- **Mentally Healthy Schools-** Quality – assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk
- **Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)** provide support to children and young people with a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues. www.oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/child-and-adolescent-mental-2/
- **Bexley Local Offer-** <https://www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/Services/5397>

Employee Wellbeing

At Longlands Primary School, we recognise that the staff are our most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a safe, learning and caring community. We believe that everyone should positively contribute to their own sense of well-being and security.

What is Employee Wellbeing?

It's about feeling that your job contributes positively to your life rather than being a source of illness, harmful stress or other dissatisfaction. Feeling respected, valued and that the work that you do really matters and makes a difference.

Clear and regular communication between staff and their line manager is integral to personal well-being and managers are responsible for providing the necessary resources i.e. support structure.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

We have partnered with Care First by Sodexo offering immediate information, answers and advice to a range of workplace and personal issues. Available 24/7 to offer support, advice and counselling on any workplace or personal related issue. No matter how small or big the problem, Care first counsellors are available to you. All Care first counsellors are professionally qualified and accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Roles and responsibilities

Individual Responsibility:

- *Respect the diversity of staff and ensure that the nine characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act (2010), are protected: age, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, race & nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation.*
- *Respectful and thoughtful when interacting with colleagues;*
- *Follow school procedure regarding sickness, absences, special leave – Contact your line manager*
- *Being aware criticism should be constructive and then developed upon positively*
- *Learning from each other i.e.: observations, feedback, coaching, mentors*
- *Punctuality / Timekeeping (safeguarding) i.e.: playground duty, meetings, ringing the bell*
- *Follow the schools' procedures and policies at all times including trips*
- *Adaptability to be able to work around directed time*
- *Keep your working environment and shared areas clean, tidy and organised*
- *Communication i.e.: Check emails daily*
- *Time management*
- *Check the staff board daily*
- *Arranging own cover for duties or planned absence*
- *No use of mobile phones when with children/classes*

Team Responsibilities:

- *Supportive environment e.g.: covering for other members of staff when someone is absent*
- *Having fun with each other*
- *Building good relationships with colleagues*
- *Treating everyone equally*

- Time for each other
- Take responsibility for the tasks given and completed by the deadline
- Showing awareness of others workloads and time and make sure that you speak to the correct person directly not via a third party
- Fair distribution / contribution of work load
- Promoting your area of knowledge, expertise, leadership
- Giving people sufficient time to complete tasks
- Don't be offended if a member of staff cannot drop everything to assist you

Whole School Responsibilities:

- Respect for beliefs, ideas, values, skills and differences
- Staff need to feel valued
- Encouraging a positive morale
- Direct communication with all people involved
- Treating people equally
- Monitoring workloads to ensure that people have reasonable deadlines
- Monitor and review the staff feedback on the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress
- Consistency
- Professional honesty and good manners

Support available:

Senior Leaders / line managers will be expected to continually assess the working environment for significant sources of stress and to be aware of, and alert to, the symptoms of stress in the people that they manage. They must also monitor through team meetings, supervision sessions and appraisals the levels of employee well-being.

Having said this, Managers' diligence cannot be expected to be failsafe and all employees must be responsible for bringing attention, at the earliest opportunity, to any situation or factor that may be a source of stress or poor well-being either to themselves or to others.

Associated Policies and Plans

This policy is written in association with and should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents including:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- Anti-bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.