



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

The wellbeing of our school community is at the heart of all that we do and is linked to our Core Values of Belief, Effort, Kindness and Community. These values help us to better understand and improve the wellbeing of our school community with this policy, and all others, being consistent in promoting those values.

Ratified by the Governing body on	13 October 2026
Next Review Date	Autumn 2028
Signed (on behalf of the Governing Body)	Signed:
	Print name:

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)

Policy Statement

At St Ethelwolds, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all of our stakeholders. Happy, healthy children are more confident learners and happy and healthy staff are better able to lead teaching and learning. We believe in equipping our pupils and staff with tools and techniques to support their mental health and to celebrate their uniqueness and individuality.

Whilst mental health for the individual is critical, it is also important that children and adults can support each other through a deeper understanding and tolerance of each other's needs and awareness of the wellbeing of those within our school community.

The best correlate of adult life satisfaction is not income, but physical and mental health. Early intervention focused on child emotional wellbeing is probably the most effective social investment any society could make.

(Professor Peter Fonagy, Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families)

Scope

This document describes our 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 Behaviour and Discipline Policy; the Supporting Medical Needs Policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue; and the ALN Policy where a student has an identified special educational need. (It should be noted that a mental health condition is 'considered a disability if it has a long-term effect (12 months or more) on your normal day-to-day activity' as defined under the Equality Act 2010.)

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students and encourage pupils and staff to look out for each other's wellbeing;
- Increase staff and pupils' awareness, knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and the supporting resources available to them;
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health;
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues;
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers;
- Ensure that EVERY child leaves St Ethelwold's better equipped mentally for Key Stage 3 with confidence in their strengths and abilities as well as resilience to overcome challenges at home or at school.

Lead Members of Staff

All members of staff at St Ethelwold's have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils and a responsibility to afford attention to their own wellbeing. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mr Oliver - Head teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Mr Griffith - Deputy Headteacher, Deputy DSL
- Mrs Ellis – ALNCo
- Mrs Bow – Nurture Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil (See Appendix G for signs and symptoms) should speak to one of the mental health leads in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, or has suffered harm, then there is an immediate Safeguarding concern and the member of staff should follow the child protection flowchart and inform one of the school DSLs (as outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy).

If the pupil presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedure for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid trained staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be managed by the ALNCo.

Individual Care Plans

An individual health care plan can be drawn up for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis. A meeting will be organised with a Mental Health Lead, pupil (where appropriate), parents and relevant health professionals. The Format of the mental health care plan includes:

- Details of the pupil's condition;
- Special requirements and precautions;
- Medication and any side effects;
- What constitutes an emergency (symptoms to look out for); what to do and who to contact in an emergency;
- Further reasonable adjustments and support in place.

Teaching about Mental Health

At St Ethelwold's our PSHE curriculum engages children in learning the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep themselves and others physically and mentally safe and healthy. The specific content of lessons is determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught, but there is always an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed for themselves or others.

St Ethelwold's uses the Jigsaw PSHE resource which follows the PSHE Association guidance ensuring that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. The Jigsaw Scheme of Work also focuses on developing mindfulness techniques and enhancing pupils' learning and personal development, therefore

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supporting the self-regulation of emotion, building of emotional resilience and enhancement of pupil focus and concentration, while building the capacity to learn. Other resources to support the teaching and learning of mental health are accessed as needed – links to example resources can be found at the end of the appendices in ‘References and further information’.

Internal Support

As well as the day to day teaching and learning about mental health as outlined above and also the reinforcing of and referral to previous learning and experiences to embed the skills of wellbeing, St Ethelwolds also offers a range of timely interventions to further support children.

Staff may have noticed, or have been made aware of by parents, a particular need in a child that suggests specific support would be beneficial. Following this identification of need, staff can make a referral to the DSP, DDSP or ALNCo as appropriate.

The Protective Behaviour curriculum studied every year and in each year group engages the children in having a ‘Support Network’ that they trust and know they could go to to speak about anything, including worries/anxiety about mental health. The Protective Behaviours themes that all children learn and practice are:

1. We all have the right to feel safe all of the time
2. We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.

Signposting to External Support

Sometimes a child’s need may be such that external, expert guidance and support is required. Staff receiving a referral for such a need that cannot be met with school intervention alone, should consult the lead practitioners identified above. Whilst awaiting the requested external support, the mental health leads will consider what interventions and actions *can* be assigned within school to support the child, seeking advice from external contacts already established (e.g. Educational Psychologist).

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms for all mental health conditions can vary from mild to severe and can include a range of physical and emotional signs and changes in behaviour. Staff members who see children routinely are often able to notice marked changes from the child’s usual emotions, thinking and behaviour. Signs of concern at different stages of development can be seen in Appendix G.

Staff members are often able to observe when problems with a child’s emotions, thinking and behaviour persist and/or identify changes to a child’s day-to-day functioning (e.g. in their classroom participation, peer relationships on the playground, lunchtimes and extra curricular activity times and academic performance). Staff, including Teachers, Support Staff, Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants, who become aware of significant changes in a child’s behaviour should

consider whether the changes may indicate a mental health problem or indeed a safeguarding concern – please see the Flowchart for raising concerns about mental health in Appendix B.

Managing disclosures

A student 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 student 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 rather than of exploring 'Why?' The member of staff should discuss with the child the fact that they will need to share this information and should include:

- Who they are going to talk to ☐ What they are going to tell them ☐ Why they need to tell them.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential CPOMS (digital record keeping) file. This CPOMS 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 will be shared with the mental health lead, who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Professional judgement (with support from the school Mental Health leads and/or DSPs) should be used to decide if it is in the child's best interests for parents to be informed (their consent must be sought if external support is needed) and children may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the child should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents, unless considered to be an emergency and the best interests of the child are for parents to be informed sooner. We should always give children 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, then the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy needs to be referred to and followed.

Working with Parents

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;
- 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 policy easily accessible to parents.

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents of a child's mental health needs (either from staff concerns or from a child's own disclosure), the school will be sensitive in its approach and outline the support being offered/suggested. Staff will consider the range of feelings parents may have in learning of their child's mental health needs and will work with parents in the interests of supporting the child. Staff will refer parents to this policy and the further sources of information in the appendices that may support them in supporting their child.

Supporting Peers

When a child 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 by the child who is suffering (and their parents if appropriate) 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 could look out for that signify a need for 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; ☐ speaking to and seeking support from their parents.

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 in order to enable them to keep students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD (Continued Professional Development) will be supported throughout the year as 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 the Mental Health Lead who can also highlight/seek sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

The new focus on children's mental health, serves as an important reminder to us that we must couple support for school staff with the ambitions we have for children's wellbeing.

(Professor Peter Fonagy, Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families)

At St Ethelwold's we value staff mental health and wellbeing as key to realising our culture of being a mentally healthy school. The high expectations of staff in their approach to teaching is of prime importance to ensure that children succeed and the expectation that staff look after their own wellbeing and mental health is just as important. We encourage and support staff to identify, take responsibility for, solve and act on their own wellbeing; to look after themselves, to show and speak about what wellbeing looks like to children and to therefore have a positive impact on children's achievement and wellbeing.

Staff who require support in their mental health and wellbeing should speak initially to their line manager or directly to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

Staff wellbeing is considered when assigning the dates/times for wider school events; each time a school policy is reviewed or a new incentive/initiative considered, for example in asking 'what impact could this have on staff mental health?'; as well as asking what impact it can have on pupil outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A - References/ further information to support Mental Health and Wellbeing

Appendix B – Signs of concern for mental health at different stages of development

Appendix B - References/ further information

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care and Excellence) - Social and emotional wellbeing in primary education (pub. 2008, updated December 2017)
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph12>

This guideline covers approaches to promoting social and emotional wellbeing in children aged 4 to 11 years in primary education and is targeted to school staff, childcare staff and parents. It includes planning and delivering programmes and activities to help children develop social and emotional skills and wellbeing. It also covers identifying signs of anxiety or social and emotional problems in children and how to address them.

PSHE Association

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparingteach-about-mental-health-and>

On Useful Link page – Guidance and lessons plans for schools on preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing. Our mental health guidance has been produced under a grant from the Department for Education and is accompanied by a set of lesson plans spanning key stages 1-4.

The lesson plans are designed to be used in conjunction with the guidance, with topics including teaching children how to describe emotions, talk about anxiety and worries, and develop coping strategies. Lessons aimed at key stages 3 and 4 also cover eating disorders, self-harm and depression and anxiety.

A Bright Future for All

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/bright-future-all>

A training pack for teachers wishing to develop activities on mental health promotion across their school. The pack can be used flexibly and at a pace that suits the school. It seeks to affirm work already underway, while providing guidance on what more can be done. The pack features a variety of activities, including the use of peer support and circle time, discussions about teachers' mental wellbeing and a range of handouts.

It has some useful links at the end of the document – resources for parents, resources for children; appendix 3 lists a large range of agencies, sources of guidance regarding policy (legislation, codes of practice and government papers).

DfE's Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools¹ (Appendix B)

One list of national organisations is provided within the DfE's *Mental Health and Behaviour* (Look at P28 - 33).

Until 2021 all local areas must publish a multi-agency Local Transformation Plan (LTP), which is refreshed each year and overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The LTP is the strategic document setting out how services for children's mental health are being improved. The LTP should be available on the Local Authority and CCG websites.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508847/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour - advice for Schools 160316.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508847/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_-_advice_for_Schools_160316.pdf)

Youth Wellbeing Directory

There are various sources of 'lists of support' to be found; an on-line directory that links local postcodes to local services: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/youth-wellbeing/>

The National Children's Bureau Produces a range of whole school resources for promoting mental health, e.g.: a self-assessment and improvement tool for school leaders:

https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Tool%20FINAL1_0.pdf

further resources to promote whole school developments:

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf>

The DfE's "Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>

Its 'Further Information' (p.38) provides links to other useful resources and external organisations. Membership of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) requires counsellors to abide by their Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, giving some quality assurance to their employers and clients.

MindEd for Professional and Volunteers

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

MindEd provided free educational resources containing advice, guidance and information on managing a wide range of mental health issues in children and teenagers.

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/> **Schools in**

Mind

Schools in Mind is a free network for school staff and allied professionals which shares practical, academic and clinical expertise regarding the wellbeing and mental health issues that affect schools. The network provides a trusted source of up-to-date and accessible information and

resources that school leaders, teachers and support staff can use to support the mental health and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care.

Protective Behaviours

<https://www.protectivebehaviours.org/> <https://www.protectivebehaviours.org/what-does-protective-behaviours-mean>

Protective Behaviours is a framework for **personal safety** consisting of **2 Themes** and **7 Strategies**. This is very different from the 'lock your doors', restrictive approach to personal safety - it is a dynamic, confidence building, empowering approach that links safety with having adventures and taking risks.

Jigsaw PSHE

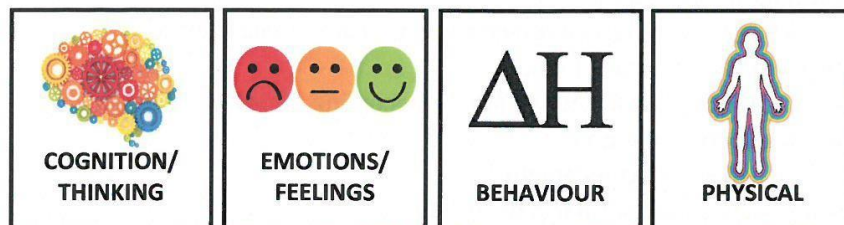
<https://www.jigsawpshe.com>

Jigsaw PSHE perfectly connects the pieces of Personal, Social and Health Education, emotional literacy, social skills and spiritual development into an easy to use lesson-a-week programme. Jigsaw is a whole school approach providing a comprehensive scheme of learning and a unique, spiral, progressive and effective scheme of work aiming to prepare children for life, helping them really know and value who they truly are and understand how they relate to other people in this ever-changing world.

Appendix C – Signs of concern for mental health at different stages of development

Signs of Concern at different stages of development:

Student behaviour can be difficult to interpret. With so much going on, sorting out what is 'normal' adolescent behaviour and what is something more concerning can be challenging. When looking at student behaviour through a mental health lens, it's important to remember that young people experiencing mental health difficulties will display different signs and symptoms across four key areas:



Pre-school:

- Behaviour problems
- Hyperactivity beyond the norm
- Trouble sleeping
- Persistent nightmares
- Excessive fear, worrying, or crying
- Extreme disobedience or aggression
- Lots of temper tantrums
- Persistent difficulty separating from a parent.

Primary school:

- Difficulties in relationships
- Excessive fears and worries
- Extreme hyperactivity
- Sudden decrease in school performance
- Loss of interest in friends or favourite activities
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of motivation
- Sudden changes in weight
- Excessive worry about weight gain
- Sudden changes in sleep habits
- Visible prolonged sadness
- Substance use or abuse
- Self-harm
- Contemplating death or suicide
- Seeing or hearing things that are not there
- Complaining of physical illness

Secondary school:

The signs listed above are all a concern during adolescence, staff should therefore be aware of these but also consider:

- Destructive behaviours, such as damaging property or setting fires
- Carrying out or threatening to run away
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Absenteeism
- Comments or writings that suggest a desire to harm self or others
- Substance abuse
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in behaviour or personality
- Risk-taking behaviours
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others