

# Guilden Sutton Church of England Primary School



*'Love and Justice for All'*

*'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'*  
*Micah 6:8.*

*through the teachings of Jesus all can flourish spiritually, emotionally and academically throughout life,  
living out love and justice for all.*

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Staff member responsible	Mrs. T. Rainford
Governor/Other	Mr. A. Parker
Date of Policy	May 2024
Reviewed	Every 3 years

## 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)***

Guilden Sutton Church of England Primary School believes that every member of the school community has the right to be themselves, feel safe, valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and equally. We are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a loving Christian ethos, where each individual’s contribution is encouraged and valued. Through our school Christian family, we foster trust, mutual respect and a clear sense of community. Our aim is to enrich and nurture the whole child in preparation for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and, at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody’s business and that we all have a role to play. The school’s Christian vision, as seen above, shapes all that we do and is summarised by the school’s motto, ‘Love and justice for all.’

## Scope

This policy is intended for all stakeholders and should be read in conjunction with the school’s Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy in cases where pupils’ mental health needs overlap with these.

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all pupils and staff
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues so that they can; help children to understand their emotions and feelings better; help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries with a trusted member of staff; help children to form and maintain relationships; promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count; teach children the value of prayer; encourage children to be confident and ‘dare to be different;’ help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their parent/carers.
- Provide support to staff suffering mental ill health.

We pursue these aims using both whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and staff.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school's Christian values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Providing opportunities to reflect through Time to be Still, reflective prayer corners, mood registers, collective worship, circle time and celebration assemblies
- Providing high quality personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) throughout the curriculum.
- Teaching approaches to mindfulness
- 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
- Mental health weeks to heighten awareness and develop pupils' thinking and reflection skills
- Access to appropriate support that meets individual needs
- Developing staff knowledge and expertise of emotional wellbeing and mental health through continuing professional development and training
- Access to a dedicated Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) working across the school
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement and family upheaval
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties.

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Theresa Rainford- Headteacher, Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer
- Caroline Cawley – Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer
- Ros Doak Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Co-ordinator
- Nia Mullen – SENDCo
- Anna Jones & Olivia Lightfoot-Ward - Emotional Literacy Support assistant -ELSA
- Olivia Lightfoot-Ward - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

The school's leadership as a whole is responsible for:

- Using a preventative approach to create a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely to occur, in order to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the school community and instil resilience in pupils. A preventative approach includes teaching

pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing these messages in our activities and ethos.

- Ensuring that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of how potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences (ACE), including abuse and neglect, can impact on a pupil's mental health, behaviour and education.
- Equipping staff with the knowledge required to identify pupils whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Raising awareness and employing efficient referral processes in order to help pupils access evidence-based early support and interventions.
- Working effectively with external agencies to ensure the school can provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.
- Identifying and supporting pupils with SEND, and considering how to use some of the SEND resources to provide support for pupils with mental health difficulties that amount to SEND.
- Identifying where wellbeing concerns represent safeguarding concerns, and ensuring that appropriate safeguarding referrals are made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Lead Members of the Governing Body**

- Sheena Bayton, Chair of Governors, Link Governor for SEND, Safeguarding Governor
- Emma Neal, Parent Governor
- Charlotte Williams, Parent Governor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead or the Headteacher 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, Theresa Rainford.

### **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.

The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught, 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.

## **Early Identification of Need**

The school has a variety of different approaches for identifying individual pupils or group needs through:

- Weekly book of concerns meeting
- Daily mood register
- Staff discussions
- Discussions with parents
- Midday assistant observations and communication with class teacher
- Communication with before and after school clubs
- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Prayer jars
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes'
- PSHE Curriculum

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these signs should share their concerns with the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing/SENDCo, Theresa Rainford.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Being unusually emotional or anxious

## **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other events that impact pupils'**

The balance between risk and protective factors is disrupted when traumatic events happen in pupils' lives, such as the following:

- **Loss or separation:** This may include a death in the family, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships, family conflict, a family breakdown that displaces the pupil, being taken into care or adopted, or parents being deployed in the armed forces.
- **Life changes:** This may include the birth of a sibling, moving house, changing schools or transitioning between schools.
- **Traumatic experiences:** This may include abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents or injuries.
- **Other traumatic incidents:** This may include natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

Some pupils may be susceptible to such incidents, even if they are not directly affected. For example, pupils with parents in the armed forces may find global disasters or terrorist incidents particularly traumatic.

The school supports pupils when they have been through ACEs, even if they are not presenting any obvious signs of distress – early help is likely to prevent further problems.

Support may come from the school's existing support systems or via specialist staff and support services.

## **SEND**

The school recognises it is well-placed to identify SEND at an early stage and works with partner agencies to address these needs. The school's full SEND identification and support procedures are available in the SEND Policy.

Where pupils have certain types of SEND, there is an increased likelihood of mental health problems. For example, children with autism or learning difficulties are significantly more likely to experience anxiety.

Early intervention to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour includes an assessment of whether appropriate support is in place to address the pupil's SEND.

The headteacher considers the use of a multi-agency assessment for pupils demonstrating persistently disruptive behaviour. These assessments are designed to identify unidentified SEND and mental health problems, and to discover whether there are housing or family problems that may be having an adverse effect on the pupil.

The school recognises that not all pupils with mental health difficulties have SEND.

The graduated response is used to determine the correct level of support to offer (this is used as good practice throughout the school, regardless of whether or not a pupil has SEND).

All staff understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEND, including pupils with persistent mental health difficulties.

The SENCO ensures that staff understand how the school identifies and meets pupils' needs, provides advice and support as needed, and liaises with external SEND professionals as necessary.

### **Partnership Working with Parents/Carers**

In situations where a child or young person presents differently across home and school environments, school adults and parent/carers should work in partnership to address such differences to enable the child's needs to be appropriately met within a particular environment. We recognise that parents know their children best and all concerns will be acted upon. Best practice approaches should be shared and promoted between parents/carers and school adults.

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in school.

Parents can get mental health and wellbeing information via:

- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy available on the school's website or from the School Office
- Contacting the classteacher, SENDCo (Mrs Mullen), the ELSA (Anna Jones & Olivia Lightfoot-Ward) or the Headteacher
- The Children & Young People's Out of Hours Advice Line on 01244 397644 (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services known as CAMHS).
- Resources and books for adults and children in the ELSA area which is located in the staffroom (please see Anna Jones or Olivia Lightfoot-Ward).

### **Early Action and Support**

The school uses the Behaviour Pathway (Appendix 1), developed in partnership with local agencies, to identify children with additional behaviour/social emotional needs, address any learning and training needs, and put appropriate strategies in place (based on the child's needs) without waiting for a formal diagnosis.

In the first instance, a referral form and assessment questionnaire would be completed by the classteacher/parent and passed to the SENDCo who will decide the best way forward in collaboration with the Headteacher.

In response to the identification and targeting of support for children's needs, a cycle of **assess, plan, do and review** will be followed as illustrated in Appendix 2. A programme of support will be planned to suit the child's individual needs and regularly reviewed at least every 6 weeks. This may include a series of sessions with the school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), Anna Jones or Olivia Lightfoot-Ward.

If a child does not make progress as expected, with parent's consent, school will make a referral to the community paediatric team, or consult with the appropriate agency, providing all the relevant information including professional reports.

### **Emotional Support for Individuals or Groups**

ELSAs help children and young people learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for pupils to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them. Parents are encouraged to have an informal chat with the ELSA to provide some helpful background knowledge about their child.

ELSAs cover a variety of emotional issues such as:

- Loss and Bereavement
- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Emotions
- Friendship issues
- Relationships
- Anger management
- Behaviour
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Conflict

Useful coping strategies include:

- Relaxation techniques
- Lego therapy
- Next step



## **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Community paediatrician
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Link with Coram Life Education – Life Bus

## **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 children safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional training will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

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.

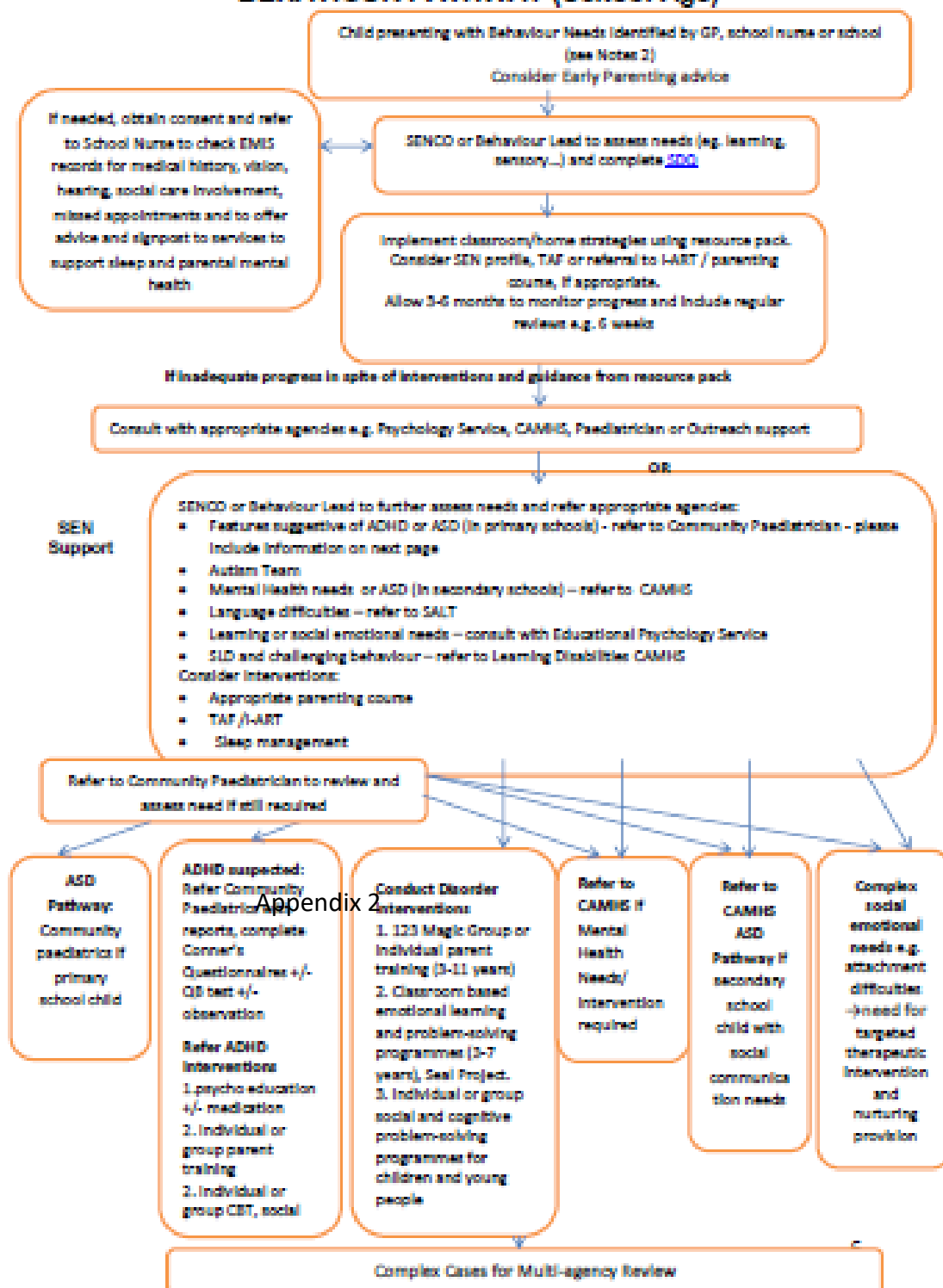
ELSA staff receive annual supervision which ensures they have the most up to date and current information needed.

## **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum and immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.



## BEHAVIOUR PATHWAY (School Age)



Appendix 2

## Assess, Plan, Do, Review

