



Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

July 2024



We are a Rights Respecting School with No Outsiders

Policy Statement

At Whitley Village School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. 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 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.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- encourage children to be confident and celebrate difference
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

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
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder and those who have experienced trauma.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Relationship and Health School policy which demonstrates the school's commitment to being a trauma informed setting. Where pupils' mental health needs overlap with other needs, this policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Needs policy and our SEND policy. It also sits alongside and does not replace child protection procedures.

Article 39: Any child who has been neglected, exploited, abused, tortured or involved in armed conflict should be supported to recover their health, self-respect and dignity, and to reintegrate.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Russell David, Head of School, Safeguarding Lead, Adult Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)
Nicola Downey SENCO

Lorna Keegan, Mental Health Lead

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil/student should record their concerns on CPOMs. Where a child is considered at risk of immediate harm, DSL should be notified in the first instance.

All staff will record any information regarding children on CPOMs. This is aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties, including:

- Attendance - increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative OR unusual behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- 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

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use relevant and appropriate guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils, which may include:

- Circle time approaches
- Use of 'Zones of Regulation'
- Referral to Local Mental Health Support Teams
- Primary group work/mental health and wellbeing group
- Therapeutic activities including Drawing and Talking and supported play times.
- Support with NHS referrals for Speech and Language Support

Working with Parents

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, and how to get about this, 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 PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

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:

- Mental Health Support Team
- Health box
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Halton)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Warrington)
- West Cheshire 0-18 CAMHS team (Cheshire West & Chester)
- Family support workers
- Early Help & Prevention
- Edge of Care
- School Health
- TAF
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Staff well-being and Mental Health

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required.
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing Whitley Village School.
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to Whitley Village School's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all.
- Use commercially agreed schemes of work to reduce teacher workload and promote quality outcomes.
- Utilise Educational Technology to reduce teacher workload.

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.

Managers and Senior Leadership have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all school staff are made aware of this policy.
- Manage and support the implementation and review of this policy, including its goals
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within Whitley Village School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Encourage staff to use strapline below for email signatures:
'Whitley Village School promotes the work-life balance of its staff. We do not expect our staff to respond immediately to emails or to respond outside normal working hours'.
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both at school-wide and class-wide level.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the Trust's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
 - Sickness absence data
 - Staff turnover, exit interviews
 - Number of self-referrals to the counsellor service
 - Number of referrals to Occupational Health support

- Numbers of grievance and harassment cases
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.
- Staff will be supported with:
 - Direct advice and support through an effective support line
 - PPA from home, when appropriate
 - Flexible and generous staff absence trust policies
 - Referrals to occupation health
 - Phased returns after a period of absence
 - Access to free hypnotherapy via Human Resources

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or updated to reflect new legislation.

The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed through feedback from staff, pupils and parents and the review of the policy by SLT and governors to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.