

# Calthwaite Church of England Primary School

## Mental Health Policy



**Chair of Governors:**

**Head Teacher:** J. Harvey

**Date:** Sept 2024

**Next review due by:** Sept 2026

## **Aims and Vision**

We aim to promote positive mental health for everyone in our school community. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and with the expertise and advice from external specialists.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues. We also work closely with parents and carers to help them maintain good mental health and will signpost to agencies should we feel they need some direction.

## **Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important?**

At Calthwaite C of E Primary School, we recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age and periods of absence. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need. All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: ***"in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy"***.

Our role is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also aim to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

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

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated at Calthwaite Primary School
- In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

### **3. Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being**

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"A state of well-being 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. Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems."

We want all children/young people to

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

### **4, Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Links with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a method of communication.

### **5. A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, maintain happiness, feel successful and to prevent problems before they arise or escalate.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos that supports mental health that everyone understands
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health

5. Early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. Effectively working with parents and carers
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

Jonathan Harvey - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer / First Aider  
Sarah Bulman - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead / SENDCo

All staff understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

### The school's Lead Mental Health Team

- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to external services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils

- SENDCo who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Barnardos and Family Action
- Cumbria Family Support
- CAMHS

## **7. Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health**

We have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- Pupil-led Activities
- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Transition Support
- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Worry monsters
- Kindness/Compliment Boards
- Breathing/relaxation methods
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Assembly themes
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school Small Group Activities
- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:

- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

## **8. Early Identification**

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- Home visits in EYFS to identify needs
- Induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, medical incidents, attendance, relationships
- Pupil Voice check ins
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the SENDCo and Designated Safeguarding Team
- Worry monster or other method of reporting a worry in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- Weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- Parental meetings
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns to any member of staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO/ Designated Safeguarding Team. These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

#### Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff **listen rather than advise**. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the SENDCo/Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out;

- The needs of the pupils
- How the pupil will be supported
- Actions to provide that support
- Any special requirements

Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact

### **9. Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment**

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Inclusion Manager/SENDCo.

### **10. Involving Parents and Carers Promoting Mental Health**

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers we:

- Provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Have an open door policy.
- Support parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child

- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions
- We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

### **11. Involving Pupils**

We seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through;

- Pupil Voice
- Surveys
- Class questions
- Suggestion boxes

### **12. Supporting and Training Staff**

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help

Sarah Bulman has completed 2 day Youth Mental Health First Aid Training.

### **13. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum.

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

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/services/north-cumbria-mental-health-support-team>