



**GREAT FINBOROUGH
CHURCH PRIMARY**

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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Introduction

At Great Finborough Church Primary School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows children's voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Great Finborough Church Primary School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including *Looked After Children Policy*, *Safeguarding Policy*, *Child Protection Procedures*, *Online Safety Policy*, *Behaviour Policy*, *Anti-Bullying Policy*, *Equalities Policy*, *Information Management Policy*, *Data Protection Policy*.

Aims

- 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.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Instilling a culture of staff and child welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of children, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- SENCO
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- PSHEe Subject Lead

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the child, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school 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 PSHEe curriculum.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: 'in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy'. We will follow the guidance issued by the DfE 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' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of children' 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 children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

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

The aim of this is to ensure parents, children and staff understand:

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

Sources of Support

School Based Support

We believe that the school community has a key role to play in promoting children's positive mental health and wellbeing. We incorporate the following into our school activities:

- Class assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Peer mediation– children working together to solve problems
- A lunchtime group supporting individual children at lunchtime
- Transition programmes to help smooth the transfer to our EYFS class for our new intake and to secondary schools for year 6 children
- Reward programmes where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- Worry boxes - a mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Small group activities

Early Help

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. By identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals and targeting assessed need, we can stop problems escalating and increase positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. School staff support by identifying difficulties at an early stage and putting in place action which is targeted and evaluated. Support that can be offered by school includes:

- Breakfast & After school Clubs
- SEN Support
- Pastoral support
- Individual Support Plans

- Working with parents
- Making classroom adjustments
- Risk Assessing
- Signposting to services
- Referring to and working with external agencies such as:
School Nursing Team, Doctors, Speech & Language, Educational Psychology, Primary Mental Health, Occupational Therapy, Family Support Practitioner, SENDIASS County Inclusion Support Service

Local Support

In Suffolk, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **Emotional Wellbeing Hub**, which provides information, advice, and guidance if you are worried about the mental health of a child or young person aged 0-25 years, or you're a young person experiencing emotional wellbeing difficulties.

The Emotional Wellbeing Hub can be contacted on their helpline on **0345 600 2090**, press option 3 to make a referral to access mental health services (Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm). For more information and to access an online referral visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing-support/suffolk-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-wellbeing-hub/>

For urgent mental health support, contact:

- Call 111 and press option 2 NHS Mental Health Crisis Line (24/7 helpline for anyone of any age)
- [Contact the Samaritans](#)
- If it's a life-threatening emergency call 999.

Warning Signs

Staff may 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 warning signs should alert the Senior Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of, may include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / 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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are looked after children, young carers, those who have had previous access to mental health services, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

Managing Disclosures

All concerns related to mental health are reported to the Senior Mental Health Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead. and SENDCo and recorded so that the level of need can be assessed in order to provide the necessary support either from within or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENDCo following the assessment process, and in consultation with the child and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead if it is the most appropriate support for the child's specific needs, and only with the consent of the child and parent/carer. We have a duty of care to support children and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children.

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. We will tell them:

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

Whole School Approach

Working with parents/carers

We understand that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that poor mental

health is common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

We will signpost parents to other sources of information and support that can be helpful in these instances. A meeting with the SENDCo and Senior Mental Health Lead will be arranged and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels.

Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents 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 needs 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 Safeguarding training to enable them to keep children safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

We will signpost training for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more children.

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 Senior Mental Health Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher will carry out monitoring on the policy as part of the whole school monitoring process.