

Balcombe C E (C) School



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Adopted by Governors: December 2021

Reviewed: Dec 2022, Nov 23

Next Review: December 2024

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)

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils and staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection, SEND and Safeguarding policies.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in children and adults
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities

Staff Wellbeing:

Role of Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern

- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work following prolonged absences

Wellbeing Leads for Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, staff members with a specific remit for staff wellbeing are

- Wendy Millbanks – Headteacher & DSL
- Susie Couves - Spring Class Teacher
- Sally Smith - Forest Class Teacher
- Claire Cleverton – Mental Health trained

Supporting Staff

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives. Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Staff are always encouraged to discuss the need for time for family events, for example: child's sports day, funerals, weddings with the Headteacher.

If it is possible to support and accommodate requests without huge disruption and additional expense, time off will be given.

Supporting the SLT.

The Well-Being Governor/ the Chair of Governors will have regular contact with members of the SLT to give support as outlined above.

Procedures to aid positive wellbeing and work/life balance:

As much as possible we ask that messages to staff are verbally communicated.

Emails:

There is no expectation to respond to emails in the evening, weekends or school holidays. Staff are encouraged to check emails regularly, but this should be to suit them.

WhatsApp groups

There is a school WhatsApp group to deliver important / business messages to all staff.

There is also a separate WhatsApp group for the Senior Leadership Team.

Other optional groups have been set up for more informal communications.

Meetings

Meetings, including staff meetings, will only take place if there is a clear agenda and a need to hold the meeting. Staff meetings happen once a week (when necessary) and should not last more than 90 minutes.

Work life balance

Certain events and timings of meetings / events will be planned to make sure that there is appropriate work / life balance. Examples include:

- **Meetings** - If there is a late event during the week, there will be no staff meeting.
- **Parent consultations** - These take place twice each year and are for 2 sessions. One is an evening session, and one will largely take place shortly after the end of the school day.
- **Report Writing** - Teachers are given 1 INSET day for report writing. The report format is reviewed annually to make sure it is efficient and covers all the legal requirements.
- **School Productions and other events** - Staff will be asked to share attendance at out of hours events, so that there is fair distribution over the year.

Policies and Procedures

Policies are reviewed to reflect best practice and legal requirements but are also reviewed with the question, "How will this impact on wellbeing and workload?" Examples of changes made include our Feedback policy to reduce marking.

PPA

Where possible, we will organise PPA so that teachers complete their PPA where best suits them.

Wellbeing Team

The school has a wellbeing team made up of staff, governors and pupils. They reflect on any suggestions made and offer solutions to improve school wellbeing.

Refreshments

The school will provide tea and coffee for all staff, located in the staff room.

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

The [MindEd learning portal](https://www.minded.org.uk)¹ 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 students.

Pupil Wellbeing:

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to one of the following members of staff in the first instance.

- Wendy Millbanks – Headteacher & DSL
- Claire Cleverton – SENCO
- Susie Couves - Spring Class Teacher
- Sally Smith - Forest Class Teacher
- Audrey Kirby – Learning Mentor

Individual Health Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

¹ www.minded.org.uk

Strategies to support children

The Pod is open at lunchtimes by invitation to children who may find lunchtime difficult. All classes support Zones of Regulation strategies in the classroom, for those pupils who need them.

Teaching about Mental Health

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 specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching 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.

We will ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. This will be supported by the PSHE curriculum and the Local Authority. Refer to the school website for a list of various Mental Health and Wellbeing support services and resources.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

Staff are aware of what to look out for and how to respond to a disclosure. Details can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

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Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation.

Working with All Parents

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 access this support, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- 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

Governing Body

The Wellbeing Link Governor is either the Chair or Deputy Chair of Governors, unless a specific Governor who has requested to be the Wellbeing Link Governor.

The Governing Board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school wellbeing team. At every review, it will be approved by the Full Governing Body.