

# Mental Health and Well-being Policy

## Waddesdon Village Primary School – a *Pathway to Excellence*



**Approved by:** Laura Forchione

**Date:** February 2024

**Last reviewed on:** February 2024

**Next review due  
by:** February 2026

## Overview

**“Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing whole school approaches tailored to their particular needs, as well as considering the needs of individual pupils.”**

*(Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, November 2018)).*

**"It is defined as 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."**

*(World Mental Organisation)*

At Waddesdon Village Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at our School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all our children and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## Vision Statement

We will provide a learning environment where each individual is valued and encouraged to give their best.

We are an inclusive school and every child is celebrated for their uniqueness. We work hard to ensure that we educate and care for the 'whole child' and that their needs are identified and addressed through personalised learning.

## Objectives

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and children.
- 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.
- Instil a culture of staff and children's welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

## Key Staff Members

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific and relevant parts to play:

- Miss Laura Forchione – Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Sarah Leslie – Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding Lead
- Miss Pauline Cross – Head of KS1, SENCO
- Mrs Hayley Smith – Mental Health Lead, Mental Health First Aider, ELSA

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead 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 Headteacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

## 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. At Waddesdon Village Primary School we understand that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health illness.

## 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 and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as shared areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of the child help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

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

### Support available

At Waddesdon Village Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where children:

- have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging (e.g. Circle Time, KAPOW, Pupil Parliament)
- have opportunities to participate in decision making (e.g. Class Monitors, House Captains, Pupil Parliament and School Monitors)
- have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements (e.g. Celebration Assembly, Achievement Books, Achievement Tree)
- have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed ( e.g. Extra-curricular clubs, More Able register)
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others. (e.g. residential, school trips)
- have opportunities to reflect (e.g. Circle Time, ELSA and PSHGE)
- have access to appropriate support that meets their needs (e.g. TA support in class, specific interventions, ELSA, Young Carers, School Nurse)
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours and interactions at all times.
- Have a right to an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for.

At Waddesdon Village Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where staff:

- have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- have a range of systems in place to support mental well-being e.g. performance management, briefings, training
- have recognition of their work-life balance
- feel valued and have opportunities in the decision making processes
- success is recognised and celebrated
- are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- can access support from our ELSA and informed of relevant support from outside agencies
- are encouraged to communicate freely
- are given the opportunity to meet socially organised by our Wellbeing Committee

At Waddesdon Village Primary School there is a mentally healthy environment where parents and carers:

- are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- are welcomed, included and work in partnership with the school and agencies
- are provided with opportunities to ask for help when needed and signposted to appropriate agencies for support

- are clear about their role, expectations and responsibilities in working in partnership with the school (e.g. home school agreement shared annually, Parents Meetings)
- opinions are sought, valued and responded to (e.g. Questionnaires.)
- strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately
- are kept informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHGE

### 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 designated safeguarding lead/named persons.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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
- Avoiding 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

At Waddesdon Village Primary School we recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies and services to follow protocols including assessment and referral

- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Providing a range of interventions including ELSA
- Provide children with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Provide children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.
- Using Zones of Regulation in each classroom

### Managing Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be documented on CPOMS.

This information should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead who will offer support and advice about next steps.

### Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child on then we should discuss with the child:

1. Who we are going to talk to
2. What we are going to tell them
3. Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a child without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the designated safeguarding lead or other named persons. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child. It ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents must always be informed.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

### 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 students safe.

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.

A member of staff is a Mental Health First Aider as well as a trained ELSA.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.