



# Pupil mental health and wellbeing policy

Westdale Junior School, part of Nova Education Trust

**Approved by:** Sarah James **Date:** 20.11.22

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## 1. Policy statement

***Mental health is 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 Health Organization** —

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

At Westdale Junior School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy was written in consultation with school Wellbeing and Senior Mental Health Leads across the Trust and the Trust Wellbeing Lead.

## 2. Scope

This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to school staff on our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school
- Inform pupils and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing

Read this policy in conjunction with:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy

## 3. Policy aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole school
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where pupils feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
- Celebrate all of the ways pupils achieve at our school, both inside and outside the classroom
- Allow pupils to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting pupil voice
- Give pupils the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest

- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- Provide support and access to resources to pupils experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

## 4. Legal basis

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

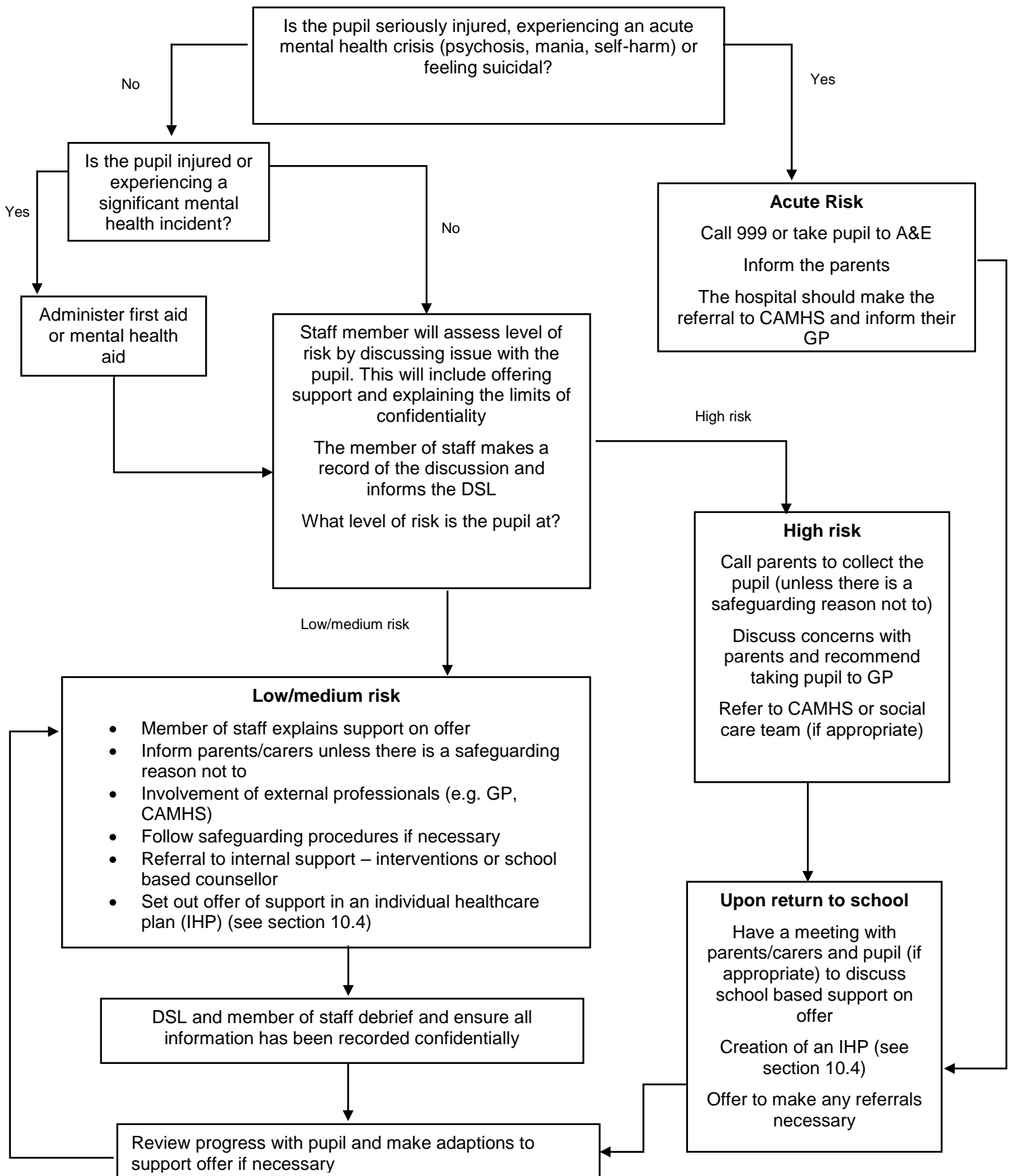
## 5. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Head of School: Ruth Kyle
- Designated Safeguarding lead: Sarah James
- Special educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO): Sarah James
- Senior Mental Health Lead: Sarah James
- Attendance lead: Dan Ring
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA): Angela Jarvis

## 6. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



## 7. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

## 8. Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

## 9. Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

## 9.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with the DSL.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

## 10. Supporting pupils

### 10.1 Baseline support for all pupils

As part of the school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, the school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE and Mental Health week
- Signposting all pupils to sources of support
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
- Providing pupils with ways to share their opinions and ideas to improve mental health across school, such as the Pupil Wellbeing Champions group.
- Monitoring of all pupils' mental health through termly audits

- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
  - Offering pastoral support through our ELSA and interventions such as Theraplay and Forest School
  - Making classrooms a safe space to share worries through interventions like worry boxes.
  - Maintaining a link with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) who provide workshops and support in school and offer a referral service.

## 10.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the Senior Mental Health Lead (Sarah James) will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1. The school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

## 10.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- ELSA sessions
- Theraplay
- Circle of Friends
- Time out of class
- Forest School

## 10.4 Individual healthcare plans (IHPs)

A pupil will be offered an individual healthcare plan (IHP) or Pupil Passport if their mental health is significantly impacting their learning.

IHPs are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in the school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency



## 10.5 Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- GP or paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental Health Support Team
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services

## 11. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Hosting webinars to provide information about supporting their child's mental health

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section 10.4).

## 12. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends

- › Things they should avoid doing/saying
- › Warning signs to look out for
- › Signposting to sources of external support

## 13. Signposting

Sources of support will be displayed around the school and linked to on the school website, so pupils and parents are aware of how they can get help.

The Senior Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

Parents will be made aware by email of any events coming up in school.

## 14. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

### 14.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE/Personal Development

Our PSHE curriculum has been created with the aim to support the development of the 'whole child', by helping them to understand how they are developing personally and socially as well as promoting their social, mental and physical development. A focus on **health and wellbeing** supports children to make the right decisions for them. Children will be able to develop the ability to tackle the moral, social and cultural issues that are part of growing up. Through our discreet lessons as well as wider cross curricular approach to teaching, children are taught how to keep themselves safe when **living in the wider world**. We provide our children with opportunities for them to learn about rights and responsibilities and appreciate what it means to be a member of a diverse society. Our children are encouraged to develop their sense of self-worth by playing a positive role in contributing to school life and the wider community. In addition, children are taught about **relationships**, including the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

Pupils will be taught to:

- › Develop healthy coping strategies
- › Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- › Understand their own emotional state
- › Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE/Personal Development curriculum.

### 14.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- › Discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- › Encouraging pupils to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating

### 14.3 Wellbeing Action Plan and stakeholder voice

Our school and Trust regularly evaluates pupil wellbeing as part of our stakeholder voice surveys. This is an anonymous survey which informs our school's Wellbeing Action Plan.

- › Pupil wellbeing audit termly
- › Pupil wellbeing champions group
- › Pupil stakeholder engagement plan

## 15. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help

## 16. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment

All Nova staff have access to professional mental health support via Nova Perks: staff should contact their school's Business Operations Manager/School Business Manager/HR colleagues for further details of Nova Perks.

**Please also see the Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.**

## 17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust's Wellbeing Lead (in consultation with school Wellbeing Leads) *at least* biennially. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Nova Education Trust Board and the school's Local Governing Board.