



Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

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1, Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We strive to be as happy and healthy in body and mind as possible, acknowledging that a life lived fully will include significant challenge and times of hardship. All people go through ups and downs in life and some face significant life events.

About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and this can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

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. Our infant children are at the beginning of their education and we therefore have the opportunity to create and embed lifelong understanding and behaviours that will go with them in every stage of education and life.



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St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



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.

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”.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school 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 have a role 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.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where:

- all pupils/staff are valued
- pupils/staff have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils/adults 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

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 aim to 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



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- 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 community members 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, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, 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 message***.

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 and staff become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. Our school vision and values underpin all that we do and guide us in making our day-to-day choices. Our values provide a strong foundation for all community members. We believe that growth can be an outcome of challenge and hardship as well as planned and positive situations.

This encompasses seven aspects:



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1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils and staff to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils and staff to be resilient learners with a growth mindset
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of any mental health needs and planning support to meet them 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. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy.'

6, Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to 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, even for our very young children.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make it more likely for some to experience problems; such as 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 from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The Federation's Mental Health Team (MHFA (Gayle Priestley) / SMHL (Paula Bliss/ Nicky Cleather) plus one other staff member and a nominated governor:

- 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
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health 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



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St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



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 leaders
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENCO 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.
- ELSAs
- School nurse
- Primary Mental health Workers
- Charities

Staff are also able to access universal, targeted and specialist support:

(Action points for 2023/24 are highlighted in green)

Universal support	Targeted Support	Specialist support
Staff wellbeing policy Access to MHFA - Gayle Priestley – face to face or remote Staff wellbeing team established Staff education on mental health	Supervision (DSLs and ELSAs) Training around mental health (twilight sessions)	Employee Assistance Programmes Referrals to occupational health
Culture of no blame and stigma for mental health needs of school community	Wellbeing events for staff	Crisis support (signposting as appropriate for the individual)

7, Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We believe 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. Our year 2 leaders promote 'Hello Yellow' day each year.

'Little Governors' (School council) choose charities related to mental health to raise awareness.

'Young Carers' week supported across the school each year.



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Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



Transition Support

- Support for all children in Year 2 plus additional support for identified children
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Transition Passports for vulnerable children (in liaison with feeder school)
- Key Adults might support junior school visits with vulnerable pupils
- Transition meetings with pre-school feeders

Class Activities

- Worry boxes (*St. Michael's only*)
- Places of Peace
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation and other
- Emotion visual resources
- Individual 'calm' spaces

Whole School (Will vary across schools and through the school year)

- ELSA table (*Newdigate only*) and Places of Peace / Prayer spaces around the school
- Rainbow Bridge and memory garden (*Newdigate only*)
- Worship themes including school values
- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - we also use 'The Story Project' resources as part of our RSE programme to do this
- Our PAT dog visits
- Worry muncher / post-box (*Newdigate only*)
- Displays around the school about positive mental health
- NSPCC 'Stay Safe' materials

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support
- The Haven/ Rainbow Room /Badger's for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming
- Brunch sessions
- ELSA groups (i.e. Connect-children experiencing divorce or separation)
- Young Carers / vulnerable children's group (Sunshine Club) (*Newdigate only*)

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

Through PSHE / RSE 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. The school staff will model an emotional coaching approach following whole school training



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Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



Our approach is to provide within our small schools:

- 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 and work closely with them to co-produce appropriate outcomes
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated
- support parents through workshops, individual meetings, sign-posting to parent resources and courses e.g. Parenting Puzzle

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:

- Identify individuals that might need support through observation
- Use of the Leuven scale to identify children with low well-being or involvement
- home visits in Foundation Stage to identify needs
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- analysing behaviour, suspensions / exclusions, attendance and Behaviour logs / (including Sexual harassment patterns)
- pupil interviews
- discussion at pupil progress meetings about well-being influence
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual vulnerable children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- leaders and office staff are available chat at the school gate most mornings

All staff will receive training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO or Designated Safeguarding Team.



MOLE VALLEY GATEWAY CE SCHOOLS FEDERATION

Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



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 when appropriate getting changed for PE)
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, 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 immediately and an expression of concern form should be filled in and given to the DSL or DDSL.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes and use the SEN graduated approach to monitor any changes.

Need	Evidence-based Intervention and Support	Monitoring
Highest need Specialist Support	Mindworks assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies ELSA 1:1 support PMHW individual consultation External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work	Consideration of EHCP (education, health and care plan) If appropriate Early Help Referral and Children's Services. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers



Some need Targeted Support	Small group intervention. ELSA groups Pets as Therapy on site. Connect (separation) Rainbow (Young Carers/vulnerable)	Leuven scale assessments Completion of 'factors' EH form from Anna Freud/Bristol School support on SEND register ILPs and reviews Weekly staff briefing for vulnerable children.
Low need Universal Support	General support (see sec. 7) e.g. Lunch Club, class teacher/TA, ELSA 'Check-in' Monitoring on SEN register	

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 non-attendance and other complex needs.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service	Referral process
Mindworks Primary Mental Health Worker (Malcom Firth/Aimee Arias)	Accessed through SENCO
ELSA	Accessed through the Head/Head of School
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through SENCO consultation line
Early Help Referral	Accessed through the Safeguarding Team

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:



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Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



- we organise a range of Mental Health workshops that include topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management, Sleep, building resilience and setting healthy boundaries.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- we support families to access the Parenting Puzzle programme at the Dorking Family Centre
- we have an Open Door Policy.
- We 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 work closely with parents to plan appropriate support and monitor the impact of any provision.

Parents and carers will always be informed if we feel their child is at risk.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. 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 discussions and discussions with our Little Governors group. Pupil voice will also be included in any ILPs.

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 (see Appendix 3).

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training.

Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics have been organised regularly.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school. Our current target is to plan and promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing with relaxation activities. Newdigate currently run fortnightly yoga classes led by a teacher with the appropriate qualifications that is available to all federation members. We are also aiming to run regular craft workshops.



13, Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the SLT and reported to the Full Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1

Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genetic influences• Specific development delay• Communication difficulties• Physical illness• Academic failure• Low self-esteem• SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being female (in younger children)• Secure attachment experience• Outgoing temperament as an infant• Good communication skills, sociability• Being a planner and having a belief in control• Humour• Problem solving skills and a positive attitude• Experiences of success and achievement• Faith or spirituality• Capacity to reflect



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Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
In the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events • High standard of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued connections • social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities



Appendix 2

Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

For information see Annex C Main Types of Mental Health Needs Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-inschools--2>

Annex C includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for
Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)
Depression
Eating Disorders
Substance Misuse
Self Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought
Young people may experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their lives. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.



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Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham



Appendix 3

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk

Self-Harm www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts [Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems www.minded.org.uk

(e-learning) www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health