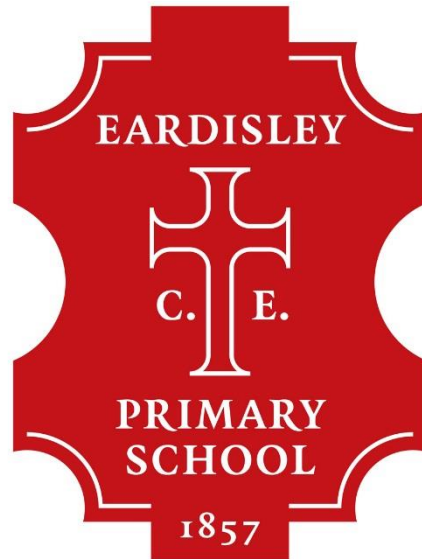


# **Eardisley Church of England Primary School**



## **Mental Health and Well-being Policy**

**October 2023**

*In all that we do, may our values shine through.*

## 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)*

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do:

*'In all that we do, our values shine through'*

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

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

## Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The 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 poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

**Bridget Knight** - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer

**Bridget Knight** - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

## **Training**

Mental Health and Wellbeing is part of all Safeguarding training, which all staff and volunteers complete on an annual basis. In addition, staff meeting and INSET days address this subject.

Mrs Knight has been trained as the School Mental Health Lead (2022-23).

Mrs Knight and Miss Howard (Teaching Assistant) have undertaken the Thrive Training (2021-22)

Mrs Lewis (Teaching Assistant) has undertaken the ELSA training (2023-24)

Values based Education and the Inner Curriculum – All Staff (September 2023)

## **Concerns**

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 Designated Child Protection Office staff or the head teacher. 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by **Bridget Knight**, Mental Health Lead.

## **Individual Care Plans**

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives 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

## **Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Our values-based approach to learning and to the curriculum ensures that children develop a mindset and vocabulary that helps them to understand and control their inner feelings and emotions, and understand how these work in concert with others.

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 and RSE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're 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 follow the PSHE Association Guidance<sup>1</sup> to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### **Good Practice**

- Our daily Acts of Worship comprise an element of time for developing strategies to manage personal inner calm. Each act of worship gives significant time for meaningful, silent reflection and an exploration of inner space. The pupils say how much they enjoy this and value these opportunities.
- Reflection time is echoed in classes at various points in the school day. Each class observes a quiet time with a candle and prayers, giving further opportunities for pupils to develop their individual spirituality and enable collective worship.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We draw on support and guidance from:

- Herefordshire CAMHS
- Herefordshire MASH
- Herefordshire CLD
- School Nursing
- Herefordshire Social Emotional and Mental Health and Inclusion

We also offer a range of in-house support through Friendship Groups, Peer Support, Equine Therapy and sporting and outdoor opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

We will display relevant sources of support in communal 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 pupil 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

## **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 communicate their concerns with Bridget Knight our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.

Possible warning signs 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

## **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 recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, **Mrs Knight**, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Collective Worship

Values-based Education.

## **Confidentiality**

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

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil 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. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, **Mrs Knight**, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer Mrs Knight must be informed immediately.

### **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. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. 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 get about this, 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 through our regular information evenings

- 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

## **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil 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 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 child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

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.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) [accessed 02/02/18].



## **Support for Staff** (written following staff consultations on the Wellbeing Charter)

As explained in our Wellbeing Charter (see Annex 1), mental wellbeing and health of staff is important. In addition to the training outlined above, we offer a range of support measures to maximise staff wellbeing, including:

- wellbeing cards, summarising the charter, as a reminder of our commitment for all staff
- governor support for the wellbeing of the headteacher and appreciation of the headteacher's proactive leadership for school staff culture and wellbeing
- support meetings
- peer to peer support
- signposting to helplines and online resources, for instance on the staffroom noticeboard
- encouragement to take breaks, in and out of school and to leave work as early as possible, aiming for at least one early finish each week
- encouragement to take advantage of opportunities for physical/mental/recreational activities out of school hours
- opportunities for peace and quiet, if possible, where requested
- clear and unambiguous communication
- opportunities for voices to be heard and to influence practice, where possible
- encouragement to ask for help if workload is becoming unmanageable, and support to manage workload
- judicious use of email
- the offer of days off for birthdays
- acknowledgement of personal caring responsibilities and support where possible
- the offer of home-working for PPA time
- prior agreement for time off in lieu, if possible
- support with career progression, and the offer of fresh responsibilities for professional development
- support when new challenges are faced
- a regular opportunity to discuss wellbeing and workload at performance management meetings
- an anonymised staff survey at least every two years, to inform policy and practice
- dedicated time to discuss wellbeing in one staff meeting each month and regularly in governor meetings, no less than twice a year.
- The governor wellbeing champion will hold annual conversations about staff wellbeing with the headteacher, staff, and the governing body.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

## Annex I Eardisley CE Primary School Wellbeing Charter, March 2022

### Children's wellbeing is enshrined in our [mission statement](#)

We endorse the [gov.uk Staff Wellbeing Charter](#). The importance of staff wellbeing is implied in all our policies and practices, but this charter makes it explicit.

### **Governors and school leaders commit to the following, and will recognise individual preferences:**

**Culture;** we are proud of our values-led culture, which includes all in the school community. Respecting each other, we live the values of Eardisley School. Leaders provide induction and mentoring opportunities, and respond to staff needs, so that a cooperative and harmonious atmosphere of mutual support in school can be enjoyed by all.

**Wellbeing;** members of staff already take responsibility for theirs and other's wellbeing because there is a strong ethos of valuing each other, together taking pride in the school's work. Staff are encouraged to boost their wellbeing through a powerful shared sense of vocation, with a continuing commitment to inspire others both locally and nationally. This is affirmed through quality marks such as Values-based Education, Artsmark, RE Quality Mark and Games Awards. Leaders will also continue to support staff to maximise their wellbeing through meetings, peer to peer support, signposting to helplines and online resources.

**Mental Health;** staff mental health is prioritised by school leaders, who acknowledge that we all need to take breaks, in and out of school. Opportunities for physical/mental/recreational activities, or simply some peace and quiet, will be acknowledged and facilitated where possible. Information is also provided in the staff room, so that staff can choose to find help for improved mental health.

**Resources;** we recognise that prudent investment of the school's budget in up-to-date, reliable teaching resources can minimise unnecessary stress. Online tools and in-person support are also made available for staff, to support their wellbeing.

**Communication;** It is recognised that good communication with staff is key to minimising uncertainty. Leaders will also ensure that every voice is heard and opinions valued. We will check this through notes of meetings.

**Decision making;** all staff will be encouraged to have a voice and to be involved where appropriate (ie not adding unnecessarily to workload), therefore making a difference to outcomes.

**Workload;** school leaders are committed to reducing workload where possible, minimising unnecessary 'paperwork'. Staff will be encouraged to go home as early as possible, aiming for at least one early finish a week. Staff will be encouraged to ask for help if workload is becoming unmanageable. and to use email judiciously.

### **Flexible working;**

We will offer days off for birthdays, acknowledge personal caring responsibilities, offer home-working for PPA time and provide time off in lieu when agreed with staff.

**Careers;** leaders will support each member of staff to progress in their career, whatever roles they perform in the school, for example through learning from one another, continuous professional development or training. When faced with new challenges, staff will be supported to benefit from the learning experience. Opportunities for fresh responsibilities will be facilitated where appropriate, with the aim of enriching working lives.

**Leaders;** every member of school staff has a leadership role in their own field of expertise. Their

contribution is recognised and supported through this charter. Governors take their responsibility for the wellbeing of the headteacher very seriously, appreciate the headteacher's proactive leadership for school staff culture and wellbeing, and offer the support enshrined throughout this charter.

**Accountability;** although performance management meetings offer a regular opportunity to discuss wellbeing and workload, a resilience questionnaire will be used at least every two years, to enable anonymised information about wellbeing to be considered by school leaders and governors. Dedicated time to discuss wellbeing will be included in one staff meeting each month and regularly in governor meetings, no less than twice a year. The findings from the questionnaire, as well as ongoing feedback on wellbeing, will inform the action plan underpinned by this charter. A governor wellbeing champion will be appointed to be responsible for the monitoring of the action plan. They will hold annual conversations about staff wellbeing with the headteacher, staff, and the governing body.