

# Colehill First School Mental Health Policy

## **Why mental health and wellbeing is important**

At Colehill First School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. We also know that the past few years have been incredibly difficult with the impact of Covid19, the pandemic has continued to impact the lives of children and young people as they have adjusted to living with ongoing uncertainty and changes in restrictions when required

## **The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that:**

*"in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".*

There is good evidence to support this assertion and Ofsted has highlighted that children and young people themselves say that they want to learn more about how to keep themselves emotionally healthy. Moreover, schools have a duty to promote the wellbeing of students.

## **The department for Education go on to remind us that:**

*"in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy." There is good evidence to support this assertion and Ofsted has highlighted that children and young people themselves say that they want to learn more about how to keep themselves emotionally healthy. Moreover, schools have a duty to promote the wellbeing of students."*

## **Public Health England go on to remind us:**

*"Although schools and colleges play a significant and valuable role in helping to promote student emotional health and wellbeing, their contribution should be considered as one element of a wider multi-agency approach."*

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 children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children 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 to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children 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 wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

### **Purpose of the policy**

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we prevent mental health problems.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

### **Definition of mental health and wellbeing**

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 wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems.**

We want all children/young people 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.

## **A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

## **Staff 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 children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely 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 should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy

Our Inclusion Lead, ELSA and Senior Leadership team work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. 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 more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

## **Supporting children' positive mental health**

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children 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

- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child
- Playground Buddies – a lunchtime group supporting all children at lunchtime.

## **Transition programmes**

Transition Programme to middle schools which includes all Year 4 children having a smooth transition to middle school

## **Class activities**

- Worry boxes - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Wellbeing day– whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good

## **Whole School**

Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support

Our environment has been changed where possible to foster positive mental health. Our grounds allow for quiet time and our forest school provides an environment for mental health support.

In school we have quiet spaces such as the Rainbow Room and Library for children to be quiet and thoughtful.

## **Curriculum**

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

## **Parents**

To create positive mental health in our young people, we must also look to those who parent them. Parenting young people who struggle with mental health issues can be a lonely and difficult task. Our school will always work alongside parents and outside agencies to ensure that the adults with primary care for the young person are mentally and physically healthy. We also put on parents information sessions so that adults can see that they are not alone and garner some generic tips for parenting those with specific difficulties.

## **Technology**

We also recognise the significance of the increase in use of technology and social media and an increase in wellbeing issues. Although we have little control over the use of technology in the home, we aim to empower parents and keep them up to date with trends in technology and legalities.

## **Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs**

### **Our approach:**

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated

### **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: ,

- SDQ (Social Difficulty Questionnaires),
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- A parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School.
- Parental meetings in EYFS.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Any members of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SLT. These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

## **Disclosures by children and confidentiality**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

## **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 if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health strategy 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 young person 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 needs 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

## **Strategy Review**

This strategy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in 2025

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

## **Useful resources**

### **Support for feelings around suicide**

Papyrus- Prevention of Young suicide - including 'how can I get help?' and a help line.  
([www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org))

Hector's House - Suicide support, links and advice, signposting for helplines, with a particular focus on supporting young men. ([www.hectorshouse.org.uk/](http://www.hectorshouse.org.uk/))

Heads Together - promoting the benefits of talking about difficult thoughts and feelings as well a lots of other Mental Health resources. ([www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk))

### **Building Self-esteem and Confidence;**

Dove Self-Esteem Project - Confident Me, a set of free, evidence-based resources for teachers and schools to run body confidence workshops, aimed at 11-14 year olds.  
([www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html](http://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html))

Human Utopia - Primary school aged courses aimed at inspiring children to be 'their own unique selves'.

([www.humanutopia.com](http://www.humanutopia.com))

Self Esteem Team – Run talks in secondary schools promoting positivity and self-esteem.  
([www.selfesteemteam.org](http://www.selfesteemteam.org))

### **Counselling support;**

Kooth- anonymous online counselling for secondary age young people, access to forums on relevant topics that are overseen by the Kooth team & advice and tips on staying mentally healthy  
([www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com))

### **Parental support;**

Young Minds – A charity promoting awareness of and information about mental health difficulties in young people, with online information and resources for young people and parents and a parent helpline. ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk))

CAFCASS - Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, look after the interests of children involved in family proceedings. [www.cafcass.gov.uk](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk) has information for young people and parents/ carers.

Bis-net Behaviour Support Service – Offering a range of workshops for parents and carers.  
([www.bis-net.org.uk](http://www.bis-net.org.uk))

Gingerbread – A charity for single parent families, running online forums, advice and single parent groups. ([www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk))

Family Lives- Parenting and family support including online resources, forums and helpline.  
([www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk))

### **Helping families to access local services;**

Home Start- A family support charity helping families with young children offering home visits, groups, and helping families to access local services. ([www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk))

### **Families facing abuse and domestic violence support and systems;**

SAFE (Stop Abuse For Everyone)- Helpful information and resources. ([www.safe-services.org.uk](http://www.safe-services.org.uk))

Child Assault Prevention UK- ([www.safestrongfree.org.uk](http://www.safestrongfree.org.uk)) Work to understand how to reduce children's vulnerability to child abuse and build safer communities.

Operation Encompass - Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse by reporting to schools before the start of the next school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening, in confidence to the school's key adult. ([www.operationencompass.org/](http://www.operationencompass.org/))

### **Mental Health awareness/guidance, useful websites;**

Young Minds – A charity promoting awareness of and information about mental health difficulties in young people, with online information and resources for young people and parents and a parent helpline. ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk))

Mind – Provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem, including information about mental health, guides to support services, online community and links to local Mind support. ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))

Mental Health Foundation – Information about looking after your mental health. ([www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk))

Time to Change – Movement to end mental health discrimination. ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk))

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training- Helps to identify need, and when further support may be necessary. ([www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org))

### **Gender Diversity;**

Stonewall & Young Stonewall – Campaigning for everyone to feel free to be who they are. ([www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) / [www.youngstonewall.org.uk](http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk))

LGBT Foundation – A charity providing a wide range of support services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, including a helpline and email support. (<https://lgbt.foundation/>)

Mermaids - Support gender diversity and trans-gender children, with support and resources for young people, parents/carers and professionals. ([www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk))



Proud2Be - Support LGBTQIA+ people and their families; Through campaigning, delivering training, facilitating a youth project, a volunteer programme and groups and events throughout the year. ([www.proud2be.co.uk](http://www.proud2be.co.uk))

### **Drug and Alcohol support;**

Together Drug and Alcohol Service (supporting those over 18 who wish to address their drug and alcohol use; support previously given by RISE),

[www.edp.org.uk/together-drug-alcohol-service/](http://www.edp.org.uk/together-drug-alcohol-service/)

### **Specialist support for boys/men**

Boys to Men Project- Aims to reduce the numbers of young men who become perpetrators of domestic abuse, with research and free resources on. ([www.boystomenproject.com](http://www.boystomenproject.com))

### **Support and resources for schools;**

Emotional Logic –Free session from Babcock for primary and secondary schools, focusing on helping students manage feelings and move forward in their lives with strength and resilience. ([www.emotoinallogiccentre.org.uk](http://www.emotoinallogiccentre.org.uk))

We Eat Elephants (for Primary Schools) – Programme run in schools focussing on helping young children understand what they are feeling and helping them to deal with current issues they may be facing. (<http://www.weeatelephants.com/>)

Thrive approach- Run across the whole school, which helps us understand the needs being signalled by our students' behaviour, and give us targeted strategies and activities to help our students' emotional learning. ([www.thriveapproach.com](http://www.thriveapproach.com)).

NSPCC Pantasaurus Campaign- Keeping children safe and supporting them to 'help seek'.  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule>

Mentally Healthy Schools Website- From the Heads Together Campaign, including lesson plans, assembly plans, whole school resources, PSHE resources & small group work. ([www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk))

Mind Up- Sessions run in schools, with all ages participating – lesson programmes teaching activities including how the brain works in an interactive way, gratitude, mindfulness, perspective taking, including 'brain break' breathing exercises; for primary and up to KS3. ([www.mindup.org/u-k/](http://www.mindup.org/u-k/))

MindEd website – Free educational resource with information on children and young people's mental health for all adults (for professionals, volunteers, parents and carers), funded by the Departments of Health & Education. ([www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk))

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust - Delivering talks & training to young people and those who work with them about how to stay mentally well, with resources for schools, young people and parents/ carers; resources approved by Dr Pooky Knightsmith. ([www.cwmt.org.uk](http://www.cwmt.org.uk))

### **Support for those with a family member in prison;**

Choices Consultancy Service – Offering support for prisoners and their families, including children & young people, centred around prisons in the south west. (<http://www.choiceshelpsfamilies.org.uk>)

### **Support for children and families with eating disorders;**

BEAT Eating Disorders – Information about eating disorders, including recovery information and young people's help lines and web chat. ([www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk))

### **Young carer support;**

Young Carers Organisation- Offering resources and support on the ground for children living with an adult who needs Mental or Physical support. <https://youngcareers.org.uk/>

Kids Time Foundation - Provide information, resources and support for children and young

people who care for, or are affected by, a parent or sibling's mental illness. (<http://kidstimefoundation.org/>)

### **Bereavement; National**

Winston's Wish – Supporting children bereaved of a parent or sibling, their families and the professionals who support them, including a free phone national help line, email service and resources. ([www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org))

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) – Support including; helpline, email support and local support groups, with information for survivors and professionals. ([www.uksobs.org](http://www.uksobs.org))

Hospice Care- Support offered for families where a family member is terminally poorly. ([www.hospiceuk.org](http://www.hospiceuk.org))

### **Dorset:**

Cruse Bereavement Care; <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Mosaic Bereavement Support: <https://www.mosaicfamilysupport.org>

### **Internet Safety;**

Common Sense Media – including family guides, parent concerns, especially on issues about media, including independent reviews, age ratings, with parent and educator sections. ([www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org))

UK Safer Internet Centre – Advice for young people, parents/ carers, schools and governors. ([www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk))

NSPCC Online safety advice – In collaboration with O2, including advice, phone support and school resources and 'net aware', guide to social networks children and young people use. ([www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/))

Childnet International – Advice for young people, parents/ carers and schools regarding internet safety. ([www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com))

Internet Matters – Helping parents keep children safe online, also with information for schools. ([www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org))

Get Safe Online – Information for parents / carers. ([www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/](http://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/))

Thinkuknow – The education programme of CEOPS, aimed at empowering children and young people aged 5-17 to identify the risks they may face online and know where they can go for support. It has information for parents/ carers. ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk))

### **Anti-terrorism support;**

Prevent (Part of the government's anti-terrorism strategy)- Prevent is a multi-agency approach to safeguard people at risk of radicalisation, aiming to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. (<http://www.preventforschools.org/>)

Channel- Early intervention scheme across agencies, working to support people at risk of being

drawn towards terrorism or violent extremism, by offering help to make positive choices about their lives. (<https://www.itai.info/what-is-channel/>)

### **Mindfulness Resources;**

Mental Health Foundation – Information about mental health, including looking after your mental health ([mentalhealth.org.uk](http://mentalhealth.org.uk)) & mindfulness site. ([www.bemindful.co.uk](http://www.bemindful.co.uk))

Go Noodle- A website designed to help children to 'get moving' with in the classroom. ([www.gonoodle.com](http://www.gonoodle.com))

'Just Breathe'- Videos for children to explain about relaxation, especially useful for primary school aged children. ( [www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org))

Headspace- A resource full of mindfulness and relaxation sessions. (<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>)

Calm- Meditation and relaxation aid, with guided music and stories. (<https://www.calm.com/>) Smiling Mind- A web and app meditation programme. ([www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au))

Breathe- A website will simple self-guided mediation techniques; (<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>)

Mindfulness in Schools- Project and resources with research basis for using mindfulness in schools. ([www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org))

Mind Up! -Mindfulness sessions online with lesson programmes and teaching activities, including how the brain works in an interactive way, gratitude, mindfulness, perspective taking, including 'brain break' breathing exercises; for primary and up to KS3. ([www.mindup.org/u-k/](http://www.mindup.org/u-k/)).