

	<p>Gislingham CE Primary School</p> <p><i>'Belong, Believe, Become'</i></p>	<p>Policy Document</p> <p>Agreed: July 2025</p> <p>Review: Every 2 years</p> <p>Date: July 2027</p>
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At the heart of our vision is the belief that the spiritual, social, mental and physical development of every child is as important as academic achievement. We strive to nurture children to believe in themselves and honour our Christian values, ensuring they have the capacity to thrive and flourish throughout their lives.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Definitions

'Children and young people feeling good, feeling that their life is going well and feeling able to get on with their daily lives.'

'Emotional health and wellbeing is the emotional resilience that enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our own worth and of others. Emotional health and wellbeing is embedded in social relations built upon social skills that are developed from birth.' (Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer, 2001)

Policy Statement

At Gislingham C of E Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of all our pupils, their families and members of staff and governors.

Our school offers a supportive, safe and respectful environment where each individual and their contribution is valued. We aim to put wellbeing at the heart of all that we do, enabling the children in our school to develop the self-esteem, awareness and self-confidence to play an active part in school life and be valued and valuable members of their communities.

We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and, at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

What is good emotional health and wellbeing in our school?

- The ability to recognise, acknowledge and manage feelings
- The ability to develop caring and concerns for others
- The ability to develop meaningful, positive and long lasting relationships
- The ability to take responsibility for themselves and make practical decisions
- The ability to develop emotional resilience and manage setbacks

We want our children to:

Be effective and successful learners

Make and sustain friendships

Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly

Solve problems with others for themselves

Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety

Be able to promote calm, optimistic states that support the achievement of goals

Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of the difficulties

Work and play cooperatively

Compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for other competitors

Recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others

Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respecting the rights of others to have beliefs and values different from their own

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- our curriculum (RHE)
- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- providing opportunities to reflect
- providing access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- actively developing positive healthy relationships between and amongst staff and children
- building mental wellbeing and physical breaks into our school day

Scope

This policy is a guide for the whole school community, including staff, parents and governors and outlines Gislingham C of E Primary School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies such as Behaviour, SEND, Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and the Tilian Employee Wellbeing Policy.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with children with mental health issues
- Provide the appropriate support for children and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support

- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from leadership that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare throughout the school.

We pursue our aims through:

- universal, whole school approaches
- support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term disorders

Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure **all staff** take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads:
Mr Benstock, Mrs Cason and Mrs Schultheiss
- SENDCO: Mrs Watson
- Senior Mental Health Lead: Mrs Schultheiss
- Governor: Mrs Earl (staff wellbeing)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, they should speak to Mrs Welham and to Mrs Watson in the first instance.

If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's Child Protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

A Whole School Approach



We base our support for emotional wellbeing and mental health on the 8 principles illustrated on the above diagram.

(Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach Public Health England and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015)

If the 8 principles are consistently and comprehensively applied across the whole school setting they can have a positive impact on:

- The cognitive development of children, their learning, motivation and sense of commitment and connectedness with learning and with the school
- Staff wellbeing, reduced stress, sickness and absence, improved teaching ability and performance
- Pupil wellbeing including happiness, a sense of purpose, connectedness and meaning
- Development of social and emotional skills and attitudes that promote learning, success, wellbeing and mental health, in school and throughout life
- The prevention and reduction of mental ill health such as anxiety, stress and depression
- Improving behaviour, including reduction in low-level disruption, incidents, fights, bullying, exclusions and absence
- Reducing risky behaviour such as impulsiveness, uncontrolled anger and violence

Staff Development

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 to enable them to keep students safe. The Headteacher and nominated wellbeing champion will have completed training in mental health i.e. *Mental Wellbeing in Children and Young People, Leading a Mentally Healthy School* or equivalent.

Training opportunities for staff are provided e.g. 'Empowering the Anxious Child' by the Suffolk Primary Mental Health team. Additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations. For example, staff may complete training such as *An Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Early Trauma*. 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. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Mrs Gill Watson (SENDCo) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Curriculum Organisation

Emotional health and wellbeing cover the spectrum of activities in school. Gislingham is proactive in its approach and welcomes opportunities to promote emotional health and wellbeing through the formal and informal curriculum.

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves, and others, mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RHE curriculum and online safety teaching. Circle time and restorative group discussions are regularly used in all classes to support wellbeing. Through the planned programme and informal curriculum, opportunities exist to explore issues appropriate to children's ages and stages of development. Staff deal sensitively with these issues and differentiate according to the varying needs of the children in their care.

We also promote emotional wellbeing and mental health through our Christian Values which are embedded into all our learning: respect, responsibility, compassion, creativity, forgiveness, generosity, hope, humility, friendship, justice, courage, peace, trust, perseverance, service, truthfulness, wisdom and thankfulness.

Staff use a variety of methods to provide protective factors that will build resilience and ensure sound emotional health and wellbeing for children. These complement and reflect the overall vision and aims of the school. Our approach includes:

- Restorative approaches to conflict
- Listening and responding to the views and opinions of our pupils
- Class codes of conduct
- Clearly identified rewards and sanctions, understood by all
- Rewarding positive behaviour and achievement through team token system and other class rewards
- Positive growth mind-set
- Setting appropriately challenging tasks
- Providing a forum for listening and talking i.e. PSHE, circle time, P4C, 'come and chat with the Head'
- Encouraging cooperation and collaboration
- Encouraging and developing coping strategies and resilience
- Ensuring all children are prepared for and experience positive transitions in school
- Specific teaching of Emotional literacy and the language of emotions as well as the use of visual charts to enable children to express their feelings.

Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- closely involving parents at an early stage and working with them to support their child
- ensuring parents are aware of and have access to services promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners
- highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc) and signposting families to age appropriate materials such as books/stories on bereavement.

Gislingham maintains an 'open door' policy for parents and carers and an ethos of listening to all members of the school community. Leaders and teachers are visible and available to the whole school community.

Working with other Agencies

As part of our whole school approach, we will work with other agencies to support our pupils emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- the school nurse
- Community Paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Counselling services
- Therapists
- Family Support Workers
- Psychology and therapeutic services - Inclusion Facilitator, Psychologists
- Emotional Wellbeing hub - Emotional wellbeing practitioners

Identifying need and monitoring impact

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who have had or are currently experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as those in care, young carers, those that have experienced any kind of abuse or neglect; or those who have had previous access to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Also those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence, substance misuse or criminality.

Through our knowledge of individual children and their circumstances, children are effectively identified early by class teachers or teaching assistants and are discussed with our SENDCo. They are supported through timely, accessible and effective programmes of intervention and/or nurture sessions.

For some children, drawing on expertise from outside the school is necessary to meet their needs. A referral by the school or parents to the Emotional Wellbeing Hub, the school nursing service or their GP, may be required.

Each programme of support and involvement from outside agencies is closely monitored and reviewed. Target setting, good communication between professionals and regular staff meeting discussions provide opportunities for the quality of care to be evaluated and developed and for staff training needs to be identified.

Covid-19

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the wellbeing of a greater proportion of pupils may have been directly impacted by the unique difficulties and challenges that a national lockdown will have imposed; pupils are more likely to have a range of unmet needs that will impact their ability to be present and learn. They may well have been exposed to more frequent and consistent adverse experiences in the home without the support and reassurance from others outside the home. Pupils may return to school less resilient, mentally unwell, or with challenging behaviours and will require a recovery curriculum that recognises and responds positively to a child's emotional, mental health and/or behavioural needs.

Individual Wellbeing Care Plans

This policy identifies the development of Individual Wellbeing Care Plans as a next step. When a pupil has been identified as cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Wellbeing Care Plan is drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Any additional provision or intervention for the child from both within school and by outside agencies.
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

Warning Signs

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 alert the headteacher/DSL.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity, mood or general behaviours
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- 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

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file or, where there is a safeguarding concern, on the safeguarding recording form, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the Headteacher/ DSL / SENDCo.