



The Anthony Curton and Tilney All Saints Primary Schools' Partnership

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Our School Vision

To provide a safe, nurturing environment, where everyone can blossom, being the best version of themselves whilst inspiring and increasing courage, individuality and confidence and motivating all to reach their full potential. Everyone is empowered to make good choices through the spirit of God and the fruits offered.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law,"



Approved Autumn Term 2023

Review Due Autumn Term 2026

Signed on Behalf of the Local Governing Body

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

Policy Statement

At Anthony Curton / Tilney All Saints Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our schools 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.

At our schools we:

- Help children and adults to understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Help children and adults feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- Encourage children to be confident and happy to be different.
- Help children and adults to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our schools' 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.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches.
- Support for pupils and adults going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties e.g. attachment disorder.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. It also sits closely alongside child protection policies and procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Dawn Liddle/Jeremy Wilkinson/Alice Williams - Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Jeremy Wilkinson - mental health lead, mental health first aider (adult and youth)

Alice Williams - SENDCo, mental health first aider (youth)

Karla Reid – mental health first aider (youth)

Dawn Liddle - THRIVE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL. If the student 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 an outside agency is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the mental health lead and/or SENDCo.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Targeted Support

The schools will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.

- Targeted use of whole class resources e.g. THRIVE, SEAL.
- Individual THRIVE programmes
- Therapeutic activities including play, art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students 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 student 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 to the mental health lead or a mental health first aider.

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.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Lateness to or absence from school.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose mental health 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 student 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 the first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on CPOMS. This 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 will be automatically shared with the mental health lead, who will provide support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

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

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

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead or first aider, as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students 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 DSL must be informed immediately.

Supporting Peers

When a student 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 and 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 may be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we may 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.

Communicating 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 student, 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.
- Inform parents about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home if appropriate.

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 students safe.

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 students.

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.

Policy Review

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

It is next due for review in the Autumn Term 2026.

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.