



Gusford Primary School Mental Health and Well-being Policy	
Date:	Autumn 2021 Last updated November 2021
Renewal Date:	Autumn 2024
Approved by LGB:	This is a working document that will be considered by the LGB on 24th January 2022.



GUSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mental Health & Well Being Policy

Last Updated November 2021

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 Organisation)*

At Gusford, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and every pupil. 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, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Statistics from Anna Freud <https://www.annafreud.org/>

- 1 in 8 children aged between 5 and 19 has at least 1 diagnostic mental health problem.
- Less than 35% of children with mental health problems get any help.
- Around 60% of children in care are reported to have an emotional or health problem.
- Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ are 2 ½ times more likely to report a mental health problem than those that identify as heterosexual.

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

At Gusford 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 everyone's business and that we all have a role to play.

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.

At Gusford we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know they matter and their opinions count
- Help children to develop emotional resilience, a growth mindset and to manage set backs

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to make decision. We have a school council and a team of anti-bullying ambassadors
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievement
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Supporting restorative conversations
- Providing access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need. It also runs alongside safeguarding procedures and policies for behaviour, anti-bullying and PSHCE.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or 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:

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Lead	Mrs Claire Claydon
Senior Mental Health Lead	Mrs Carmen Hopkins
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mrs Carmen Hopkins
Alternate Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mrs Kim Wright / Mrs Tanya Mann / Mrs Claire Claydon / Mrs Pippa Wake / Mrs Louise Hughes / Mrs Pippa Coleman
Family Engagement Team	Family Engagement Team

Licensed Thrive Practitioners	Mrs Jo Nainthy & Mrs Claire Claydon
Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)	Mrs Sheila Crocker & Miss Sophie Annis
Inclusion & Pastoral Deputy Head	Mrs Carmen Hopkins
SENDCo	Mrs Pippa Coleman
PSHE Co-Ordinator and Learning & Life Skills Lead	Miss Jenny Gooch
Adult Mental Health First Aiders	Mrs Kerry Hawes, Miss Kayleigh Cooper, Mrs Jo Aldous, Mrs Gemma Smith & Mrs Claire Claydon
Youth Mental Health First Aiders	Mrs Sheila Crocker, Mrs Jo Nainthy & Mrs Claire Claydon
Suicide First Aiders	Mrs Sheila Crocker (Youth) & Mrs Claire Claydon (Adult & Youth)
CPD Lead	Mrs Claire Claydon

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the senior 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 a designated safeguarding lead. 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 the Emotional Wellbeing Hub is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Family Engagement Team, the senior mental health lead or the SENDCo. Parents and carers can also make a referral direct to the hub. [Parent, carer and professionals referral form](#) or call 0345 600 2090 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 7.30pm).

Individual Care Plans

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

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 PSHE 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](#)¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Targeted Support

Gusford Primary School will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups which may include:

- Thrive !:1 sessions
- ELSA support
- Circle time
- Chill & Chat
- Targeted use of PHSE resources
- Managing emotions resources such as 'The Zone of Regulation'
- Managing feelings resources e.g picture books like 'Bag of Worries', worry monsters or worry worms.
- Therapeutic activities including Lego therapy, physical literacy, time with the school therapy dog (a Canine Concern Cares dog)

The school will make use of resources to access and track and wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Boxhall Profile
- Thrive Online
- The Leuven Scale in Early Years

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. who it is aimed at and how to access. This is outlined at the end of this policy.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors 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

1

seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mrs Carmen Hopkins, our senior mental health lead.

Possible warning signs include:

Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental

- Changes in eating or 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
- 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 on MyConcern. 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

All Gusford staff have access to MyConcern to log in and report their concerns on line. The safeguarding leads then will follow up and record outcomes electronically.

Our mental health lead and SENDCo are also DSLs and so will have access to the information logged on MyConcern. They will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If 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 / professional and / or a parent. This will depend upon a) pupils age, b) seriousness of the risk of harm or c) the nature of the risk to the pupil

Any disclosures made relating to mental health are flagged to the senior mental health lead, Mrs Carmen Hopkins. 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 must always be informed. Pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. 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 Customer First – 0808 800 4005 must be informed immediately and a MARF (Multi-Agency Referral Form) completed.

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 steps 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 go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health & emotional wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Regularly update the emotional wellbeing and mental health page of our school website with resources to support families
<https://www.gusfordprimary.net/parents/emotional-wellbeing-mental-health>
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information events
- 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

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists
- Emotional wellbeing hub
- Suffolk SES - Specialist Education Services (provides SEMH support)

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 with 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

Supporting and training our 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 children and know what to do and where to get help. A number of our staff are qualified mental health first aiders.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential

component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing. Staff also have access to the Education Support Partnership.

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 pupils safe.

We will share all relevant information and updates through staff meetings, briefings, bulletins and emails to staff.

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 additional 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 Claire Claydon, our CPD Coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in September 2024.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Mrs Claire Claydon, mental health & emotional support lead.

Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

Parents and children have access to Mrs Carmen Hopkins (Pastoral and Inclusion Deputy & Senior Mental Health Lead), the Family Engagement Team or Mrs Pippa Coleman (SENDCo) and are able to see the Headteacher, Curriculum Deputy Headteacher or their child's/children's class teachers or Year Leader on request.

- Thrive and ELSA sessions and other support groups are held regularly in school for targeted children that need additional support.
- Support is also offered in classrooms.
- Our school dog supports our wellbeing work, providing a reward for positive behaviour and a source of comfort, support or distraction for some children who become dysregulated. Our school dog also has weekly reading groups and walk & talk sessions.
- Educational Psychologists visit the school to assess pupils.
- A play therapist is currently on placement at Gusford.
- CES support is in place for behavioural and vulnerable children.

- A speech and language therapist makes weekly visits to the school.
- We also have regular visits from Suffolk Young Carers.

Staff can also use our internal inclusion referral form to request additional support if they have any worries about a child. Our inclusion team (Senior Mental Health Lead, SENDCo and Family Engagement Team) meet regularly to review referrals.

Covid 19 (Coronavirus)

Wellbeing of Staff at Gusford Primary during Covid 19 Pandemic

All Education Staff are Key Workers at this time. The pandemic has not just impacted on physical health; mental health can also be affected. Even if you have never been affected before, you may be struggling. Depending on your circumstances, anxieties about your family's health and wellbeing will likely be compounded by concerns of returning to work/school.

There is much we can do collectively and individually to alleviate concerns and many resources are available.

The Active Learning Trust trained Mental Health First Aiders at the beginning of this pandemic and they are still available for staff to talk to. These colleagues will be alert to signs that others are struggling and will be able to signpost you to sources of support. In addition we have our own trained mental health first aiders amongst the staff at Gusford.

If you are struggling, you are unlikely to be alone. A colleague may be able to help, or you can talk to one of our trained Mental Health First Aiders (see page 3).

Look after your own wellbeing when you're not working. Remember to take regular exercise, eat healthily, see friends and family regularly whilst respecting the current rules, plan things to do for down time (allowing for Covid- 19 restrictions), avoid too much social media and the news, be rested, talk to people about any issues, hobbies etc.

As well as our own Mental Health First Aiders, we also have access to Education Support Partnership (details below).

Help and advice for staff:

The [Education Support Partnership](#) supports the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Call the helpline on 08000 562 561.

[Mind](#) has published useful guidance on coronavirus and wellbeing.

Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>

Wellbeing of Children at Gusford Primary during Covid 19 Pandemic

Gusford Primary offered support throughout the lockdowns to all of the children who attend Gusford. Those that were considered vulnerable or at risk received regular support. Should the Government introduce a further period of lockdown this would resume.

Some of our pupils are struggling with being back in school full time and we need to ensure that we are vigilant to their needs and offer support to those that need it. Various mediums are being utilised including safeguarding, phoning parents, emailing parents, PSHE, chill & chat provision at lunchtime and a strong pastoral presence within the school.

All staff are listening to the children, and those that need additional support are being identified.

Although we have returned to school, there are many changes that the children are adapting to. Staff are treating the return with a positive approach and this is reflected in the way the children are adapting.

The Head Teacher is leading the positive approach by ensuring that there are regular assemblies with a planned weekly theme. Currently due to restrictions these assemblies are taking place in classrooms, with the weekly SLT assembly delivered via video.

Staff will remain focused on the well-being of the children at this time and continue to reassure them. The school dog maintained an online presence during lockdowns to help support the feeling of school community while we were split between home learning and key worker/vulnerable provision in school.

Local Support

For an adult or child/young person needing urgent crisis support contact the First Response helpline on 0808 196 3494, a 24/7 helpline for anyone of any age experiencing mental health difficulties.

Emotional Wellbeing Hub - Call 0345 600 2090, available Monday to Friday, 8am to 7:30pm. For more information about the Emotional Wellbeing Hub Service and to make a referral, please go to the [Emotional Wellbeing Gateway website](#)

Point One – Offering professional mental health support to 0 – 17 year olds – 0800 977 4077 www.point-1.org.uk

Young People can find emotional wellbeing support, information and advice on [The Source website](#) and through [Kooth online counselling service](#)

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

One Life Suffolk (Healthy Lifestyle Support) 01502 564579 www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk

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

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

YMCA Trinity Group - <https://ymcatrinitygroup.org.uk/what-we-do/>
2 Wellington Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2NU Telephone: 01473 252456

For general information and support:-

www.childline.org.uk - 0800 1111 (free 24 hour) confidential listening

www.relate.org.uk - 0300 100 1234

www.samaritans.org – 116 123 (free 24 hour)

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

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

www.time-to-change.org.uk - tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org - Challenges attitudes towards mental health

<https://www.annafreud.org/> - lots of mental health resources for schools and families

Appendix 1: Risk & Protective Factors

[DfE 2018 Mental health and behaviour in schools .pdf](#)

Table 1: Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
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

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying including online (cyber) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer on peer abuse • Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2: What to say during initial conversations and what to do next.

(Advice from pshe-association.org.uk)

It is important that PSHE teachers are aware that when they lead whole-class sessions on issues like mental health, such discussions can trigger responses in individual pupils who may then choose to make a disclosure about a personal situation. The way in which that disclosure is first handled will be critically important, both in terms of the pupil's immediate feelings and his or her likelihood of engaging in future support.

It is crucial, therefore, that clear ground rules are set for PSHE lessons, one of which will be that personal matters should not be discussed in a group setting, another that while PSHE teachers are always willing to talk to pupils about the pupil's personal situation in a one-to-one setting, they can never promise confidentiality since disclosures may have safeguarding implications. What teachers can do, however, is to listen sensitively and supportively while at the same time gathering the information they need to consider what to do next.

The advice in the downloadable guidance below is from pupils themselves, in their own words, together with some additional ideas to help you in initial conversations with pupils when they disclose mental health concerns. This advice should be considered alongside relevant school policies on pastoral care and child protection and discussed with relevant colleagues as appropriate.

[Talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures](#)