

Holme Community School



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Responsible Member of Staff: Louise Burton – Mental Health Lead

Policy Status: Non-statutory, GB approved

November 2025 – November 2028

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

Policy statement

At Holme Community School we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents, governors and carers). We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important to our lives as our physical health.

At Holme Community School, we endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of transition and stress. We aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their full potential and /or access help when they need it. We also believe we 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.

At Holme Community school, we know everyone experiences life challenges that 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.

At Holme Community School we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feeling better.
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries they may have.
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know they are valued.
- Encourage children to be an individual and dare to be different.
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- 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.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Promoting trauma informed practices, regulate (soothing), relate, (connecting) reason,(reflecting) and repair(re-connecting).
- Using a whole school approach to supporting wellbeing by following the Decider Skills STOPP principle.
- Developing an open culture with staff, pupils and parents where it is normal to talk about mental health.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups.
- Wellbeing week and access to information around 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 difficulties.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health need overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Craig Dewar-Willox – Designated child protection/safeguarding officer
- Louise Burton and Rebecca Shepherd – Deputy for child protection /safeguarding

officer

- Louise Burton – Pupil Support Manager/ Mental Health Lead

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep them mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE association guidance to ensure we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted Support:

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

- Circle time approaches
- Managing feeling resources e.g. ‘worry boxes’ and ‘ask it baskets’
- Therapeutic activities include: ‘drawing and talking’, play-based and relaxation therapy techniques.
- Decider skills - a CBT and DBT evidence based approach
- ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support)

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support if needed.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs:

All staff will complete termly wellbeing trackers on their pupils that are aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behavior patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible Warning Signs Include:

- Changes in eating patterns/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness and absenteeism

Working with Parents:

In order to support our parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.

- Share and allow parents to access resources of further support.
- Provide a range of adult learning workshops within the school to support their child(ren) with their mental health, wellbeing and resilience.
- Ensure all parents are aware of who to talk to, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.

Staff Wellbeing statement of intent

The Governing Body and school's senior managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level. We also recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

This *Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy* expands upon the School's Health and Safety policy, setting out how the School will promote the wellbeing of staff by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing managers' and staff members' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.

- Developing the competence of managers through introducing them to the competencies proven to prevent and reduce staff stress.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby staff feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues

Staff 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.

Furthermore, 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 to the developing with one or more pupils.

Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Your child may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- CAMHS
- School Nursing Service
- Children's Services
- Pediatricians
- Barnardos
- Family support workers.
- Educational psychology services

- Counselling services
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Family Hub services. (Early Help)

The Coronavirus pandemic impact on mental health

The coronavirus pandemic, subsequent lockdown and on-going restrictions, and new routines is an unprecedented situation. It may have caused or exacerbated mental health issues.

Just as important as academic work are the social lessons children learn at school and this aspect was missing during self isolation / home learning. This is why it is so important that alongside the academic we maintain our focus on aspects of school life that will help to address students' social development.

Possible Challenges

- Deterioration in children's mental health owing to being involved in domestic violence during lockdown and the impact this has had on them.
- Children in poverty not having enough to eat or watching their parents go without.
- Children who are high achievers may have felt real anxiety about not working hard enough when 'on line learning'
- Children's heightened anxiety.
- Children's attachment to a parent or grandparent/carer

Monitoring and evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available on request.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect changes in personnel .