Mental Health Policy

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| **Approved by: Strategy Team** |  | **Date: January 2025** |
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**Pupils**

# **1.1. Introduction and statement**

At Weald Community Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of our pupils. Our school ethos is one of care, respect and kindness, and we value the happiness, security and contribution of each individual member of our community.

At our school, we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable, we recognise that there are times when any of our pupils 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.

**1.2. Promoting positive mental health**

At Weald we:

* help children to recognise, understand and express their emotions and feelings
* help children feel comfortable in sharing any concerns or worries
* help children to form and maintain positive social relationships
* promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
* encourage children to be confident and ‘dare to be different’
* help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
* promote and strengthen pupil voice through Pupil Forum opportunities, pupil interviews, pupil surveys etc.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

* living out our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
* developing pupil leadership and opportunities to participate in decision-making
* celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
* providing pupils with opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
* creating opportunities to reflect
* access to appropriate support that meets children’s needs

We pursue our aims through:

* shared whole-school values and approaches
* support for pupils going through difficulties, including bereavement
* specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties, including attachment disorder

**1.3. Curriculum and staff responsibilities**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Character Education curriculum, delivered via assembly, PSHE and Circle Time throughout the school.

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

All staff have a responsibility for promoting positive mental health to all children at Weald CPS.

As a minimum, all staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training, in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue (https://www.minded.org.uk/).

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 if it becomes necessary due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

**1.4. Identification and causes for concern**

If staff become aware of warning signs which may indicate that a pupil is experiencing difficulties with their mental health or emotional wellbeing, these should always be taken seriously and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Senior Mental Health Lead.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school’s Safeguarding policy and procedures must be followed.

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify pupils experiencing difficulties with their mental health as early as possible to prevent things becoming worse. We do this in different ways, including:

* Analysing behaviour, sanctions, exclusions, attendance and illness
* Pupil welfare/children of concern is an item on every staff meeting or briefing agenda
* Staff report concerns about individual children to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
* Worry boxes for information gathering
* Pupil Progress meetings
* Parent information and health questionnaire on entry to the school
* Gathering information from a previous school at transfer
* Parental meetings
* Enabling children to raise concerns with any member of staff
* Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns with any member of staff

Warning Signs

These might include (but are not exhaustive):

* Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
* Falling academic achievement / changes in learning behaviours
* 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 misuse
* Family circumstances
* Recent bereavement
* Health indicators
* Changes in eating / sleeping habits
* Changes in activity and mood
* Physical signs/ indicators of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
* Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might manifest themselves as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour, which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

**1.5. Levels of support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individuals or groups of pupils depending on each individual case.

These may include:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier 0 : Universal level support** | **Tier 1 : Universal level support** | | **Tier 2: Targeted support** | **Tier 3 : Personalised support** |
| What does this mean? | | | | |
| Pastoral and response to general concerns | Low level incidences and concerns | | Planned interventions in school to address mental health concerns | Professional referral for high level mental health concerns |
| Who is responsible? | | | | |
| All staff | All staff | All staff  (most notably SENCO) | | HT, SENCO/ Senior MH Lead, DSL  Lisa.drogomirecki@weald.kent.sch.uk |
| What does this look like at Weald CPS? | | | | |
| Positive reinforcement and praise.  Reward systems – house points.  Celebration assembly.  PSHE assemblies.  Growth mindset/ character qualities display boards.  PSHE tasks.  Buddy system.  Wellbeing officers – Year 6.  Structured class routines.  Opportunities to share worries/ concerns.  Home contact book.  Circle time. | All of the support in Tier 0 plus -  Arranged time to speak to key adults.  Differentiated tasks accompanied by increased adult support.  Incredible 5-point scale. | All of the support in Tier 0 & 1 plus -  Interventions available:  Lego therapy.  Emotional literacy.  Social stories.  Drawing and Talking.  There’s a volcano in my tummy. | | All of the support in Tiers 0-2 plus -  Risk assessment.  Increased mentoring, 1:1.  Family support.  Front door access:  Referral to engage Early Help and other local professionals, including Kent social services if necessary.  Outside agencies:  Annafreud.org  CYPMHS  Kooth  Young Minds  Al-Anon  Childhood bereavement network |

**1.6. Sources of external support**

* **Annafreud.org – service directory detailing agencies in the local area.**

### Service detailing agencies in the local area. Website: [www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)

* **CYMPHS**

NHS directed. Website: <https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-mental-health/>

* **Kooth**

Online support for children and adults. 24/7 access. Website: <https://www.koothplc.com>

* **Young Minds**

Specific advice for parent/s carers/ educational professionals. Website: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

* **Al-Anon**

Supporting families dealing with alcohol addiction. Website: <https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk>

* **Childhood bereavement network**

The hub for supporting children and parents dealing with bereavement. Website: <https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk>

**1.7. Working with parents and carers**

At Weald CPS we value our relationship with our parents and carers greatly. If you have any concerns regarding difficulties with your child’s mental health, you should contact the class teacher or the SENCO/ Senior Mental Health Lead.

In order to support parents and carers we will:

* Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing
* Share and allow parents/carers to access sources of further support
* Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children
* Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE

**Staff**

# **2.1. Introduction and statement**

At Weald CP School, we recognise that mental health is as important as physical health and are aware of statistics which confirm that on average, one in four people will experience a mental health difficulty in the course of a given year and that such problems can cause real and lasting damage to an individual. We also recognise that the majority of people who experience mental health difficulties recover or learn to manage their symptoms, especially if they are supported early on.

The purpose of this policy is to:

* Promote positive mental health and wellbeing by providing information and raising awareness of mental health issues
* Prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to positive mental health and wellbeing
* Provide an environment in which staff who have mental health difficulties receive suitable support and adjustments to their work (if required) to allow them to achieve their full potential

# **2.2. Definitions and terminologies**

The term ‘mental health difficulties’ is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which affect an individual's ability to cope with his/her life and/or work responsibilities. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental health conditions diagnosed and treated by the health services. Although difficult to precisely define, it is important to avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached, which may deter staff from accessing the support required.

# **2.3. Policy actions**

* Provide employees with information and guidance on mental health issues to help raise awareness
* Deliver fair treatment and non-judgmental support to any staff member experiencing a mental health issue
* Provide ways for staff to support their own mental wellbeing, for example through stress-buster activities and social events
* Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or discrimination, paying due regard to the Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010
* Ensure good communication between senior leaders, managers, staff and teams
* Encourage staff to talk to a mental health first aider, occupational health or their GP
* Treat all matters relating to staff mental ill health in the strictest confidence and only share information with prior consent from the individual concerned

# **2.4. Communications**

All staff will also be made aware of their own responsibilities in implementing the policy actions. This includes raising any issues or concerns and seeking help from a member of the Leadership Team, Occupational Health or a mental health first aider.

A Staff Wellbeing Group will be established to lead on the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing and to ensure the policy actions are implemented.

Updates will be provided to staff through staff meetings.

**2.5. Levels of support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individuals depending on each individual case. These may include:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier 0 : Universal level support** | **Tier 1 : Universal level support** | | **Tier 2: Targeted support** | **Tier 3 : Personalised support** |
| What does this mean? | | | | |
| General, everyday concerns | Low level incidences and concerns | | Planned support to address mental health concerns | Professional referral for high level mental health concerns |
| Who is responsible? | | | | |
| All staff | All staff  (most notably line manager) | Line manager & HT | | HT & Governors |
| What does this look like at Weald CPS? | | | | |
| Regular staff meetings with adequate time to discuss concerns or worries, either on a professional or personal level.  Staff room available as a safe-space to communicate with colleagues.  Members of LT in school daily to approach if needed.  Supportive and mutually respective environment.  CPD around mental health. | All of the support in Tier 0 plus –  Check-ins with line manager.  Performance management. | All of the support in Tier 0 & 1 plus –  Planned, dedicated time with line manager.  Occupational health referral:  Suggested reasonable adjustments to working arrangements – for example, timetables, hours. | | All of the support in Tiers 0-2 plus -  Risk assessment, if necessary.  Outside agencies:  Annafreud.org  Anxiety UK  Mind  Samaritans  Cruse Bereavement Care  Relate |

**2.6. Sources of external support**

### Anxiety UK

### Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm) Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/)

### Mind

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm) Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk/)

### Samaritans

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org/)

### Cruse Bereavement Care

Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) Website: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk/home)

### Relate

The UK's largest provider of relationship support. Website: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk/)

# **2.7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by Lisa Drogomirecki (SENCO and Senior Mental Health Lead) and approved by the headteacher every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.