

Jesson's CE (VA) Primary School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Last Updated: June 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 Organization)

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do:

“It is our school’s fundamental purpose to honour every human being as part of God’s creation, and to enhance their spiritual growth as well as their academic aspirations.”

At Jesson’s, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students’ voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other, relevant policies (Medical and/or SEND as applicable).

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Enable staff to identify early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT 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 student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Key Members of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils.

Staff with a specific, relevant remit are:

- Mrs. Sarah Lea – Head Teacher and DSL
- Mr. Richard Seager – Deputy Head and DSL
- Mrs. Angela Shackleton – Assistant Head, DSL and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mrs. Kelly Mann – Assistant Head and DSL
- Mr. Richard Mitchell – Assistant Head and DSL
- Mrs. Donna DiFranco – Mental Health Lead and DSL, Pastoral Team
- Mrs. Sunita Sharma – Pastoral Team
- Miss Rachel Cotterill – Pastoral Team
- Mrs. Amy Smith – SENDCo
- Mrs. Susan Phipps – Lead First Aider

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to Mrs. DiFranco, the Mental Health Lead, in the first instance. If there is a concern that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, school's child protection procedures should be followed, with an immediate referral to the DSLs. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Mental Health Lead/SENDCo.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals.

The minimum this should include is:

- 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 and Wellbeing

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 developmental PSHE/HRE curriculum.

Our curriculum at all stages provides opportunities to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges (see section on **Supporting Peers** below).

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in the [Appendix](#).

Within the school (noticeboards, communal rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure 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

Sources of Support at School and in the Local Community

A wide range of school-based and local support is available to all children and staff. Our Provision Map shows all the services we use.

Some examples of school-based support are:

Circle Time, Reward charts, Wave 2 interventions, assemblies, Art therapy, school counsellor and the Dudley Nurture and Resilience Project.

Some examples of local support are:

Mental Health Support Team (MHST), school nurse, Lighthouse play therapy, CAMHS, Early Help assessment and the Educational Psychologist.

See full details in the [Appendix](#).

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 seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mrs. DiFranco, our Mental Health Lead, or any of the Pastoral Team/DSLs listed above.

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
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- 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 their response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see the [Appendix](#).

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. 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

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead, Mrs. DiFranco, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. See [Appendix](#) for our Procedure Process.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we 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

Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent, particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead or a member of SLT; 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.

Parents should be informed about mental health concerns, and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school contacts parents.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Head Teacher/DSLs must be informed immediately.

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:

- 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?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

We will ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan is created if appropriate.

Supporting 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
- 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
- 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; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who want to support but do not know how. 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 by 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 / 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

Supporting Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

One in four adults experience mental ill-health in any given year. Knowing how to recognise that they are struggling and feeling confident about helping and supporting them is key; especially as taking early action can prevent problems escalating and help individuals to recover more quickly.

Early warning signs that a staff member may be experiencing the beginnings of mental ill-health may be initially noticeable to colleagues around them. General changes in a person's 'usual' behaviour is one of the more common indicators. Other signs may include:

- An increase in unexplained absences and sick leave, or conversely an increase in working long hours and staying late
- Poor timekeeping
- Physical symptoms such as headaches and back aches; constant tiredness, low energy levels
- Changes in behaviour such as an increase in the consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, sedatives, etc
- Changes in performance – not getting things done, out of character errors, indecisiveness, memory problems, conflict with team members and/or manager
- Unusual displays of emotion, irritability, erratic behaviour, anxiousness, tearfulness; changes in sleep patterns

Support can be provided by:

- Opening up a conversation if you are concerned
- Responding when someone confides in you
- Being supportive, working with them to find solutions

In addition, staff can:

- Request reasonable adjustments to their work routine, environment or job specification, on a case by case basis, in the short or long term
- Take time off work, preferably maintaining regular contact to prevent feelings of isolation, in line with school's absence policies and/or HR as applicable

Who to contact in a crisis situation:

The NHS provides guidance about what to do with a mental health crisis or emergency and who to contact. The charity, Mind, also has information about how to get help in a crisis.

For immediate help, phone 999 or go to A&E.

For non-emergency help, ring 111.

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 pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

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 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. Shackleton, the Senior Mental Health Lead, 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 2025.

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. Donna DiFranco or Mrs. Angela Shackleton, our Mental Health Leads, via phone (01384 816825) or email (info@jessons.dudley.sch.uk).

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

A. Shackleton, Feb 2022

