Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

2025-26

Contents

1. Aims
This 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
- Support the wellbeing of all staff and pupils to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Provide a supportive learning environment for all pupils
- Acknowledge the needs of staff and pupils and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff and pupils with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

2. Promoting Staff wellbeing at all times
2.1 The school will use the following to assess the effectiveness of the wellbeing policy
- Leaders as positive role models
- Decision making processes are clearly understood and supported by staff
- Staff representation through Wellness Champions
- New staff supported with an appropriate level of induction
- An open and listening management team that responds quickly to problems
- A welcoming and tidy staff room that is sensitive to issues of race, gender, homophobia, culture and disability
- The quality of staff facilities and accommodation e.g. access to refreshment, adequate seating and toilet facilities
- Opportunities are provided for all staff to socialise and relax with each other
- The regular and systematic monitoring of staff absences
- Building and maintaining positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents
- Recruitment and retention of staff

2.2 Practical actions to support new staff
- Everyone new to the school to have a tour of the school building and induction meeting with a member of SLT
- All staff to have a name badge/lanyard
- Staff Handbook is shared and discussed with a member of SLT and all new staff must read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' part one
- New staff are signposted to all policies and further information on the school website
- New staff are signposted to Place2Be for in-school counselling support through Place2Think
- Staff team will be welcoming and supportive of staff new to the school

2.3 Practical actions to support new roles
- Subject leads will be supported by Craig Porteous, Deputy Headteacher
- Handover with previous subject lead
- Introduction/visits to school/class or environment of new role
- Establish a pattern of support including CPD opportunities
- End of first half term review with supporting person

2.4 Examples of good practice:
• Allocated time during INSET for staff to meet with their Union Representatives
• Signposting to additional services via WAMHs Alliance / CAMHs – for staff and pupils
• Free lunch for teaching assistants on lunch duty
• Time provided for subject leaders to complete major tasks
• Time provided for tasks such as moderation and additional medium term planning

• No emails at the weekend, during lesson time or after 6.30pm Monday – Friday
• Actions in red at the end of emails to save staff time
• All Staff are encouraged to leave early one day a week e.g. Friday by 4:30pm
• Tea and coffee are provided free of charge for all staff and visitors
• Wellbeing board in staffroom with positive messages and opportunities (E.g. free yoga)
• Staff social event organised by SLT at Christmas and end of the academic year – cost agreed by Governors as a gesture of thanks and appreciation
• Financial contributions towards external courses that support individuals' professional development (e.g. Masters)
• Cycle Scheme (Tax free monthly salary deduction scheme)
• Childcare voucher scheme (Tax free deductible amount from monthly salary)
• TPT (teacher planning time), staff well-being or no meeting week – 1 x termly
• All teaching staff and support staff are entitled to a moving day
• Flu vaccinations are offered to all staff free of charge
• Staff leave to attend their own children's assemblies and performances
• Staff leave to attend meetings for their own children e.g. SEN reviews
• Staff receive personal deliveries to school office (deliveries are accepted on the assumption that the products are appropriate to be delivered and school is not responsible for the delivery)
• Vectis discount card – Hackney employee benefit scheme
• Apple Stores – offer 10% discount for all school employees
• Display Screen Equipment Assessment (DSEA)
• Lunch provided for all staff on INSET days and refreshments (pizza or snacks) for teachers on Parents Evening

3. Role of all staff
All staff are expected to:
- Treat each other with kindness, empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Promote reflective practice and debriefing after challenging incidents
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- If relationships or communication breaks down, actively engage in restorative interventions
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Follow the school's policy on out-of-school hours working, including guidance on when it is and isn't reasonable to respond to communications
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

3.1 Role of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team
MHWB Lead – Sian Davies (Deputy Headteacher)
SENDCO – Caitlin Shaw
Place2Be School Project Manager – Rachael Haynes
WAMHs/CAMHs Worker in School (CWiS) – Lora Linhares-Marx
WAMHs/Mental Health Support Team (MHST) – Danila De Morais
Staff, Parent and Pupil Wellbeing Champion (rotated) – Jane Spanton

The Mental Health and Wellbeing team are expected to:
- Ensure that good MHWB is promoted across the school and maintains a high profile
- Liaise with other members of the MHWB team regularly
- Contribute to WAMHs reviews and development planning with our wellbeing framework partner, Claire Tregear
- Contribute to the MHWB policy and update as necessary

- Be proactive in their own CPD around MHWB as well as disseminating good practice to other members of staff
- Maintain the Staff Wellbeing board with positive messages and opportunities to improve MHWB
- Be approachable and able to signpost parents and staff to additional support if needed
- Organise regular workshops for parents and INSET for staff

3.2 Role of Line managers
Teachers and SLT: Karen Law – Headteacher
Teaching Assistants: Sian Davies – Deputy Headteacher
Admin/Premises/Cleaning/Catering: Elmara Cadette – School Business Leader

Line managers are expected to:
- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Regularly updating and developing staff induction training using staff feedback
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work (Elmara Cadette – all staff)

3.3 Role of the senior leadership team
Senior staff are expected to:
- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Ensure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes are made
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Establish a clear policy on out-of-school hours working, including on when it is and isn't reasonable for staff to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities

- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

3.4 Role of the governing body
Wellbeing Link Governor: TBC
The governing board is expected to:
- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Senior Leadership Team
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

4. Managing specific staff wellbeing issues
The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.
Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:
- Signposting to Place2Be School Project Manager, Rachael Haynes
- Signposting to the Educational Support Helpline
- Ensuring an open door and listening ear, without judgement and in confidence
- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

5. Supporting pupils' positive mental health
At William Patten we believe that supporting children's social and emotional well-being is a crucial part of their childhood journey. Learning to understand and manage our feelings early on, gives us vital social and emotional skills for later in life. We are committed to providing an environment where children talk about their own wellbeing and mental health. We teach them to notice their emotions, talk about how they are feeling and develop good emotional intelligence.

We support all of our pupils to learn the following:
Knowing Emotions – *recognising a feeling as it happens*
Managing Emotions – *what to do to help themselves if they feel anxious or upset*
Handling Relationships – *form positive and respectful relationships with others*
Empathy – *be aware and understanding of other people's emotions*
Self-Motivation – *be in charge of their emotions rather than controlled by them*
  We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school uses a range of strategies and approaches including:
- A dedicated MHWB team with representatives from the school community
- MHWB training for all staff at September INSET
- Regular assemblies and activities, linked to 'Word of the Week' to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing
- JIGSAW, the mindful approach to PSHE scheme, is used across the school, which helps students learn about, improve and sustain good mental health

- Wellbeing section on the school website with links to external agencies and organisations
- Place2Be in-school counselling service offering: Place2Talk (children self-refer using Place2Be slips in middle/top halls) for KS1/KS2 pupils, weekly 1:1 counselling (usually for 1 x term) for pupils referred by school or families, Place2Think for staff and parent support/online courses
- Whole school participation in annual 'Children's Mental Health Week' with special assemblies on the theme and poster competition for display around school
- Parent workshops led by members of the MHWB team (E.g. child anxiety, transition to Secondary school, healthy sleep hygiene)
- Pupil MHWB questionnaires and targeted in-class workshops led by members of the MHWB team (E.g. managing worries, the importance of good sleep hygiene, friendships)
- 1:1 consultation appointments available for parents, with CAMHs Worker (WAMHs/CWiS)
- Regular trauma and attachment training for teachers and support staff
- 'Zones of Regulation' used across the school; a non-judgmental approach to discussing and supporting children with their emotions through use of a consistent, shared language
- Calm boxes in classrooms with sensory toys if children become overwhelmed
- Dedicated 'calm corner' with activities in the playground
- Transition support ahead of moving on to the next year group in school, for some children
- Group support for children moving to secondary school run by SENDCO, Place2Be or SALT
- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly Transition Passports and social stories for vulnerable children
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

6. Managing specific pupil mental health and wellbeing issues
- All staff are responsible for referring any concerns (6.1) about a pupil in a timely manner
- Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns and seek advice from members of the MHWB team or Headteacher
- We always listen to children, staff and families about their concerns and make referrals to other agencies when appropriate; supporting parents and other family members through the process and offering 'holding' support before other professionals' interventions

6.1 Warning Signs
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 alert the MHWB lead or SENDCO.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviours
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

6.2 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence. We also understand that children who are experiencing or have been diagnosed with a mental health concern and/or disabilities could also have SEND.

We work closely with other agencies and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.
We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural concerns
- Working closely with Hackney Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies/services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying and assessing children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural concerns
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services
- Creating a whole-school environment emphasising inclusion and co-operation.
- Developing children and young people's understanding of difference and ensure all pupils value difference in others
- Supporting children and young people with SEND to feel accepted and to belong
- Provide pupils with clear and consistent information about Place2Be and Place2talk which is available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns
- Providing pupils with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it

Any support offered should take account of protocols regarding confidentiality

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the MHWB team and link Governor.
At every review, it will be approved by Governors.
Policy Agreed: September 2025
Policy Review Date: September 2026