



Dent CE Primary

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

2023/2024

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Policy statement

Policy Written by: Mandy Robinson (Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead)

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At Dent CE Primary, our vision is for all of our community to be **Joyful & Equipped to Succeed & Serve**.

Our community includes not only our pupils but our staff, governors, and families too, and as part of our vision we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to everyone. Through our open culture 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. In this way, we will strive to ensure all of the unique and precious individuals in our school community have the wellbeing they need to flourish and to serve others.

Scope

This policy outlines the Dent CE Primary approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including Dent CE Primary Whole School Behaviour Policy; Dent CE Primary Child Protection Policy; Dent CE Primary Code of Conduct; Dent CE Primary PSHE and RSE Policy; and the Dent CE Primary SEND Information Report.

Policy Aims

At Dent CE Primary we will:

- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils;
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils;
- enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues;
- provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support;
- develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques;
- raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, ensuring that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; and
- instil 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.

Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (David Prescott)
Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Mandy Robinson)
SENCO (Mandy Robinson)
PSHE Coordinator (Mandy Robinson)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, they should speak to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Mandy Robinson). If, however, there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed and the staff member should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr David Prescott) or, in his absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mandy Robinson).

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan may include:

- details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis;
- special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions;
- medication and any side effects;
- who to contact in an emergency; and
- the role the school and specific staff

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively:

[PSHE Association: Preparing to Teach About Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupils' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing pupils 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, common 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 staff and pupils understand:

What help is available

Why should they access it

Who it is aimed at

What is likely to happen next

How to access it

Sources of Support at School and in the Local Community

School Based Support for pupils

At Dent CE Primary, early identification of pupils' mental health or wellbeing needs is the aim, encouraging dialogue between parents/carers, pupil, class teacher, SENCO and Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, as appropriate. School based support includes:

- 1:1 pastoral support where necessary;
- Individual Education Plans which include specific support strategies for identified mental health or wellbeing needs of individual pupils;
- Individual Care Plans for those pupils who have been identified as having cause for concern;
- signposting of mental health and wellbeing support strategies and services available for pupils, parents and carers; and
- access for all pupils to after-school clubs which promote positive mental health, including interest-based clubs (e.g. Lego Club, Art Club, Messy Club, Games Club, Expedition Club and Sport Clubs).

Local Support for pupils

In Cumbria, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including CAMHS (<https://www.lscft.nhs.uk/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-south-cumbria>), and Action For Children [South Lakeland Action For Children Facebook page](#). These external agencies deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

We are also able to coordinate support through [Westmorland and Furness Council SEND Local Offer](#) and [Cumbria Safeguarding Children Support Early Help](#) process.

The Westmorland and Furness Early Help Team can be contacted on:

Telephone No: 0300 373 2723; or by email: early.help@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

At Dent CE Primary, we refer to guidance issued by the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership in relation to Early Help. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information, resources and support services in community languages and accessible formats. Any cases resulting in Early Help will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

Our contacts in school for Early Help are our Designated Safeguarding Lead (David Prescott) and our SENCO (Mandy Robinson).

Support for staff

At Dent CE Primary we support school staff mental health and wellbeing through¹:

- appointing a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead in school;
- resourcing any appropriate training needs so that staff feel able to support both pupils and one another in relation to mental health and wellbeing;
- providing a comfortable and designated space where staff can take time out if needed;
- adopting and regularly reviewing a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which includes the wellbeing needs of staff;
- signposting of mental health and wellbeing support strategies and agencies;
- encouraging a school ethos of openness about mental health, for both pupils and staff, and encourage staff to share concerns;
- offering support to staff, such as supervision, so that staff feel able to successfully take on and manage their workload;
- encouraging the use of staff Wellness Action Plans;
- including staff wellbeing on agendas of both staff and governor meetings; and
- allocating time for staff to complete and submit bi-annual staff wellbeing surveys so that the SLT can better understand key wellbeing issues in our school and monitor the impact of any staff wellbeing support strategies implemented.

Warning Signs of Pupil Mental Health or Wellbeing Needs

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 any staff member who has specific safeguarding concerns should alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (David Prescott) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mandy Robinson).

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 behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated lateness to, or absence from school

¹ Including recommendations from Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families 'Ten ways to support school staff wellbeing'

- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

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 work closely with external agencies who support the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and who 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 pupils 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 problems
- working closely with Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership, South Lakeland CAMHS and other agencies or services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral.
- identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems.
- discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- agreeing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or, if necessary, an Individual Care Plan as part of a 'stepped care' approach.
- providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective.

We will, according to the child's needs:

- ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns (any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality);
- provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.
- identify, assess, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

Date	Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made	Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (David Prescott) or, in his absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Mandy Robinson).

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents of issues relating to their child's mental health or wellbeing needs, there are questions to consider first:

- can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate;
- who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- what are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

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 created if appropriate.

Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; and we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to resources promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- offering to refer parents or carers to external agencies who provide 1:1 or small, group-based programmes run by appropriately trained health or education practitioners.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Additionally, our PSHE curriculum at Dent CE Primary includes teaching strategies for children to support both their own mental health and wellbeing needs and offers advice on what they can do if they have any concerns for others. Strategies may include:

- how friends can best support one another;
- things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- warning signs that their friend needs help;
- where and how to access support for themselves; and
- healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may either observe or be feeling.

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 to enable them to keep students safe. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead will also receive training on how to support pupils and staff in school.

We will host relevant information through our communication channels (email, newsletters, website) and will use the Staff Wellbeing Notice Board to signpost staff to relevant training, resources and events.

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 students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 either the Head Teacher (David Prescott) or the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Mandy Robinson) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **29/06/2026**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Mandy Robinson).