

	<h1>Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery</h1>	<p>Reviewed: Oct 2025</p> <p>Next Review: Oct 2027</p>
<p>Policy Title:</p>	<h2>Mental Health Policy</h2>	<p>Users: Staff, Governors, Parents</p>

Policy statement

At Offley Endowed Primary School and Nursery, we are committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other members of our school community. This policy was written in consultation with all staff and members of the Governing body.

Scope

This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to school staff on our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being across all communities in the school
- Inform pupils and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and well-being.

Read this policy in conjunction with our school's:

- SEND policy
- Equality Scheme
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding Statement
- Child protection Policy

1. The aim of this policy is to:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being across the whole school
- Create a culture of well-being and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in school, where pupils feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
- Recognise that we all have varying emotions, both positive and negative at different times
- Celebrate every way that pupils achieve at our school, both inside and outside the classroom

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- Allow pupils to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting pupil voice
- Give pupils the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Spread awareness of the various ways that mental health issues can manifest
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
- Provide support and access to resources to pupils experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

2. Legal basis

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

3. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and well-being across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or well-being, they should inform one of the school's mental health leads. Other members of staff with responsibility for leading on mental health and well-being include:

- Headteacher
- Designated safeguarding leads (DSL)
- Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Mental health leads

4. Procedure to follow in a case of an acute mental health crisis

In case of a mental health crisis, immediate steps are to stay calm, ensure safety, and providing a non-judgmental space to listen, while also involving professional support and communication with parents. Key actions include, assessing the situation, communicating with designated staff and parents, and connecting the student with professional help.

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5. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some Warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Secretive behaviour
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

It is understood that many of these signs can be explained by other factors but that sometimes they can be as a result of poor/deteriorating mental health.

6. Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring. Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice. Staff will always follow the school's child protection policy and pass on all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file on CPOMS. When making a record of a disclosure, staff will record details on CPOMS and include the following

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff
- Actions to be taken

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7. Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality. A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and well-being
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with the DSL. If information is needed via CPOMS, the DSL will decide whether information should be shared with other members of staff or external professionals.

It will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first. Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the child protection policy will be followed.

7.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil makes a disclosure.
2. Member of staff offers support.
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this.
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff.
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate).
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis.

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8. Supporting pupils

8.1 Baseline support for all pupils

As part of the school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and well-being for all pupils, the school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of mental health during assemblies, PSHE (keeping safe lessons), mindfulness time and focussed awareness weeks e.g. Well-being Week, Just Talk Week, Anti-Bullying Week.
- Signposting all pupils and parents to sources of online support on the school website and displays in school.
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons.
- The Year 6 nursing questionnaire will help monitor the older children in the school.
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and well-being through interventions such as: worry boxes, circle time, PSHE lessons etc.

8.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health Lead will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1. The school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

8.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. Examples of the support offered at our school includes:

- Nurture groups
- Reduced / adapted timetable
- Movement/ time out pass/ request for support cards/ signal
- Regular check-ins with 'safe adults'

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- Access to sensory tools and/or 'safe space'
- Walk and talk session with the child's chosen adult.
- 'TLC' list of children to be more sensitive around communicated to all staff

8.4 Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- GP or paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local counselling services (Safe Space/ NESSie)

9. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and well-being issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and well-being on our school website, including the mental health and well-being policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face to face. These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting. A record of what was discussed, and

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action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

10. Supporting peers

Watching a friend/sibling experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis.

Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

11. Signposting Sources of support will be displayed around the school and links provided on the school website, so pupils and parents are aware of how they can get help. The Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

12.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE We will follow the Jigsaw 'keeping safe' curriculum throughout the school but also use other resources such as those provided by Anna Freud.org. Pupils will be taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe For more information, see our PSHE curriculum documents on the school website.

12.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating

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13. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognize warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help
- Staff utilize weekly staff meeting time to alert the team to any children that are causing concern (this can include SEMH difficulties)
- All staff are invited to whole school safeguarding update training, Mental health training and made aware of forthcoming training opportunities.

14. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this, we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Make staff aware of out of school support agencies for Mental Health.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by The Mental Health Lead every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board and the headteacher.

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